

opinion

A love for Penn State Harrisburg

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PSH offers the intimacy of a small university, with the possibilities of a large university. Over the past three years that I have been here, I have seen the campus grow and evolve into what it is today. I watched clubs like Circle K die out, and clubs like Blue and White practically take campus by storm. I have watched the first chartered fraternity spring Greek life on to campus; and how much work was put into it. And I have done it all from an editor's chair.

This unique experience has given me to opportunity to speak with

students from all walks of life and with faculty and staff. I have been behind the scenes, planning events, and attending events. I know that three years is not a long period of time, but being involved as I have been in those three years, I have gained a wealth of knowledge about this campus. Many write off Penn State Harrisburg as boring and do not treat it as a real college campus. I believe that Penn State Harrisburg is the perfect combination of academics and activities; you just have to make it what you want it to be.

I will admit that there are flaws with PSH, as there are with any campus. But listen up dear readers: you are making history. PSH

started accepting freshmen less than 10 years ago, and the dorms were built even more recently than that. This campus was booming in the 1970s, having 24-hour rock fests and the like. That was only with a small population of juniors, seniors and graduate students. Now, with over 4,000 undergrad students, the possibilities are endless, anything you want to see on campus, can happen. (If cleared with Melinda, and Risk Management of course).

As students, you have access to two large pots of money to host events, SGA and SAF. If you are involved in a club and would like to sponsor an event, such as a pizza party, dodge ball tournament or a

trip; all you have to do is submit a proposal to SGA. SAF allows individual students in addition to clubs to submit proposals.

I do not like hearing that there is nothing to do on campus. If you want a more active Greek life, start a sorority or fraternity. If you want a certain comedian to come and perform, SAF the funds and host the event. If you do not want to have the responsibility of hosting an event by yourself, or do not know how to properly SAF an event, the Student Activities office will be glad to help you through your adventure.

Social experiences are not the only thing that makes PSH the best around. The academics here are

rigorous, and the career resources are almost endless. I am currently a Political Science major and could not ask for a better place. Former state representatives and leaders in the field teach policy classes; and, what better place to study politics than in a state capitol? Classes are small, especially when you get into higher-level classes, and I have never encountered a professor who was not available for extra help on class-work.

PSH is constantly changing for the better. With addition of new dorms, admission of more students and growing campus pride, I cannot wait to see what the campus looks like in the next three years.

Seeking silence in campus library for serious study

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"Shhhh!" This is a common sound one may hear in the movie theater when people carry on a full conversation in the middle of a feature presentation. It is annoying and rude when others interrupt the show by talking or answering a cell phone.

However, the movie theater is not the only place one risks running into disregard for necessary silence.

PSU Harrisburg has a three-story building with computers and books in it, as well as other useful nooks such as classrooms, a concessions wall, and cubicles.

You guessed it: the library! If you frequent there often, you may notice that it is sometimes difficult to find a place to study in peace.

Let us say that you factor a few hours of school work that you would like to finish—away from the noise of your roommates, away from the clutter of your apartment, and away from the hub of the Stacks Market crowd.

You figure that the library is the best place to go since you have a limited amount of time on this particular day.

So, with a focused mind and planned-out schedule, you enter this rotunda-like building. You

first notice the CyberCafé to your left. Seems like a cozy area with a few computers, tables, chairs, and vending machines. You might even catch a puzzle in mid-completion. Tall windows allow the sun to warm the room with its rays.

All is well until a group of new-to-college students come in to work on a project. Fine. The long tables signal that group work is an acceptable practice in this area. You simply pick up your things and move yourself to the first floor of the actual library.

Here, you will see the check-out counters (otherwise known as circulation and reserve desks), a collection of computers (in technical terms: workstations at pinwheel carrels), the reference section (i.e., stacks), and study desks on both sides of the floor. Since students converse audibly at the computers, you move to the left side, furnished solely by cubicles and tables.

After a short time, you realize that the copy machine is a popular spot for second-year students who prepare for their group project.

Additionally, several third-year students treat the video area like your neighborhood movie rental place, airing their uncertainties about selections to make.

Understood. The first floor arguably offers the most things to

do.

Making your way up to the second floor, you are ready to buckle down and accomplish some studying. Lining the shelves are bound periodicals galore, and you assume people will not need to reference these anytime soon.

What you did not realize, though, is that the machine to view microforms is located here, and *that*, believe it or not, *is* in use.

Although a soundless device, the microform excites the mid-career student-user. He is not so soundless. Up and down, to the table, to the counter, turning pages, scribbling notes. While amusing to watch, it's not what you came here to do.

So, up one more flight you go. Ah! There's a sign on this floor that reads "This floor is for study purposes only." At last! A place reserved for you, the serious studier.

You settle into a private study desk by the window. Lots of space, lots of privacy. Lots of quiet.

Some time elapses. You get in a good half hour and then—*Riiing! Riiing!* Not just the entreaty of a cell phone but the answer as well: "Hey! I was waiting for your call! About Friday..."

Okay. Sometimes you have to answer your cell phone in public, too. Sometimes it is unavoidable.

So, you give this fourth-year

student a few minutes to inform her caller that she is in a library and that she will call back soon—or better yet, to go to the first floor where people are already using electronic devices.

But, no. You now know how many people she is expecting and what kind of chips she wants to provide at the shindig. Oh, the best is coming!

Up the stairs, her caller proceeds, accompanied by three other gals. "Study purposes" now includes preparation for a weekend social gathering.

There is one more place calling to you, one last means of escape. You heard rumors of group study rooms existing somewhere on the third floor, and you aim to seek them out.

Although you are only one and not many, you reason that if anyone demands where the rest of your group is, you will simply explain your adventure. Anyone is bound to understand why you, a lone worker, are using a space reserved for multiple people.

You discover the rooms of legend and enter one, closing the door behind you. Once and for all, you drop your bag, spread out your books, and get down to business.

One last problem arises: you can hear through the walls! Apparently, a true-to-life group

study session is happening next to you, with a heated discussion and all about who is giving what part of the presentation.

You wonder if it is you, if you have a problem with focusing. Maybe your attention span is only eager to excuse itself from your real job at hand.

Or perhaps it is the shifting culture norms of library etiquette that distracts you.

I am in that latter boat if you want to join me. Libraries exist for people to gain and use knowledge without having to battle the distractions of purposeless talking and noises.

Volume tolerances have adjusted to the era of group work and keyboards; however, there's a line with everything, and I am still searching for where it is supposed to be drawn in the sands of library land.

I used to think that libraries could be counted on to be peaceful (even a bit holy if we want to go *that* far), no matter the time of day.

Perhaps PSU Harrisburg should offer its students a traditional student union (Stacks is an eatery, hardly a student union) in an effort to divert, from the library, students who seek social opportunities. In the meantime, be prepared for a possibly futile three-story trek through talkersville on your quest for silent study time.