



The Fourth Wall Omnes vocem habent

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Some Residential Students Unhappy with Other Student Smokers

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Smoking is a huge risk for any college student. The American Journal of Public Health states 1 in 10 college students will become a smoker.

A Penn State 2004 Student Smoking survey shows that 85.6% believed smoking should not be allowed in campus buildings, 62.4%

responded that smoking should not be allowed in restaurants, 35.9% said it should be allowed in some areas, and 28% were aware of the Penn State policy banning smoking near most campus buildings. When students were asked to describe their current smoking behavior, 72.7%

responded they don't smoke; 13% smoked mostly in social situations; 7.7% smoked cigarettes every day; 3.7% used to smoke but quit; and 2.9% smoked occasionally. When asked a series of questions about their smoking behavior, 37.5% typically smoked 5 or more cigarettes on the days they smoked.

According to the student smoking survey 76% smoked before coming to Penn State, 42.5% indicated their smoking increased since coming to Penn State, 56.1% responded that their smoking always coincides with drinking alcohol, 65.7% have smoked at least 100 cigarettes in their lives. When students were asked about their

tobacco use in the last thirty days there had been a decline in tobacco use among undergraduate students since 1999. In 2004, 23% smoked a cigarette while in 1999 37.3% smoked a cigarette, 3.1% used chewing tobacco, while in 1999 8.7% used chewing tobacco,

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Chancellor Speaks: Budget Reduction?

As a result of a decrease in enrollment university-wide, Penn State's overall revenue is down, which means that less money will be allocated to the colleges, administrative units, and campuses. In response to the deficit experienced by all Penn State campuses, President Spanier has instructed every college at every administration level to evaluate expenditures and cut where possible.

The Mont Alto campus alone receives almost \$7 million; however, in January the campus still faced a \$138,000 permanent budget reduction. The Chancellor, Dr. David Gnage, charged a committee of faculty and staff to assess the 2006-07 Mont Alto budget in order to make recommendations for reductions. The committee took as its core principle that any cuts must have no effect on the quality of the students' education.

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The committee's recommendations were announced the week of February 14. There were rumors of potential lay-offs, but enough savings were found within departmental allotments (such as Information Technology and Enrollment Management) and a number of other measures that nothing so drastic was needed. Some currently unfilled positions will be left vacant for the time being, however, and a tightened, more efficient schedule of course offerings was prepared for the coming year. No core courses or curricular requirements are jeopardized.

At the same time, there was also good news: Director of Academic Affairs Dr. Francis Achampong was able to secure the committee's recommendation to fund a new position, a full-time instructor of Spanish.

The budget cut does not necessarily compromise the

Start Smart Program Yielding Results

Research from the previous two years indicates that students who participate in Start Smart have more positive academic experiences when compared to those students who qualify but choose not to participate. From last year's data, Start Smart students had a 2004 fall semester average GPA of 2.69 and a 2005 spring semester GPA of 2.76 compared to the control group's GPA of 2.52 and 2.33. This data is supported by students' comments about their experience in Start Smart. Students said they benefited by:

"Seeing that my needs were being met."

"I improved on several things like studying and working together, and I came to college hoping that I wouldn't become lost as to what is going on around me, and I didn't."

"I know I always had help if I needed it."

According to the National Center for Education Statistics the average six-year bachelor degree completion rate is slightly greater than 50%. In 1983 Penn State University created the Equal Opportunity Planning Committee in response to a federal mandate and as a part of its desire to be a caring community. The mission of the Equal Opportunity Planning Committee is to promote greater equity within the university. To that end, EOPC oversees the allocation of funds to Mont Alto and other campuses for new and continuing programs aimed at supporting equity at Penn State University.

Equity and diversity have been part of the mission and philosophy of the university from its origins. To achieve its mission Penn State created "A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State 2004-09." The framework identifies seven

challenges. Among those challenges are "Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body." In taking on that challenge, Penn State Mont Alto created "Start Smart," now in its third year. Each year the program has been funded in part by a grant from the Equal Opportunity Planning Committee and by Penn State Mont Alto.

In promoting equity and diversity, Start Smart works closely with traditionally underrepresented groups of students: African-American, Hispanic, and first generation college students. Students who qualify for this program take a group of common courses designed to lay a strong foundation for academic success and to create a sense of community among students and the university. Start Smart students are also provided with

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