

# Opinions and Comments

## A Failing Grading System?

The grading system of Penn State is certainly familiar to each and every student attending Highacres. The system is 90-100—A, 80-89—B, 70-79—C, 60-69—D, and below 60 is failing. It is one of those systems that few students question. However, it does have its weaknesses.

The system, as it now stands, is too general, and it does not give a true measurement of a student's achievement during a term. For example, student A and student B have the same class. Student A finishes the term with an 82 average while student B finishes with an 87 average. According to the present system, both students will receive a B for the course which does not give an accurate picture of the total achievement of the students.

To correct this situation, it is necessary to incorporate into the present grading system B+, C+, and D+. The system would be set up something like this: 90-100—A, 85-89—B+, 80-84—B, 75-79—C+, 70-74—C, 65-59—D+, 60-64—D. Returning to the above example, student A would receive a B as a final letter grade while student B would receive a B+. This shows that student B had a higher achievement than student A rather than the same achievement.

Another proposed system would be as follows: 95-100—A, 90-94—B+, 85-89—B, 80-84—C+, 75-79—C, 70-74—D+, 65-69—D. Students should be aware, however, that this system would present several difficulties. The main one would be, of course, the difficulty of obtaining an A. In addition, someone whose average is an 84 is already in the C range. For these reasons, we feel, the first system is the better of the two.

No matter which system is used, it would be better than our present one, and we feel this is a needed change at Penn State. What do you think?

## From The Editor's Desk

One thing we find most astonishing at Highacres is that many journalism majors on campus do not become involved with their campus newspaper. We cannot say whether this situation is typical of other colleges; but in discussions with some other Penn State branch campus editors, we were told that similar situations do exist at their campuses. The reasoning behind a journalism-bound student's decision to not work on his college newspaper staff would seem to indicate that he has no real desire to become a journalist. If a student, fits into the latter category, then he should not waste his time preparing for a career in journalism.

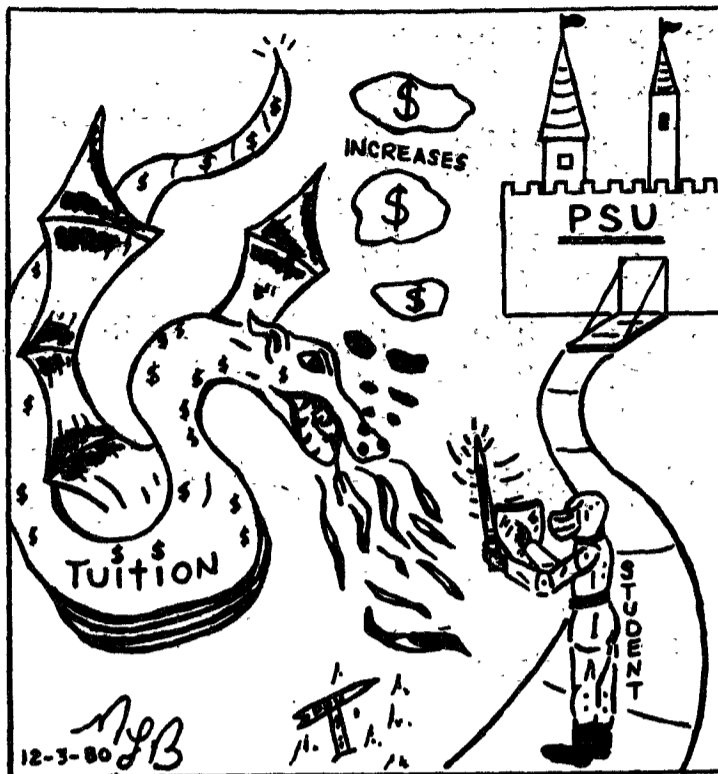
Why is being on a college newspaper staff so important for a journalism-bound student? Here are three good reasons, but there are more: Experience, exposure, and competition.

On-the-job experience that a staff reporter gets is almost limitlessly beneficial and useful. By interviewing campus officials, faculty members, and students, the college reporter practices his style of reporting; if he wants to change his style of reporting or work on it to his satisfaction, there is no better

place to do so than at college. A college reporter can pick up many of the "tools of the trade," for instance, the rules governing journalistic form and style, the terminology associated with journalism, and more. Also, a former staff member can list his college newspaper experience on a job resume when applying for work after college.

The exposure of a reporter to the different people he encounters will help him to round out his personality, to discover new insights, to share ideas, to cooperate with other people, to mature and discover himself. All this comes from working on a college newspaper staff.

Competition is what survival is all about; it is a very real and important part of everyday life. Plants compete for water, sunlight, and soil. Animals compete for food and shelter. As students, we know what it is like to compete for grades. Working on a newspaper staff also involves competition. Writers compete to get their articles printed. The best writers survive, in a sense, and move up the evolutionary ladder to become the reporters and editors of tomorrow.



## New term brings new opportunities

Many students, looking back on the fall term, realize that it may have been less frenetic had they not postponed major writing assignments and other term projects until the last week. Regardless of its outcome, the fall term is gone — for some, immortalized; for others, dead and deeply buried — but this term may yet be salvageable.

The first step is to organize and space the work load. Acquire one of those appointment calendars and mark all assignments on the due dates. If a teacher is unable to give the exact date of a test or essay, estimate the approximate date and make the notation. Since professors rarely consult with one another about the timing of course assignments and since many give mid-term and final exams, the fifth and tenth weeks of the term will probably have many listings, while the other weeks may be relatively free, except, perhaps, for those never-ending English comp assignments. Probably some of the work can be completed, or almost completed, well before the due dates. Certainly, those assignments involving outside research belong in this category. Students who write and type these assignments early in the term usually avoid sleepless nights and poor grades.

Another way to salvage the term is to realize that it won't improve by itself. Students who are

not satisfied with writing or test results should make an appointment with the teacher as soon as possible. Even the best teachers can rarely help failing students in the ninth or tenth week of the term. If problems are understood and goals are clarified early in the term, the possibility of more successfully completing the term increases.

College is not a system designed by teachers to give students ulcers. It is, among other things, a "space" for thinking about and experimenting with ideas, systems of organization, and priorities. No one has to give up partying, dating, or sports to be a "good" student. But students who manage to avoid conflicts between these activities and due assignments will probably be more satisfied with the results of this term's efforts than they were with last term's achievements.

## Community values Highacres library

The library at the Hazleton Campus of the Pennsylvania State University is a very valuable asset to our community. The library serves many high school students, engineers, professionals, and other members of the community.

In addition, the library also lends Audio Visual equipment to the local organizations of the Hazleton Area.

The library is also noted for the permanent art collection. The art works include prints of water colors and oil paintings, sculptures, photography, lithographs, and etchings. The collection includes works by many local as well as international artists. Assistant Librarian, Kathleen Stone is presently compiling an art catalog of the art work found in the library.

Recently, the library was visited by Miss Barbara Smith, coordinator of the Commonwealth Campus Libraries and Mrs. Suzanne Streidrick, chief of Bibliographic Services, University Park, and Commonwealth Campuses.

While at the Hazleton Campus library Mrs. Streidrick checked the card catalog so that it will concur with the card catalog at University Park; the catalogs will be on a computerized system starting January 1, 1981. All commonwealth campuses will be receiving new booklists on microfilm. The commonwealth campuses will be using the computerized system for interlibrary loan. The Highacres campus library may be linked to University Park on this computerized system, giving students here access to the vast resources of information at the main campus.

In the future, all commonwealth campuses will be using the computerized card catalog system.

The Highacres Collegian prints letters to the editor.



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