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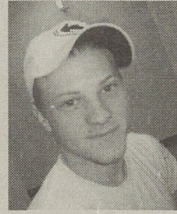
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The Mont Alto Myth: You Don't Have to be Bored

Travis Johnson

Penn State Mont Alto has been my home for the past seven months. I'm not complaining, though there is the occasional exam and the classic late night rush to finish a paper. But these are a part of "the college experience."

When I began my search for a college during my junior year of high school, there were two main factors that would



influence my decision: First and foremost, I wanted to attend a school with a great reputation and big name. Secondly, I wanted to have opportunities similar to those I had in high school. I wanted to be able to write for a newspaper and participate in intramural sports. I wasn't sure if I would get those chances here, as it was a small school with a small student population. I can now say my fears about Mont Alto were unwarranted. Here is the biggest socially downcast myth about Mont Alto and why it is untrue.

I asked Mont Alto Hall students what they thought about the campus and the opportunities it offered them. Many shared similar feelings; "Mont Alto doesn't offer anything that interests me." This is never true at any college! I believe there are more chances at other larger campuses to participate in more organizations due to the size of the student population, for example, I would love to play hockey for Altoona or University Park. There aren't many hockey players here. This is due, in part, to where Mont Alto pulls students from. So the current attitude is that there isn't a club that interests you and you can't do anything about it. Ah ha! A solution! Talk to someone about joining an existing organization or possibly forming a new club that expresses your and other potential members' interests. It is crucial to your college experience that you meet many new people who share the same opinions and interests as you. Mont Alto offers clubs as other campuses do. The only downfall is that it may be difficult to form such a special interest group since the campus has a smaller pool of students to pull from.

I have asked my friends who are students here, "How was your weekend?" I get the same reply almost every time by

students who stay on campus; "It was boring. No one was here!"

I work back home on weekends, and I know most students go home or maybe take a trip to another campus. Many students go to University Park to watch a football game, concert, or to visit friends. Again the reason for this is simple. Mont Alto is a small school in which the student population that attends class here comes from a relatively close radius. Myself, I live just thirty to forty-five minutes from campus. Obviously this is a trade-off for the students that come from farther away. There may be some lonely weekends; however we all have to look at the big picture.

We must stop looking at what we don't have, because this will only make us wish we were somewhere else. We can't preoccupy ourselves with thoughts that the Millstream closes early on weekends, therefore, we can't eat late. If we were to do that, we may not realize they're serving our favorite food for the time they are open, and we would miss out on that. Instead we must look at what we do have. We live on a beautiful campus; the weather is great for sledding in the winter and great for just about anything in the fall and spring, our dorms are close to our classes and our cafeteria. This is a small campus so it is easy to meet new people and share interests. Honestly, I think I've met more people here in the shortest span of time in my life. The majority of us will be transferring to University Park, and anyone who's ever been to a football game at Beaver Stadium, seen a concert at the Bryce Jordan Center, or just walked around the campus, you know how big it is. I imagine I will be overwhelmed my first semester at UP and I will look back on my time at Mont Alto as "the good old days."

Penn State Restructuring to Take Place in July

Christina Green

On March 22nd, University Park administrators announced that Penn State will have a new organizational structure as of July 1st. Mont Alto, along with all Commonwealth campuses, will be directly affected by the changes. At the General Assembly meeting on Thursday, April 7th, David Gnage, Mont Alto CEO, and Andrea Christopher, Director of Student Affairs, explained that the changes will generally not affect the way existing Mont Alto students receive their education, and that the restructuring will be an improvement for our campus in the future.

The reason for the restructuring is that Penn State University has become one of the most complex institutions of higher education in the nation. The restructuring of the university will grant all Penn State campuses, including Mont Alto, better opportunities to share funds and other resources, as well as better representation at the highest levels of university decision-making. Penn State President, Graham B. Spanier, stated that, "This restructuring will allow Penn State to adjust better to changing demographics

and the competitive realities in the coming years, and it will position the University to take maximum advantage of the strength of its administrative resources."

The current system that Penn State operates under was established in 1996. In the plan, there are six academic colleges outside of University Park: Altoona College, Abington College, Behrend College (Erie), Berks-Lehigh Valley College, Capital College (Harrisburg and Schuylkill), and the Commonwealth College (twelve campuses, including Mont Alto). Since then, Penn State has recognized the need for change in the system to meet current challenges, and to balance campus goals and University goals simultaneously.

With the restructuring, Mont Alto and the other campuses within the Commonwealth will join seven other Penn State campuses to make up what will be known as the University College. The current CEOs at the Commonwealth campuses, including Gnage, will have new titles as campus chancellors, which is a more traditional title for campus leaders of other institutions at the University

level. They will report to the new vice president for the University College, John Romano, who currently serves as vice provost and dean for Enrollment Management and Administration. This new administrative organization will increase interaction and support of functions across all Penn State campuses.

Gnage maintains that the relationship of Mont Alto within the University College system will allow the campus to strengthen current academic programs and access more resources and capabilities of the university. Although tuition will be increased next academic year, the restructuring has no direct influence over the cost of tuition. The changes should be transparent to Mont Alto students; however, graduates after July 2005 will receive diplomas from the University College as opposed to the Commonwealth College.

For a more detailed press release of the restructuring announcement from University Park, access <http://live.psu.edu/story/11049> online.