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Chronology: An overview of campus safety issues

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Capital Times Reporters

The following overview chronicles the series of events which took place in the past nine weeks responding to the rape and alleged attack that occurred to two separate PSH students.

September 23 - Police Services received a phone call from a nurse at a local hospital informing them that a female student from PSH was admitted as a rape victim. The Administration was informed immediately and within four hours a memo was posted throughout campus informing students that a female student was "accosted" earlier that day and further information was unavailable since the sources were second hand.

October 2 - police services had their first meeting with the

victim confirming that a rape actually occurred.

October 4 - the university released the information in This Week, the first time the University referred to it as a rape. Provost Leventhal left voice-mail messages with faculty informing them of the

October 5 - Students filed a petition demanding increased security, better lighting, and access to police records.

October 15 - The Capital Times filed an Open Records request with the university, asking for the release of public information regarding the case. The university denied the request.

October 23 - a female student was attacked walking between the Wisburg and Church Halls. Police services and Community Relations

posted another memo, informing students of the second assault.

October 26 - Channel 28, Channel 27, Channel 8, and Patriot News reporters arrived at campus to interview students about the two attacks. A safety meeting was also held with female resident students in the dorms.

October 27 - Student Affairs met with faculty senate to present a report on ways to improve campus safety. The report was then presented to Provost Leventhal. That same evening a composite sketch of the second attacker was distributed throughout camps and to the local community.

October 28 - Student Government Association sent a memo to Provost Leventhal listing their recommendations to improve public safety, this memo was then released to campus community.

October 28, and 29 - Provost Leventhal resided over two forums where students, faculty and staff

addressed concerns and made recommendations regarding campus safety.

November 1 - crime prevention seminar was held in dining commons, presented by Citizens Against Crime.

November 9 - A personal defense demonstration was held in the Gallery Lounge by a campus self-defense group.

November 10 - Provost Leventhal held a campus open hours session where students gathered to express their approval and concerns for the changes made after the open forum sessions.

For an in-depth look at issues surrounding campus safety, see the Public Safety Supplement inside this issue.

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AN IN-DEPTH LOOK**
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Wisberg and Church Halls proved to be poorly lit when a second attack occurred between the two dorms. The university responded by increasing the amount of light and trimming the bushes that lined the walkway.

Photo by
Mary Gates

He's Back:

University provost discusses faculty concerns during second visit

Ricardo Duarte
Capital Times Reporter

Penn State's executive vice-president, John A. Brighton, met with disgruntled faculty members recently to address their complaints and concerns regarding administrative policies.

Brighton received a personal invitation from Provost and Dean Ruth Leventhal "to talk to the faculty regarding their overall problems with this campus," the invitation stated.

The invitation was prompted after an unsettling encounter between Brighton and the faculty a few weeks ago, according to faculty members.

"Brighton was visibly shaken and unnerved by the faculty at the initial general meeting," said Associate Professor of Humanities and Art History Troy Thomas.

"He felt he had to come back and deal with our concerns in a more detailed way," Thomas said.

Many of the faculty members hoped the meeting would improve the overall

situation between the faculty and the administration by opening communication lines.

"The importance of the administration communicating more with the faculty on a regular basis is paramount," Thomas said. "They have to make us more aware of what's going on here and at University Park so we can work together on our problems."

Along with better communication, Thomas stressed the need to end "red tape" and bureaucracy. Too much paperwork and too many meetings keep a lot of decisions from ever being finalized, he said.

"Penn State Harrisburg has to deal with the entire bureaucratic structure of University Park, in addition to its own structure," he said. "For a campus this size, it is almost unworkable."

Many professors in the Humanities department echoed Thomas' opinion. They also felt that University Park's administration was too judgmental.

"As far as the Humanities Department goes, the Park's administration doesn't seem to realize that we're interdisciplinary," said Dr. Glen Mazis of the Humanities Department. "Being interdisciplinary not only makes us

unique to other universities across the state, but across the country as well."

In light of recent cutbacks and reduced funds to the University, many faculty members were also displeased with the progress of the Physical Plant.

"The Physical Plant hasn't changed much for a campus that services more than 3500 students," said Thomas. "Messiah, Lebanon Valley, Elizabethtown, even HACC all have far greater plants than we do. It still has a long way to go before students get their money's worth."

In addition, professors felt they don't have the proper equipment to teach the students.

"We have computers, but we essentially have no budget for CD-ROMS, videotapes or laser discs," explained Thomas. "In art we have no facilities for sculptures or printmaking. There is still so much we lack."

Thomas also said that the PSH administration needs to deal more with the day-to-day problems that arise in the classroom. "One of the faculty suggestions to Brighton was that administrators teach at least one course a year. They'd become much more sensitized to what needs to be done."

Faculty members said that Brighton listened to their concerns and tried to understand their perspective, but he became somewhat defensive when they complained about the library, Mazis said.

"He thought we were being too pushy. We had a right to be upset though, we really need to get the ball rolling on a new library," he said.

"In Brighton's view, Provost Leventhal is a very strong advocate for the library. Many of the faculty did not realize that she was pushing hard for its development," Brighton said.

There is an overall feeling of hope and optimism among many members of the faculty that some of their needs will finally be addressed, faculty said. Whatever actions the administration takes to make improvement, however remains to be seen.

"The first test to see if Brighton listened will be whether or not the faculty has a say in the process of finding a new Dean of the Faculty, in light of Dishner's resignation," added

Mazis. "After all, that is the person who should best represent our needs."

SGA forms committee on firearms

Matt Hunt
Capital Times Reporter

The Student Government Association is forming a new committee to explore the issue of allowing Campus Police officers to bear firearms in response to recent events on campus.

On Oct. 28, the SGA sent a memo to Provost Ruth Leventhal listing their recommendations for improving campus safety. The memo was written in response to official university reports of an alleged rape and assault on campus.

Among the times listed on the memo was a suggestion that all qualified officers be allowed to carry firearms.

At the Nov. 2 meeting of SGA the issue of arming Police Services was

discussed at length.

After much debate back and forth evaluating the pros and cons of the issue, Todd DeBoard, SGA president, moved that a committee be formed to study the problem.

"The committee will survey the students and see if they would be in favor of doing it (allowing Police Services to bear firearms)," DeBoard said.

The motion passed.

Once the committee finishes surveying the student body, it will make a report to the administration, DeBoard said.

The committee is still being formed at present.

Nudity in art discussed at symposium

Dawn Kopecki
Capital Times Reporter

Controversy over male nudity in the recent exhibition "Postmodern Metamorphoses" culminated in a symposium headed by a panel of art experts and humanities faculty members in the Gallery Lounge on Oct. 28th.

Jim Bostick's photographic exhibit spawned criticism and censorship attempts from administrators, panelists said.

Panelists included photographer and art historian Melody Davis, who recently published *The Male Nude in Contemporary Photography*, Stephan Salisbury, arts writer for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, David Accosta, founder of the Arts Emergency Coalition in Philadelphia and humanities faculty members Dr. Tace Hedrick, Dr. Suren Lalvani and Dr. Troy Thomas.

"Nudity generally makes people feel uneasy, especially male nudity," said Accosta, who also represents the board of directors of the National Campaign for Freedom of Expression, a national, non-profit advocacy group for the arts.

"However, this (the Gallery Lounge) is a university gallery.

"I guess the university has to decide whether their gallery is going to be a free gallery or something else determined by bureaucrats," he added.

According to Janet Widoff, coordinator of student activities, the Gallery Lounge is a multi-purpose facility and falls outside of the constraints of a traditional art gallery.

Once administrators found out that the exhibit was all nudes, they considered prohibited its showing, then they suggested moving the exhibit to a classroom. But Bostick resisted any censorship, and administrators finally decided to post warnings outside the Gallery Lounge.

"That label tells you to shut off part of your mind...It's telling you what to think before you have a chance to think," Davis said.

Administrators also moved special events to other areas on campus.

But many faculty, staff, students and the artist himself disagree.

"(The Gallery Lounge) needs to be just a gallery. The idea of a

multi-purpose space is fine, but art shouldn't be something that enhances an assembly room," Bostick said.

Male nude photography has come to the forefront with the rise of feminism, panelists said.

"It is men who were the producers, purchasers and ideal viewers of the female nude...From the 19th century onward, the female body is the primary spectacle," Davis said.

Panelists explained that men have always controlled various perceptions of women, and women have been subjected to the "male gaze."

The discomfort caused by male nudes stems from a power struggle between genders. Subjecting men to the female gaze disempowers them, panelists said.

"The penis is the seed of power in a patriarchal society...When the male is up there being looked at, that opens up its gaze...making it

vulnerable," said Hedrick, asst. professor of comparative literature and humanities.

"A man in a visually feminine position is most commonly

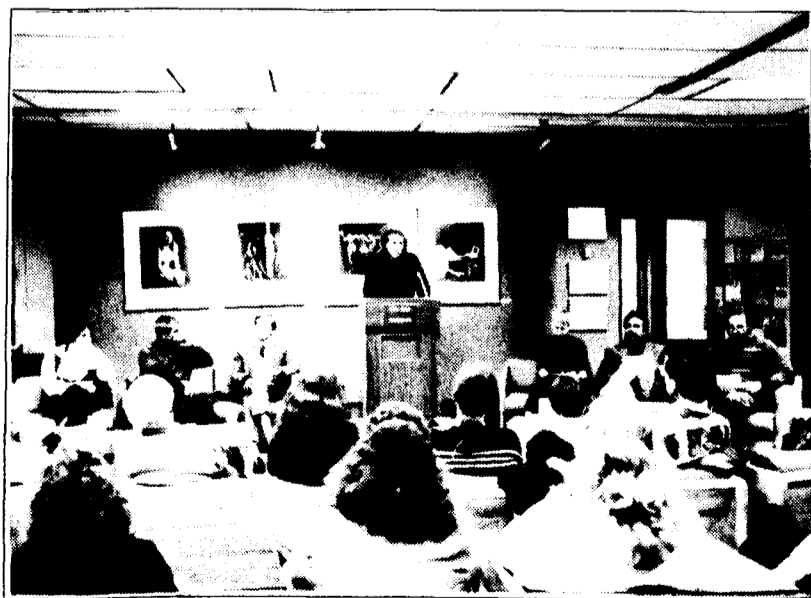
perceived either as a joke or a threat," Davis said.

Homo erotic images like Bostick's "Apollo and Hyacinthus" illicit outrage among many male viewers, panelists said.

The outrage felt in regards to male nudes "is an expression of perceived injustice," Davis said.

For years the phallus was symbolized through masculine imagery, she added. But it was never brought to the forefront until recent years when photographers like Robert Mapplethorpe revolutionized the male nude.

"Real genitals we were taught do not belong in art," she said. "They are pornography, part of the taboo which consume cultures peddle through billion dollar industries which feed what we want to see as dirty."



Jim Bostick defends his photo exhibit "Postmodern Metamorphoses" after it spawned criticism and censorship attempts from PSH administrators. Stephan Salisbury, Arts Writer for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, and David Accosta, founder of the Arts Emergency Coalition in Philadelphia, were among the panelists at this symposium.

Photo by
Michael Starkey