

# A biting challenge for PSU administrator

Michael Stone  
Capital Times Staff

You may not believe this, but I am not going to share some trivial excursion with you this issue. I am going to write a real op-ed column.

Why? Because I am genuinely mad. (I would say "pissed," but my Mom reads this.)

In the Oct. 14 issue of the weekly *Collegian*, an article appeared regarding how Commonwealth Campuses are getting the shaft in terms of the Pepsi agreement. [A copy of the article may be found in the Heindel Library.]

(I believe the *Capital Times* has mentioned this agreement once or twice in the past. If you recall, the Penn State Commonwealth Campuses will divide \$500,000 over the course of 10 years--i.e., we receive \$2,400 a year from the \$14 million agreement.)

In the article, William McKinnon, associate vice president of business operations, said:

"Because the deal was made with the convocation center in mind, Commonwealth Campuses are 'lucky' to get the money they receive.

"This is a market exposure for Pepsi's name to be advertised in the convocation center--the Commonwealth Campuses will just have to drink Pepsi instead.

"It looks more attractive to have Pepsi's name to be advertised in the convocation center than at the Commonwealth Campuses."

Well, *Capital Times* readers, how does that make you feel?

I have a few things to say to Mr. McKinnon and the other PSU dignitaries who voiced their opinions. And since McKinnon did not return any of our phone calls, I will use this forum to do so.

Mr. McKinnon, I am a student at PENN STATE UNIVERSITY. Did you read that? It says, "Penn State." Granted, I'm at the Harrisburg campus, but the blue

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and white sign says PENN STATE.

I pay the SAME tuition my colleagues pay at main campus, and yet I do not see the same results they do. I do not have the art centers, the plethora of buildings, the huge library, the enormous sports complex, etc. They are getting a piece of \$13 million. I will see part of \$2,400.

When I mail in my tuition, it goes to University Park, not Harrisburg. When this campus makes money, it goes to University Park, not here. And, sir, I help pay your salary.

Granted, I chose to come here. And despite my moaning, I do enjoy it here. It's quiet, I can study, and I have many opportunities here. I have a great internship lined up come January, my professors speak fluent English and my opinions matter.

I could go to the over-populated University Park campus, but I'm choosing not to drink my way through college like many of my more illustrious peers. I want to learn, not just party. True, I do have fun here and I "party" from time-to-time, but it doesn't dominate my college life or goals.

When you read those "genuine, behind the scenes" college books, the ones that really tell you what the colleges are about, Penn State is known only for its football team and its party atmosphere.

They don't say that we produce great engineers or great (insert major). They say we're a school driven by alcohol and sports.

And what better way to improve our academic image than to sell out to a soft drink company so that a center may be

built to better accommodate sports and graduation ceremonies, amongst other things?

Beaver Stadium seats close to 100,000 people. But, for shame, no student may tread upon that grass unless he's one of JoePa's kids and wearing black Nike hightops. (Keep in mind the football players don't pay full tuition, if any at all).

Roger Williams, director of University relations, said in the article, "The University ended up with a larger package than expected."

Correct me if I'm wrong, but wasn't our library an item on the "Things To Do List"?

David Gearhart, senior vice president for development and University relations, said, "This is a marvelous thing for the University--a definite win-win situation."

Sorry, Dave, but I'm a part of "the University," and I don't think \$2,400 a year sends me running around the campus, humming the Penn State fighting march, yelling "we won, we won!"

Mr. McKinnon, in reference to the deal being for the convocation center only, why didn't the deal include just University Park?

You said it wouldn't look attractive advertising Pepsi at the Commonwealth Campuses? I cannot walk more than 50 feet in our classroom building without seeing the name "Pepsi" displayed prominently for ample viewing. I guess we got all of the "unattractive" vending machines.

I'm sure that the powers that be who made this deal boasted to Pepsi that "your name will be at ALL of our campuses, not just here in University Park."

I busted my butt in high school to make the grades and went through the hell of SAT's to get into this school. My SAT's weren't high enough, so U.P. said they didn't want me.

Well, U.P. asks for my tuition money promptly. If it's one day late, I am threatened with having my registration and housing arrangements erased with a touch of a button. Once I graduate, I'll receive alumni forms ad nauseum, asking me to contribute each year so that I can still be associated with the Penn State name.

Mr. McKinnon, you're making me feel like I'm not even a part of Penn State now.

It seems that the tuition I pay, the sweatshirts I buy, the parking stickers I must obtain, the housing fees I fork over, the books that I must purchase at exorbitant prices and then cannot resell for more than pocket change--if at all, the football games I pay to see, the sticker in my rear car window, and my future diploma--all with the Penn State name on them--don't mean squat unless I'm a citizen of the Holy Land known as University Park.

I was going to be sophomoric and end this column with, "I think I speak for the entire campus when I say: BITE ME," but I'll control my anger and be rational.

You made no attempt to answer any of our staff's phone calls, so I'm going to give you a second chance.

I invite you to send me your rebuttal. But unlike you, sir, I will acknowledge it, and even gladly print it.

Write me, call me, fax me, send me a telegram, make me a video, fly a banner over the campus, use smoke signals--whatever it takes.

You can be sure that I won't be too busy drinking Pepsi to answer.

The choice is yours.

And readers, the choice is yours as well. Don't forget to vote. There are still some major decisions in the world you can control.

(A quick addendum: Happy Birthday to my sister Sue on Nov. 6!)

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internships and participate as advisors to various campus organizations.

Also stated by Dhir in the article was that "not publishing has a direct effect on the ability of the school to present a quality education."

Personally, I think not being able to offer courses that our students need or not being able to give the students the quality courses that they paid for has a greater effect on how the school can present itself.

The presence of practitioners on the faculty was one of the attractive qualities the business program had to offer.

One of the first things we are taught in our business classes is to always listen to your customers and always try to keep your customers' needs fulfilled.

Well, the students are your customers and your product is education. I think the administrators need to review some of the fundamentals of good business.

To Mr. Hansen and the others in the provost's office, it's not too late. Mr. Kern is not gone yet, and the other resignations aren't in yet. So please show the students that our quality of education is worth the administration's time to reopen this matter. I am sure that the school and this 12-year veteran in the classroom can come to a compromise.

Certainly losing experienced educators and decreasing the quality of education should be avoided at all possible costs. The opportunity is in the hands of the provost's office and Dr. Dhir.

A school that can afford to have the heat on high and all the windows open wide can surely afford to hire an adjunct professor and prevent this loss.

Bernard Reiley  
Senior, Accounting

# The "Burg" is no paradise

Lisa Malask  
Capital Times Staff

Downtown Harrisburg is only a 20-minute drive from the PSH campus--10 if you're drunk. (And I don't advocate drunk driving.) It is the capital city; cultural, alive and thriving, right? I think not!

By day, the city seems animated with the hustle and bustle of state workers. The stores are full, the streets are busy and the sidewalks are packed. But when the clock reaches 5 p.m., downtown employees eagerly rush to their cars to get the hell out of the city. You better cross the street rapidly, because they won't hesitate to run you over. They know the truth about the "Burg."

When the sun goes down, watch out. This is when you truly behold what city life is all about. Picture this: There are drug dealers on every other corner. The repugnant stench of urine forces you to hold your breath as you pass construction sites and spaces between buildings. Neo-Nazi skinheads with swastika tattoos roam the streets. On State Street, young men sell their bodies to old men, and Third Street is a haven for female and transvestite prostitutes.

Earlier this year, a prostitute, after being apprehended, confessed that although she has AIDS and has known about her affliction for quite some time, she may have infected as many as 3,000 men with the disease. She was sentenced to slightly over a year in prison for...get this...wreckless endangerment. I suppose none of her clients have died yet, so she's not considered a murderess. But how many of her clients further spread the disease? Nice city, huh?

Do you want to know what else is really appalling? Beggars harass you for money. Bums leer at you. The shrill sound of an ambulance echoes in your ears as

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chills race through your body. And how about those schizophrenics who pace the streets, screaming at the voices in their heads?

There's nothing more aggravating than the drunks who stagger out of seedy, little, roach-ridden bars demanding, "Give me a dollar for coffee!" Sure...coffee...more like a draft beer.

The drunken brawls are a real tourist attraction. Step right up folks! Watch the bloody mayhem. See two men, two women, or a man and a woman engage themselves in a bloody battle over who bumped into whom.

And though the "Burg" is considered to be a "melting pot," I find it fascinating that there are two segregated bars within three blocks of each other, one black and the other white. And stay on your own turf...or else!

Some of the numerous, tacky, bug-infested greasy spoons have poker machines that are, legally, to be played only for entertainment. Ha! Slimy, grimy, revolting people, who appear to be allergic to bathing, spend a fortune--fumbling and searching through their pockets, their hands shaking, grasping for that last quarter.

If you manage to acquire a 100 points, the owner will slip you five bucks under the table. I've witnessed multitudes of people squander their entire welfare check just to win five dollars and a "free" cup of

coffee.

On the contrary, Mayor Reed takes considerable pride in Harrisburg's numerous new improvements. Sure, I concede that City Island, the home of the stadium and other events, looks beautiful at night. Incandescent lights envelop both City Island and the bridge. But every time I pass by, which is often (because I live in the city--an assemblage of filth) I cannot help but wonder how many homeless people could reside indoors if the tax money that's used for lights were put toward the plight of the homeless instead of aesthetic beauty!

The homeless people sleep in Hoover homes at the bus stops. And speaking of bus stops, it's convenient if you have no car, but ultimately it can be a hazard. There have been incidents where Capital Area Transit (CAT) clients have been robbed at the bus stop during the most active hours of the day, while police drove by in a stupor, unaware of what was occurring.

The newspapers are always full of articles regarding downtown renovations, but these articles exclude the real story. There is a mecca of criminals that run rampant throughout the city. Although the police station is located right in the center of the "Burg," many times, it takes them hours to respond to a call.

Our capital city is deficient. Sure, we have the chic, new Hilton; and Strawberry Square is adequate, but this does not compensate for the absence of culture and the presence of crime.

So, come to scenic Harrisburg, where you can play kickball using the trash on the sidewalks. Dare to meander through the streets. Bring a friend--you won't want to be alone...a solitary soul in the night.