

Proposed cuts would injure college and state

With Governor Casey's '92-93 proposed budget cuts in education funding, the cliché that a college education "is the most valuable thing you can get in life" has never been truer.

Unfortunately, not only has education lost its "guarantee" value for helping graduates attain jobs, the only value most Pennsylvanians are able to equate with a college degree is a monetary one. And, if Casey's proposal to decrease funding to higher education by \$118 million is passed, it's only going to get worse.

What's the worst that could happen? According to an article in The Evening News, the four state-related universities (Penn State, Pittsburgh, Temple and Lincoln), could be forced to layoff staff and raise tuition by as much as \$400-600 per semester. With tuition at the 14 state-owned schools rating second highest in the country, potential students may start looking for educational alternatives to Pennsylvania.

I admit it. When I was looking at colleges I only applied to Pennsylvania schools. Why? I couldn't afford the out-of-state tuition rate of most colleges. Luckily, Penn State fit my budget, just barely, but it fit. I admit the tuition increases in the last two years haven't exactly helped my family's financial situation, but it could have been worse.

Like next year, for example. Unless legislators drastically rework Casey's proposal and find additional money to put toward higher education, state-owned institutions will suffer as they never have before. If the cuts for universities to raise tuition students won't stand for the increase, they'll leave, finding cheaper alternatives with equal quality programs in other states.

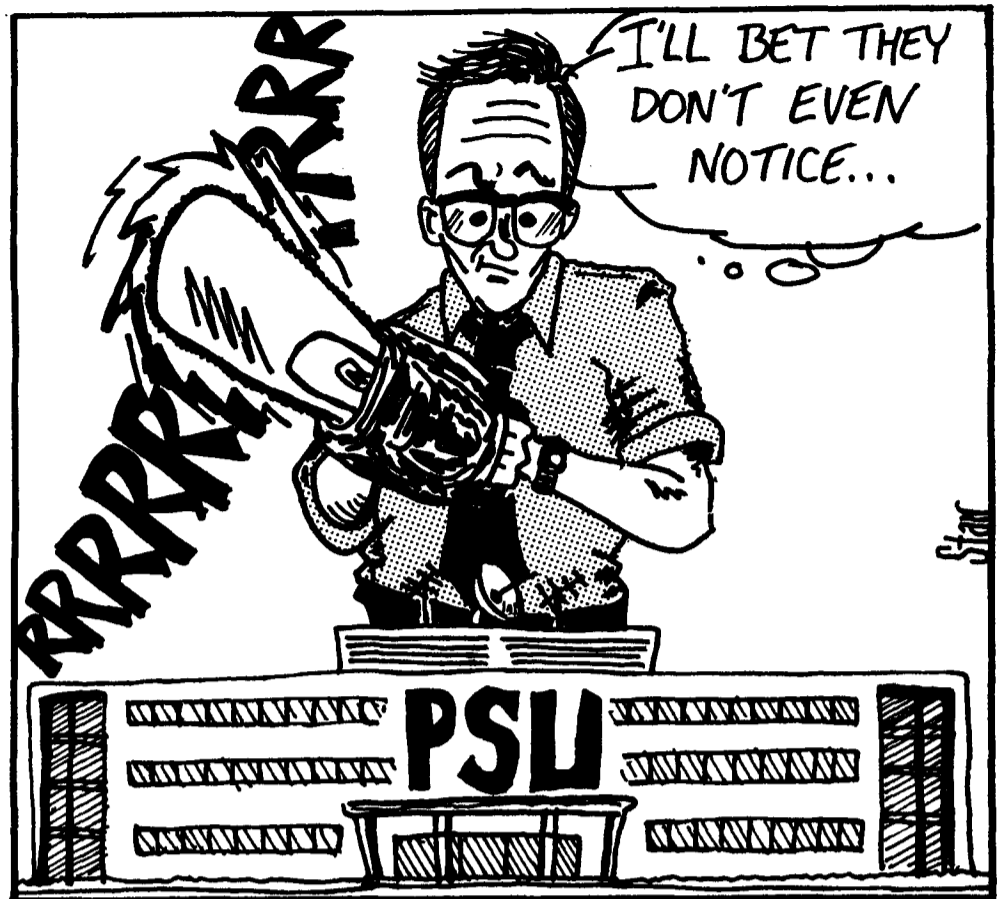
This decision will not only affect the universities, but all of Pennsylvania. Most college graduates decide to remain in the area after receiving a degree, improving the quality of job applicants and diversifying the population of the state with their values and cultures. But none of it will happen unless Casey's proposed budget is worked over by legislators.

I don't think the Governor has looked closely enough at the long term effects of cutting education funding. The same proposal which cuts education funding by 3.5 percent calls for a \$2 billion (.9 percent) increase in funding for highway and bridge construction, maintenance and replacement in state, local and interstate highways. At least students will have smooth roads to travel on as they leave the state.

Rumor has it, the areas getting the biggest increases will be in Casey's backyard. In an Evening News article, House Republican Floor Leader Matthew J. Ryan said while schools would suffer budget cuts, Casey proposed funding increases for his public relations machine, his budget office and his general counsel. Are the increases really necessary? Only he can say for sure, and it appears he feels they are.

Maybe I ate one too many packs of Pop Rocks as a child, but I've always hoped, dreamed, fantasized...call it what you will, that our government and its officials would rather suffer financial burdens themselves than inflict insult and injury on its populace. I guess it was the Pop Rocks, because judging from today's national economic situation it's never going to happen. So much for "by the people, FOR the people."

Let's hope leaders like Ryan are more reliable than Casey



and rework the budget to include additional funding for education. Otherwise, the currently crowded campuses of Pennsylvania's universities could become much easier to walk across next year.

Karen M. Putt
Editor-in-chief

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