

EDITORIALS

SGA Takes Unfair Punitive Measures Against Clubs

The most recent decisions in the Student Government Association (SGA) at PSH provide cause to reflect on whether this organization fulfills its intended goals. The student body extends the privilege of service to SGA members through an election process, therefore the student body has the right to know what new policies and procedures the association plans to implement that will affect students and their organizations.

At the last SGA meeting, the Finance Committee proposed several new rules that the association approved for the upcoming spring semester. First, any club that does not send a representative to Presidents' Council meetings twice during the semester will encounter "frozen funds" until the next meeting. When SGA "freezes" your funds, that includes restricted as well as unrestricted. Yes, clubs, that means the money that YOU work for through fund raisers can be held in the Finance Committee's iron fist and you cannot spend any of it until you send a representative to a Presidents' Council meeting to hear all about the fund raisers other clubs plan to have in the future.

This is an especially interesting policy since it crosses entirely over the lines of the norm in our Penn State system. Many other Penn State campuses also hold monthly meetings that club representatives must attend. But SGA members also must attend. The only SGA members in attendance at PSH Presidents' Council are the vice-president (because she runs the meetings and sets the agenda) and any other member that just happens to be in another club.

The usual agenda at these meetings includes announcements from the vice-president and then short summaries from club members about their specific activities. Announcements are good, but they can be typed and put in our club mailboxes. If we feel the announcements

pertain to our club members and are important, we can read the announcements at our club meetings. Written forms of communication are much more likely to survive until a club meeting than a brief oral announcement at a council meeting. And we really don't need summaries from club members about their activities. We can read the bulletin boards.

The argument is not against these monthly meetings, but the agenda and purpose of the meetings. If clubs are supposed to work with--instead of in opposition to SGA, perhaps SGA members should attend these monthly mandatory club meetings and start discussing some real issues that student clubs and SGA could use combined efforts to accomplish student-oriented goals on campus. Let's tackle some real problems--instead of sitting and looking at each other, praying the club president to your right doesn't have to explain every activity they're planning to host for the next semester... so you can leave the meeting and eat lunch before class. Club presidents usually don't mind attending useful meetings, but so far SGA has not provided a good reason for us to attend--only threats of funds being frozen. Threats might work for some people, but we prefer good rationale instead.

Another new rule, clubs: One club member cannot represent more than one club. Why? Good question. SGA might give us an answer...someday when they think of one...for now the question has probably been indefinitely "tabled" while they work on their justification. Perhaps that hot question will be tackled at future SGA meetings--during the time they should be performing the functions of "student government."

Did SGA stop to think that there are only so many student leaders on campus--many who are officers in more than one club? "Presidents' Council" implies that

presidents attend. So if a student is a president for more than one club, the officer must find a replacement to represent one of the organizations. Clubs usually have difficulties getting members together for individual club meetings, let alone requiring them to attend monthly meetings and listen to the future plans of other clubs on campus.

Third rule: Clubs cannot spend more than 60% of their restricted funds before the spring semester. In other words, don't plan on buying any needed equipment, going on field trips, or paying any large bills for operating costs until after Christmas. Perhaps the Finance Committee should let individual clubs make their own budgets--a common practice in recent years--and if an individual club overspends...too bad. We're all adult college students--some are even business majors--and I think we can handle a two semester club budget.

Fourth: Clubs must submit a copy of their constitutions to Student Court or...you guessed it! Your funds will be frozen. Let's back up a little. Before a club could legally become a club at PSH, members had to submit a constitution to Student Court and that organization in turn made recommendations to SGA for approval.

Every club went through this process and someone within the Student Government had the responsibility of keeping a copy of each constitution on file. All of a sudden, however, no one knows where these formal documents are. So, why should individual clubs be penalized for the mistakes of SGA? Student Government misplaced the constitutions, and yet club funds will be frozen if copies are not given to SGA for the second time. Somehow that does not seem fair or just. Also, since Student Activities keeps copies of club constitutions in room 216 (that is the room adjacent to the SGA office), why

doesn't an SGA member take two steps out of their office and ask Lois for copies of the constitutions? Did SGA miss the lesson in elementary school about the shortest distance between two points being a straight line?

One last point: Many clubs had to do everything but tap dance on the ceiling to get needed money for budgets, and yet the Finance Committee still has approximately \$15,000 dollars saved for a rainy day. Since that money is intended for student organizations to use, the assumption is that this rainy day will be "Hurricane Harrisburg" or some natural disaster within that range. When the Finance Committee allocates money during the fall semester, the clubs understand that these funds are for both semesters. If all the clubs received their money for the year, who gets the 15 grand?

SGA needs to study representative governmental procedure. The student body elected these members, assuming we would be represented fairly without certain members becoming dictators that design policy for only select members of the student body. Are there really no demanding or pressing issues on campus that need attention at SGA meetings? The student body elected SGA members to represent the student body and not to sit around designing bogus rules and creating mandatory meetings that take up our club time.

Victoria Cuscino
Editor-in-Chief

CAPITAL TIMES MANDATORY STAFF MEETINGS:

Please plan to attend a meeting on Monday, November 19 at 10:00 a.m. or on Tuesday, November 20 at 12:30 p.m. in the office. These are the LAST meetings for the fall semester. You will receive final story assignments and VOTE on the new editorial positions! Please submit a letter and clips to Vicki if you plan to run for editor or news editor.

Reporters Need Access to Locker Rooms

The National Football League (NFL) recently invested in nearly 1,500 terrycloth robes so that pigs like Zeke Mowatt and his teammates on the New England Patriots can cover themselves to meet the press after a game. What a simple solution to such a well-documented problem.

In response to the piece that appeared in the last issue of the *Capital Times* concerning female reporters and their access to locker rooms, it's not just an issue of females in the locker room but rather one of reporters period having access to locker rooms.

As long as male reporters have access to locker rooms, female journalists must have the same right in order to do their job. The question is should reporters--male or female-- be allowed in the locker room. Yes.

Some solutions mentioned in the article included a "20 to 30 minute grace period" for the athletes after a game or a separate interview room.

Reporters, especially those working for a daily newspaper, work under a tight deadline. A waiting period would severely hinder the reporters job performance. Plus while the reporters stand outside the locker room, the players have time to unwind and the reporter will not be able to gain a sense of the emotion of the game.

Print reporters really need player interviews because by the time the story hits the newsstands most sports fans already know the scores and highlights and are only interested in what the players and coaches have to say.

As for creating a separate interview room that would allow the players more

of a chance to slip out some side door. As it is the players already have enough places to hide inside the locker room like the trainer's room for example. The players want all the fame and fortune the football world has to offer without any of the headaches.

Without the media coverage, would the general public know or care about the Randall Cunningham's or John Elway's of the world. And these are players with talent. Players with little talent and big mouths like Jim McMahon, Brain Bosworth, and Tony Mandarich parlayed media exposure into million dollar contracts.

So when the players gripe about privacy, I say shut-up and put on your robe.

Jon Fleck
News Editor

CORRECTION

In its edition of October 26, the *Capital Times* published a story intended to dramatize the importance of wearing seatbelts (Seatbelts Save Lives). It described three local people who were involved in a motor accident. Unfortunately, the writer unintentionally implied that the responsibility for the accident lay with one of the people involved. However, officials have not established the responsibility for the accident. The *Capital Times* regrets and retracts the implication that one of the parties was responsible.