

President Oswald Visits Highacres Speaks on Tuition Increase

By James Durso

President John W. Oswald held an informal "rap session" May 9, before an assembled group of about 100.

After several preliminary remarks in which he stressed the importance of the branch campus, or as he put it, "foundation campuses." President Oswald got down to brass tacks on two issues on the minds of many students: the current University financial status, and the establishment of the Public Interest Research Group (PIRG) at Penn State.

President Oswald explained that for the upcoming fiscal year, beginning July 1, the University requested a 20 million dollar budget increase over last year, citing inflation as the reason for 90 percent of the increases. The additional budget request was based on no planned tuition increases for the upcoming academic year. Governor Shapp, however, provided only an additional \$5 million and extended the time the money must last from 12 to 15 months.

According to Pres. Oswald, this forced the University to initiate a program and salary-cut bids, and to plan a tuition hike. Two chief causes for the present situation, declared Oswald, were the state's constitutional obligation to maintain a balanced budget and the traditional lack of public support in Pennsylvania for state-supported institutions.

Pres. Oswald noted a great difference in the attitudes of the various campuses over the establishment of PennPIRG to be an excellent program and not wholly lacking in educational merit. In addition, he stated that the Board of Trustees could, under certain conditions, collect money for PennPIRG, but declared that PennPIRG should disassociate itself from the University.

Pres. Oswald noted that the only major stumbling blocks on the way to the establishment of PIRG at Penn State was a disagreement over the manner of founding.

Pres. Oswald stated his position as being that PennPIRG

should be made available for every student on a voluntary basis.

Ralph Nader and the Penn PIRG organizers, however propose a \$2 increase on every student's bill, leaving to the student the option of prepaying and filing forms in order to get his money back, should be not desire the service. Another group has proposed that the \$2 increase be invalid in the bill, but the students be allowed an area on the bill to "check-off" the additional \$2 if they wish to do so.

Pres. Oswald declared that student apathy give money to an organization unless that students express a clear desire to contribute voluntarily. Oswald noted that many students don't want to put up with the "hassle" of filling out the nec-

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