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New vehicle registration fee causes grumbling

Renee B. Jackson
Staff Writer

Penn State Harrisburg's new Vehicle Registration Program has caused some grumbling on campus because of the added fees for students, staff and faculty, but PSH officials say the program was necessary as part of the campus' long range plans.

For example, junior Joy Gross complained of the new fee, saying "There needs to be something done at the Harrisburg level to give additional funds to college and universities so they don't have to nickel and dime students to death."

Faculty members have concerns about the vehicle fee as well.

"It seems a little high for the fact that parking doesn't seem to be a problem," said Eugenia Fernandez, assistant professor of Information Systems. "I wonder why there isn't a distinction considering faculty pay more than students."

As for the Penn State system, the Harrisburg campus is somewhat unique in having what is typically referred to as a separate "parking fee." In fact, on the majority of Penn State's campuses, the fee does not exist as a charge outside the tuition.

Aside from University Park, only three campuses in the Penn State system, Penn State Harrisburg, Hershey Medical Center, and Behrend campus, have vehicle registration fees,

according to Douglas Holmes, manager of University Parking at University Park.

Robert Finley, Assistant to the Vice President for Business and Operations at University Park, said the 17 Penn State campuses considered to be Commonwealth campuses do not pay a separate charge as a vehicle registration fee. He said that at the Commonwealth campuses, their fees are incorporated into their tuition charges. According to Finley, this arrangement could not be applied to Penn State Harrisburg because tuition rates were already 100 percent of the University Park rate.

But at Harrisburg where the vehicle registration program has been in place since spring semester 1994, extensive planning went into the decision, along with considerations of long-range goals for the campus.

The plan for a vehicle registration fee began with the University Futures Committee, according to Dr. James South, Associate Provost for Administrative Operations. In considering the implementation of a user's fee, issues



Erik Hein

Olmsted parking lot awaits improvements from vehicle registration fees.

about the charge were involved. Those issues were: determining an amount based on other charges within the university, deciding what seemed reasonable, and trying to decide on an amount that would generate the necessary revenues.

The Rules and Regulations of the Vehicle Registration Program explain the program's mission to be the enhancement and maintenance of walkways, roadways, and parking

facilities for students, faculty, staff, and visitors. Included also is the re-coating and resurfacing of parking lots, curb installation, line painting, the usage and replacement of vehicles, snow removal and landscaping.

Last year, the vehicle registration funds went into work such as the upgrading of lighting throughout the campus, and the changing of the tennis courts into parking spaces, South said. Sidewalk construction

between the Capital Union Building and the Educational Activities Building was also done, South added.

However, some students complain that they see no evidence of changes in the parking services from the new fee.

"I want to know where the money's going?" questioned Jennifer Collins, a senior psychology major. "Last winter the parking lots

weren't plowed very well and sidewalks weren't salted. It's either park there or walk.

"Why is it that students living on campus must pay a parking fee along with tuition?" she added.

Looking toward the future, a "20 year Life-Cycle Funding Concept" has been adopted, South said. This concept looks ahead to maintenance and replacement. A "Physical Plant Master Plan" that involves ideas for

additional parking, sidewalks, and roads is also currently being updated, he said.

"This program looks at a longer time-line," South said. He explained that it allows the resources to be used as they are needed.

The Vehicle Registration Program has an advisory board made up of students, faculty, and staff, South said.

Sandra Jackson, Manager of Business Services, administers the Vehicle Registration Services and is responsible for police services.

"My role in the Vehicle Registration Program is really to coordinate the issuance of the permits whether it be visitors, students, faculty, or staff," Jackson said.

Her office receives the fees, keeps account of them and what is done with them, as well as handles administration of traffic citations that campus police issue.

"We got feedback from the community," Jackson said. "That's how we put this program together."

Jackson said her department met with the Student Government Association in forming the program's rules and regulations. A faculty senate committee on human resources and business services reviewed this process, along with a few administrators.

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Racial incident at PSU York leads to unity

Renee B. Jackson
Staff Writer

Penn State York experienced incidents between Oct. 19 and 20 that turned into a very emotional and highly publicized racial episode for the campus, but that seems to have ended in bringing the campus together in unity.

"We're trying to move forward from it—trying to make sure it doesn't happen again," Barbara Dennis, Public Information and Media Relations Specialist for the York campus, said.

Dennis said the incident involved all white students when it began. On Wednesday, Oct. 19, a white female student kicked the bookbag of a white male student. He responded by striking her with a physical blow. A male student intervened and in the course of the struggle, another female student was struck. The female students brought this problem to the attention of the Student Government Association president, Aaron West, who is an African-American Business major.

at the meeting was that no acts of racial intolerance would be tolerated on the campus. The students were in agreement, Dennis said.

The following Thursday, Oct. 27, the campus held a unity rally that was organized by Penn State York student Cathy Darling. Speakers at the rally included Aaron West, Michael Walker, president of the Black Student Union, Donald A Gogniat, Ph.D., Campus Executive Officer, and Darling. The event was held in the school's courtyard and the public was invited.

Penn State York tried to deal with this incident as a campus community, Dennis said. The school talked with the newspapers as there was nothing to hide.

Dennis said students had deep feelings about the racial slurs contained in the graffiti, and did not regard it as something to overlook.

"Because the slurs were so personally directed, people really rallied behind him," Dennis said of West. "This is a campus where we accept peoples' differences whether it's race, ethnic background—

"This is a campus where we accept peoples' differences whether it's race, ethnic background—whatever. We're trying to learn more about cultural differences." — Barbara Dennis, public information & media relations specialist.

West took the problem to campus administration and the police were called. The campus decided not to press charges in the situation, but to use the campus disciplinary system, Dennis said.

The next day, Thursday, Oct. 20, racial slurs directed at West were found written on the sidewalk in front of the main classroom building and on the wall outside of the student center.

Within a few hours, the school had the graffiti removed. The campus did file charges with Spring Garden Township police about the graffiti. That same day, a meeting was held at the campus that was attended by over 200 people, Dennis said. The administration's message

whatever. We're trying to learn more about cultural differences."

"I think it was a confined incident, involving maybe a few people," Eric Fetters, an engineering student at Penn State York, said. "It doesn't reflect the campus attitude."

"I felt the thing was blown out of proportion," Ali Naqui, a liberal arts student at Penn State York, said. "I don't think anybody on this campus is really racist. I don't think we have a serious racial problem."

West said that he was "very, very startled and shocked" by the racial aspect of the incident that focused directly on him. He pointed out that on a campus of a little over 1800

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New staff hired in Education department

Kimberly R. Roach
Staff Writer

Dr. Colleen Willard-Holt was recently hired as an assistant professor of education at Penn State Harrisburg.

"I was looking for a position like this, in an education department that was relatively small, because I like personal contact with my students," Dr. Willard-Holt said. "The other instructors gave me the impression that they were very concerned and caring for their students. That is very important to me."

Because Willard-Holt has only been here for a short period, she is not yet familiar with all aspects of the Education department. She does know, however, that she would like the department to focus more on a specific aspect of the courses.

"One thing that I'm concerned about is educational measurement," Willard-Holt said. "I don't see a lot of emphasis, at least not as a specific course, on educational measurement and evaluation methods at elementary schools, at the bachelor's level."

Willard-Holt has done

significant work with gifted children, as a teacher and trainer in Indiana, and as a consultant in gifted education. She is also interested in, and has done work with disabled children.

"My undergraduate degree was with special education and my dissertation study involved students who are physically disabled and are also gifted," Willard-Holt said. "So I try to talk to the 'Powers that Be' and get them to understand that a visible disability does not mean that there's an intellectual disability as well."

Willard-Holt received her Ph.D in Educational Psychology in



Dr. Colleen Willard-Holt

1993 from Purdue University. She has been teaching for approximately 15 years, in classrooms ranging from kindergarten to graduate school.

Originally from Wisconsin, Willard-Holt lives in Philadelphia with

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Two assaults occur on campus;

Unrelated incidents revive concerns of campus safety

Cathy Nolan
Staff Reporter

Two Penn State Harrisburg students have been assaulted on campus this semester in unrelated incidents, according to Police Services.

On Nov. 19, at approximately 2:30 A.M., a resident senior marketing major in Meade Heights reported she was changing for bed, when she heard a noise at her bedroom window.

When the student went outside to investigate, she said she saw a man, who claimed he had a gun.

The student then ran back inside her house, and called Police Services.

The assailant is described as a white man in his thirties, with short, dark hair and a moustache. He is approximately 5'7" tall, with a medium build. He was wearing a grey pullover sweatshirt and a dark jacket. The student said she saw no gun.

The student, who spoke with *The Capital Times* on condition of anonymity, said that, initially, she was told by Police Services to simply call back if the assailant returned.

The student then called some friends to pick her up. After she left, her roommate called 911. The Lower Swatara Twp. police and Police Services then responded, coming to the house to take a police report on the incident.

The student said that, even though Police Services was courteous when they arrived, she found it ridiculous that they were not going to come out to investigate the incident, until the Lower Swatara Police were involved in the incident.

University police Chief Charles Aleksy disagreed with the student's version of events. While he agreed most points coincided with the official police version, he disputed her claim that Police Services did not respond to her call immediately.

"They may have told her to call right away if anything else happened, while at her house," Aleksy said.

Aleksy said Police Services arrived at the same time Lower Swatara Twp. police. Police Services checked the grounds around the house, and continued spot sweeps throughout the night, he said. A composite picture will also be made, and surrounding municipalities have already been informed of the incident, Aleksy said.

Director of Public Information Steve Hevner said he was not informed of the incidents until contacted by *The Capital Times*, and will discuss the situation with Police Chief Aleksy. Hevner said that, in the past, Police Services and the Public Relations departments haven't worked closely, and that that practice must change.

"I am concerned and I will pursue this," Hevner said. "I'm as in the dark as anybody. If I'm to respond to concerns about incidents on campus, I need to be informed of what is happening."

The other incident on campus occurred on Nov. 1, according to a letter sent to campus residents by Residence Life Coordinator George Young. In the letter, Young stated

that a female resident of Church Hall reported to Police Services that she was sexually assaulted on two occasions in October by an invited guest.

After an investigation and consultation with the Dauphin County district Attorney's Office, the male was charged with aggravated indecent

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