

Commonwealth Students Philosophize On the Theory of Intelligent Design and More

CCSG Contributor

The Philosophy Club departed from their usual Tuesday morning meeting to discuss the facts about "Intelligent Design," evolution, and Creationism. These facts were questioned and discussed among members of the Philosophy Club and the Nittany Christian Fellowship (NCF) in the gazebo on the Delco campus. The discussion was lead by the Philosophy Club's advisor, Dr. David Macauley. One recent event discussed at this meeting was the on-going federal trial currently taking place in Harrisburg, where a former school board member is contesting the right to teach Intelligent Design (I.D.) in public schools.

The plaintiff stands on the platform that the teachers who have participated in the controversial teaching have violated the Constitution's explicit statement dividing church and state. The Scope's Monkey Trial in 1925 was the

first case involving the teaching of evolution in the classroom. Tennessee biology teacher, John T.

Scopes, violated a state law by teaching evolution. The Tennessee Supreme Court repealed the law in 1967, and in 1968, the U.S. Supreme Court abolished an Arkansas state law forbidding the teaching of evolution.

In 1987, the Court held that states must not require public schools to teach both evolution and creationism.

Today, President Bush thinks that schools should present both concepts when teaching about the origins of life. Intelligent Design dates back to Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, where it held more of a philosophical front.

Back then, beliefs held that the universe was created by a solitary creator, or "intelligent designer," who conceived order and design of everything existing in the universe. "Now," said Macauley,

"the more current version of I.D. focuses on what it perceives to be so-called gaps in evolutionary theory." He said I.D. claims there is a specified complexity in life that "cannot be accounted for through random changes or blind mutation, as evolutionary theory would suggest. "I.D. can also be tied into Creationism.

General consensus of the meeting defined Creationism as the belief that God created evolution and still maintains

it." Meredith Handwerk, president of the Philosophy Club, said that schools "should remove the Intelligent Design system from the classrooms." "Both of them [I.D. and evolution] should be taught," said David Pondelick, member of the NCF, "or neither

of them should be taught." Other campus organizations were present at the discussion. "Creationism should be taught in Catholic schools and should not be enforced in public schools

because there is not enough proof," said Ron Oz, president of the Jewish Student League. Darwin's theory of evolution holds that existence on Earth began with simple life forms, which over millions of years, through natural selection, created the variety of different species and organisms existing today. However, at the meet, Darwin's theory was found to be just a theory, and thus, not a precise truth.

Members of the Philosophy Club spoke on their stances of theory and evolution. "The earth was flat until proven otherwise," said Jay Hart, "can we tie that into evolution?" "People take the word 'theory' too loosely. There are going to be gaps in every theory," said Handwerk. Lisa Watts, another student present at the meeting, posed the thought that people's automatic observation to a tangible object is that someone had to have created it. However, she said that the

"staff should teach creationism in Sunday school and teach evolution in public school. "If you don't want to learn about it, why should you have to learn about it in school? It should be optional; every school should have different electives for kids to learn," Watts said. Professor Macauley's responded to this question: "I don't see anything wrong with teaching and debating I.D. as part of a religious curriculum, but I don't think it warrants being taught in a science class as a view competing with evolution. "After all, we often exclude many other views, even if they are popular, from consideration because there is a lack of evidence," he said.

Editorial: Penn State Continues to Mold & Shape the World

Jennifer Rufo

CCSG Contributor

Imagine you could be in 24 different places at once all throughout Pennsylvania; and, wherever you are, everyone knows your name. If your name happens to be Penn State, then this is reality.

Yes, there is more to Penn State than just University Park. There are really 24 Penn State locations spread throughout Pennsylvania. The majority of them make up what is known as the Commonwealth.

Geographically dispersed throughout Pennsylvania, the Commonwealth is an integral part of Penn State. In 2005, the enrollment at the Commonwealth campuses makes up more than 30,000 of the over 80,000 students at the University.

All campuses watch Penn State football. All campuses are different. Some have dorms, whereas some are commuter campuses. Some campuses don't even have Housing and Food Services. Some only have a few buildings. Compare this to University Park, a city in and of itself, and it's easy to see how the other Penn State campuses can be forgotten.

At State College, it seems University Park is Penn State and nothing else. Commonwealth Corner hopes to shed some light in the crevices of the state that are home to the rest of Penn State.

So who am I, this self appointed travel guide of yours? I am Jennifer Rufo, an

average Journalism student from West Chester, PA. I have attended three different Penn State locations. The majority of my time, seven semesters, was spent at Penn State Delaware County (sometimes fondly referred to as Delco). One semester I spent at Penn State Berks and now for my last year I am at University Park.

I have been involved on every campus, as Editor of Delco's Lion's Eye, as a writer for Berk's Collegian, and now as Editor-in-Chief of The Councillor, a newspaper of an organization called the Council of Commonwealth Student Governments, or CCSG.

I am also on Central Staff in CCSG. Our goal is to better

the life of students at the Commonwealth locations. We hold meetings three times a semester at University Park, where representatives from Commonwealth Student Governments come together to report on our progress in reaching our goals, generate new ideas and ways to make the Commonwealth more useful and fun for students, and comment and debate on what can be done more successfully.

CCSG is made up of different departments, such as Academic Affairs, Governmental Affairs, Student Affairs, Caucus Directors, etc. Each is instrumental in working as whole for the Commonwealth. Occasionally, one of their voices will be reporting on

what they are doing at Commonwealth Corner.

As we embark on our journey, don't forget to pack your hiking boots, as some places are in the mountains; or, your pepper spray as we will be nearing big, crime-filled cities; and, most importantly, your camera because some places offer sights unseen anywhere else. I'll give you a week to pack.

In the meantime, to follow what is going on in the Penn State Commonwealth, log on to www.clubs.psu.edu/ccsg.