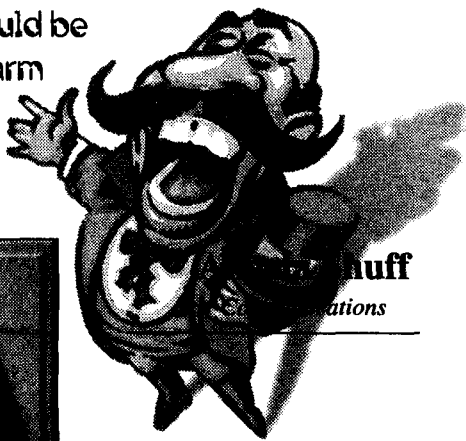


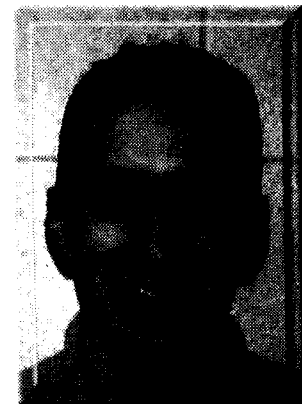


"If you could be somewhere warm right now, where would it be?"



"Sitting in a hot tub in the snowy mountains."

Garett Nell
Computer Science



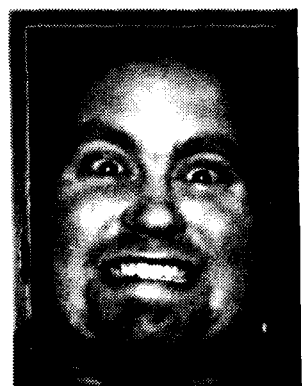
"Asleep on the beach in Southern California."

Chrissy Meck
English



"On the sun."

Vid Lynch
Communications



"Hell."

MJ Meredith
Interdisciplinary Humanities

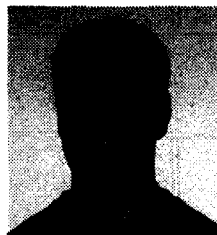


"Jamaica."

The Motherload

How some students manage to take more than 20 credits a semester

by Peter Stella
Assistant Layout Editor



We've all had those nights. It almost seems like your teachers collaborated to make the most tedious assignments due on the same day. You can hear them laughing at you as you stay up all night, gulping down your caffeinated beverage of choice, and slaving away to get three papers done in one night.

The average student is all too familiar with the aforementioned scenario. Many students are busy enough taking 15 credits per semester and working a part-time job. Yet a handful of Penn State Harrisburg students have decided that 15 credits is not enough. For one reason or another, they have decided to take over 20 credits this semester in addition to working at a part-time job or internship.

Mark Lunasin is a 22-year-old computer science major who is taking 21 credits this semester. "I remember one night last semester when I had four things due the next day," said "I worked on them all day, but then I decided to go out and party for a little." When Lunasin came home, he stayed up all night to complete two papers along with calculus and chemistry homework due the next day.

In addition to his 21 credits, Lunasin makes an hour and a half drive to New Jersey every weekend to work and visit his girlfriend. It adds 20 hours of work and travel to his already busy schedule. "I don't have that much free time," said Lunasin. "I make free time. Maybe sometimes I'll sacrifice doing homework and go to the bar or something." Lunasin said he just wants to "get out of here and be done with school."

Jolynn Ruppert, a 21-year-old applied behavioral science major, has a schedule very similar to Lunasin. She is taking 22 credits and makes a 30-minute commute to serve tables at Ruby Tuesdays on the weekends. Her courseload also includes a three-credit internship at Red Lion Senior High School in York.

Ruppert said the key to handling the heavy workload is good time management and "being able to have time for yourself, even if it's just an hour a day."

So why would students willingly put themselves into such a stressful situation?

Ruppert said she wants to lessen the load for her final semester in the spring, when she plans to take 12 credits. In addition, she increased her courseload when she decided on a

Another student, who requested to remain anonymous, said he could not afford to pay another semester's tuition. The student is taking eight courses so he can graduate in May. On top of that, he does not have a car. "My mom drives me to school everyday."

Franie McClellan, a 30-year-old criminal justice major, said she relies on scheduling her time and having the discipline to stick to the schedule. Another key is, "making sure that when I have the big test in one course, I'm not ignoring what I have to do for other courses."

McClellan is taking 23 credits this semester, after taking 23 and a half credits in the fall. "My goal was to finish in three years," said McClellan. "I'm older. And when I decided what I wanted to do, I wanted to get my education out of the way and start working."

Taking 20+ credits

Fact: The official highest number of credits being taken this semester is 23. The highest in recent years is 25.

Fact: Through on-line registration, students can avoid the requirement of getting an advisor's signature to take over 20 credits. There are students currently on campus taking over 25 credits.

McClellan said she works 20 to 30 hours a week for police services and, to top it off, commutes thirty to forty five minutes daily from Carlisle.

McClellan rarely gets stressed out despite the heavy workload. She credits this to breaking her projects into sections and working on them one piece at a time. She also makes sure to read her syllabus at the start of the semester to anticipate big assignments. Her method worked well enough last semester so that she did not stay up all not studying at all. "There weren't that many late nights either," she said.

In addition, the heavy courseload has not hurt her grades, it has helped them. "Last semester was my heaviest semester. It was also my best semester so far."

All students who are taking over 20 credits are required to get their advisor's approval. But with on-line course registration, many students are able to get around this without a penalty. "I'm going off of what students tell me, but I think it's a shame because they think they can do it, but some of them become overwhelmed," said Cindy Leach, a humanities staff assistant. "I just think it's too much."