

OPINION/EDITORIAL

Support Grows Among Students, Administrative Response Weak

First, we would like to thank everyone for their support for this issue. The resurrection issue really came together and we have learned a few things about where we would like to take *The Capital Times* over the coming months.

With some consistently contributing writers in our ranks, staffing has become our next priority. Co-editor Deborah Mallek has resigned for medical reasons and the paper is now guided by myself and the Business Manager, Christine Downs. However, we expect to begin assigning some leadership roles to our regular contributors, but are still looking for able hands to assist in photography and paper design. Those of you who have already volunteered (and you know who you are) will be contacted soon.

That was the good news. The bad news is college administration has still failed to show any interest in the survival of this paper. In funding, *The Capital Times* ranks dead last in comparison to other local colleges like Millersville, Elizabethtown College, and Harrisburg Area Community College. True, advertising is really our bread and butter, but after years of neglect, many of our regular advertisers have turned to other campus' publications for exposure in a more consistently supported newspaper. For good or evil, a school administration's interest in a campus publication is obvious from cover to cover. If you get a chance, pick up a *Millersville Snapper* or *E-townian* for a quick point of reference, it is clear that a college's priorities and goals for both its campus and communications department are well represented on the pages of such publications.

Below you will find reproductions of memos sent to the office of the provost regarding the future of *The Capital Times* and the communications program on this campus. We welcome dialog from our readers regarding this important issue.

Thank you again for your support.

PENN STATE CAPITAL COLLEGE
Harrisburg Campus
Inter-Office Memorandum
3 October 1997

TO: John G. Bruhn, Provost and Dean
Wayne D. Lammie, Campus Executive Officer, Schuylkill Campus
Michael J. Cardamone, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Affairs

FROM: Louise E. Hoffman, Associate Professor of Humanities and History, and faculty advisor to the *Capital Times*
Louise E. Hoffman

RE: The student newspaper and our Communications program

After 12 years on the Harrisburg faculty, 8+ years as advisor to journalism majors, and 2 1/2 years as advisor to the newspaper, I believe that the current crisis of the student newspaper reinforces the importance of the Communications program to the College. Strengthening that program would support the existence and quality of a college-wide student newspaper, which in turn represents the college both on and off campus.

Now more than ever, such a college-wide student voice is essential. It's needed to create a sense of community between the two campuses; to inform students at all locations of issues, events, and opportunities of possible importance or benefit to them; and to provide pre-professional experience for students in a range of majors, most notably Communications. It's always been hard to sustain such an enterprise at a predominantly commuter campus, but previous editors have partly concealed the problems by publishing less often or writing about the articles themselves. These editors have chosen shock tactics to motivate participants.

The turnover of print journalism faculty over the past 4 years has purely contributed to the current situation; our next hire must be someone who will stay and will have the commitment and skills to strengthen the paper. All communications faculty members have a special role to play in sustaining the paper, and this year, with only one continuing faculty member, the program is especially at a disadvantage. The size of the Communications student body and their unique contributions to the student newspaper and to area media outlets, argue for a strengthened program, for the sake of all students and the College as a whole.

cc: *Cap Times* editors
William J. Mahar

PENNSTATE
Capital College
Office of the Provost and Dean

MEMORANDUM

Date: October 7, 1997

From: John Bruhn

To: Louise Hoffman

Subject: Communications Program

Dear Louise:

Thank you for your letter, dated October 3, 1997, addressing the state of the student newspaper and the need for a print journalism faculty person.

I, like you, expect that as your School and the College discuss the direction of the Communications program in the coming weeks and months, coupled with the assistance of a professional survey research agency, we will be able to better serve our students and the region in the years ahead.

You, the current staff of the student newspaper, faculty of the School of Humanities, alumni and students will be very instrumental in forging the proper direction for this program in the future. I am sure that the survey agency will take into consideration all your concerns in making their recommendations. I know I will.

cc: M. Cardamone
W. Lammie
B. Mahar
Editors, *Capital Times*

State Government And Aids Policies: What Works

AIDS is not in the headlines as much as it used to be. But this disease has not yet finished exacting its toll on Americans. Recent reports do indicate that progress continues in developing drugs that slow the course of the disease—but these procedures are not cures. In fact, recent reports from Canada indicate that, for many afflicted with AIDS, the potent new three drug cocktails including protease inhibitors cease working after a period of time and the virus returns. Thus, the medical fix that we thought might be around the corner may not yet be here. What other options have we to combat the spread of AIDS?

To this point, one of the most effective weapons against the spread of AIDS has been policy choices made by governments, especially the state governments that have been on the front lines in the war against AIDS. Little is known, though, about the effectiveness of state AIDS policies.

Recently, a colleague of mine from Northern Illinois University, Dr. James Schubert, and I carried out a study to determine the effects of state AIDS policies. The results are extremely interesting, because they suggest strongly that conscious choices made by the states have had an effect on the trends in AIDS cases within state boundaries.

First, though, a word on definitions. Two basic choices exist in public health efforts—"inclusion" policy and "containment" policy. Inclusion policy does what it says—includes a variety of people and groups in policy-making. AIDS policy is based on voluntarism. One example would be public education campaigns designed in part by at-risk groups on how to change behavior in such a way as to reduce the odds of infection. Another example is voluntary testing and counseling programs, where people are counseled during the process of testing for the HIV virus. The privacy of infected individuals is closely protected under this approach.

Containment is the classical public health model. For instance, locate carriers of the virus and isolate them (quarantine them or criminalize transmission of the virus and lock them away); develop a list of all those who are infected and aggressively notify and test sexual partners. In this manner, the spread of the disease would be halted.

At any rate, Schubert and I gathered information on laws passed by the fifty states

with respect to AIDS. We calculated what the incidence of AIDS would have been expected to be in the middle 1990s if the trends from the 1980s continued in each state. And we found the following:

"Inclusive" tactics in legislation work—old-fashioned "containment" policies do not. Again, recall, inclusion stresses voluntarism in trying to get HIV+ people or People with AIDS (PWAs) (and other at-risk groups as well) involved in slowing the spread of transmission. States emphasizing inclusion policies had a lower level of AIDS cases in the 1990s than would have been expected.

Spending by states on treatment of PWAs reduces incidence. That is, states spending more money on treatment have a slower growth in the number of AIDS cases than those states spending less.

States that reacted the quickest early on, that passed AIDS laws fairly soon after the epidemic began, have lower incidence rates in the 1990s than one would expect. Thus, early action appears to have had a positive effect on the course of the epidemic.

One key lesson: the punitive containment approach advocated by some "hard-nosed" political actors is not effective, at least according to our results. Jesse Helms says that we ought to cut spending and punish people engaging in disgusting behavior. Many people would say that it is common sense to use mandatory testing and aggressive measures to isolate those with the virus to prevent the spread of AIDS.

But more voluntaristic methods appear to work better; if you want to contain AIDS, you won't be as successful using punitive policies. Ours is one of the first rigorous studies to indicate that state government decisions have had an effect on slowing the spread of AIDS. Those states that have carried out inclusion policies (rather than containment policies) and responded more rapidly to the virus have AIDS incidence levels below what one would have expected. Of course, states that made other choices—including doing nothing—ended up with higher incidence levels of AIDS.

Steven A. Peterson
Director, School of Public Affairs
Professor of Politics and Public Affairs

Letters

Dear Editor:

I empathize with your plight at *The Capital Times*. As an editor and publisher I, too, have been faced with the potential necessity to close a beloved publication. But our college newspaper is in a special position reserved only for student publications: *The Capital Times* does not appear to be in danger of closing for lack of financial support. In fact, your only mention of money in the last heartfelt issue was simply your concern that taking on the protection of a particular division or college agency would compromise the paper's Constitutionally-guaranteed right of free expression.

The last time I taught media law, the general judicial consensus in place was that student publications which accept space, materials and other forms of support from their colleges are not guaranteed quite the same rights as totally independent presses. Their colleges could most definitely rescind all support, including the opportunity to distribute on college property, for any reason at all, including administrative disagreement with editorial policy. There is, then, no guaranteed right for a publication to exist, a fact independent presses face every day.

In a way, those independent presses earn their right to sound off by paying their own way. Does *The Capital Times*? The office in Olmsted indicates it does not, at least not totally. Should the college administration

wish for any reason to stop supporting the newspaper, could the paper move and set up again on its own? And if not, what's the big problem with becoming affiliated with a division or agency, or several, which may be able to help guide the publication toward a future? If the goal of a student publication is at least in part to provide experience akin to that which is needed in the real world and workplace, why not put as a primary priority the simple continuing existence of the opportunity? Negotiate the terms as you go; stand up for your rights to free speech then. As a student publication already receiving college support, *The Capital Times'* independent voice has already been compromised, but to a reasonably acceptable extent considering the realities of publication operations.

Every commercial newspaper staff makes some decisions based on the publication's financial survival. If the survival of *The Capital Times* is your priority, get all the help you can, take it graciously and get on with the good work. And hang on to your fear of being hobbled by the diverse and often conflicting concerns of a potentially supportive college community; a little fear keeps a good journalist's work clean and substantive.

Bim Harrison
Adjunct, English

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Capital Times

Jeffrey C. Warren
Editor

Christine M. Downs
Business Manager

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The Capital Times welcomes signed letters from readers. No unsigned submission will be reprinted, however a writer's name may be withheld upon request and by approval of the co-editors.

You may reach The Capital Times at Penn State Harrisburg Campus, Olmsted Building, W-341, 777 W. Harrisburg Pike, Middletown, PA 17057, phone at (717) 948-6440, or via e-mail at captimes@hotmail.com.

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