



## THE FORUM

The Forum will be a regularly featured column that will explore important, sometimes controversial, always thought-provoking issues facing our college campuses and society today. We encourage you to submit your opinion on these issues to the Lion's Eye mailbox (Main Building) for publication in succeeding issues. Your essay must be submitted by November 15, for inclusion in the next issue, December 1989.

Read the following essay, gather additional information at the library, if you like, collect your thoughts, and express yourself in The Forum.

As tensions mount on college campuses due to racist and sexist incidents ranging from verbal slurs to physical at-

## Protection From Harassment Versus Freedom of Speech

tacks, more and more college officials are adopting anti-harassment policies. Such policies are intended to protect students from insults based on their race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation. Some impose penalties ranging from mandatory counseling to expulsion for direct verbal or physical attacks. Penn State, University of California, University of Michigan, and University of Wisconsin have adopted such an approach. Broader policies, like those adopted by University of Pennsylvania, University of Connecticut, Emory University, Tufts University, and others, prohibit students from engaging in more general kinds of offensive behavior. At University of Pennsylvania, for example, students are penalized for "any behavior, verbal or physical, that stigmatizes or victimizes individuals" and "creates an intimidating or offensive environment." The most controversial policy, adopted by Tufts University, permits the use of racial slurs or insults in student newspaper articles, on the campus radio station, and during public lectures, but prohibits the same things in classrooms or residence halls. Tufts officials contend that students deserve greater pro-

tection from harassment when they are in academic settings or in their dormitory rooms than they do in public forums.

According to some professors, such policies have stirred up such sensitivities on their campuses that they have stopped teaching controversial courses for fear of being labeled racist or sexist. Other professors feel that the policies simply demand that controversial issues be discussed in the classroom in an academic manner.

College officials who have instituted anti-harassment policies feel that they are necessary to stop intimidation of students. Some of their critics feel that speech, no matter how offensive, should not be restricted.

**THE ISSUE: Should a university limit free speech to create an harassment free environment for learning?**

## The Midsemester Blues Hit Campus

by John Terrell

The start of the semester has long since passed us and with it, for some students, has gone the energy and enthusiasm which accompany a new semester. Unfortunately these students have lost the focus and resolve to perform at the best of their ability. For these students and any other students for that matter I would like to offer encouragement for overcoming these "midsemester blues" and for increasing academic performance.

First is the issue of effort. From my observations most of us feel better if we have given a course our best effort in comparison to just coasting or barely getting by. It is not necessary to become a hermit to give your best effort. But it does require assigning priorities to your various activities. What is more important? Going to the mall for a two hour break between classes or going to the library to study or do research? Watching situation comedies on TV or studying? A certain streamlining of your life may be necessary in order to give school work more of your focus and energy. Even an evaluation of part-time work is required. Is it necessary to work 20 hours per week or is 15 sufficient? Can spending patterns be adjusted? The point is that all activities need to be evaluated and priorities need to be set.

Next is the issue of perspective. Why am I here? What is the point of a university education? To start, look at the pragmatic point of view. A successful

## Letter to the Editor

The last issue of the *Lion's Eye* included a cartoon critical of student activities on campus. The implications of the cartoon were that Penn State offers a meager choice of campus entertainment.

As Student Activities Coordinator, I'd like to point out two things. First, a great deal of effort has gone into the development of a rich social and recreational program on campus. Among these are a BSL retreat, a hayride and bonfire, a Halloween dance, Delco's version of "Jeopardy," and more. These activities represent maximum utilization of the student activities budget. Secondly, the unfortunate facts are that most planned activities are under-attended and poorly supported by students. When planning meetings are scheduled and publicized, they are also poorly attended. For example, the newly-formed Student Activities Commission, co-chaired by John Palka and Rob Martin, recently scheduled such a meeting. Although invitations were sent to all club officers, only two persons actually attended.

It seems self-evident that student activities on campus can only be as successful as student participation will allow. It is unfair to complain about a situation unless there is an honest attempt to remedy it. The Student Activities Commission is ready to plan any reasonable program to meet student needs. Replace apathy with action. Your involvement and input is all that is needed.

Betsy Rosen, Student Activities Coordinator

## ASK ORLOV

Dear Dr. Orlov:

Many of my friends and I wish that there could be more interaction between faculty and the students of the Delaware County out of class. We think the campus could be a more enjoyable, as well as educational place to take courses, if out-of-class activities allowed for such interaction and let us know the faculty better. How do other faculty feel about this? Why aren't such opportunities going on? Do you have any ideas about how students who feel as we do can create those extra-curricular activities?

— Feeling Unfulfilled

Dear "Unfulfilled":

First, let me assure you that many of our faculty members (including myself) feel very receptive to your idea that there ought to be more chances for profs. and their students to socialize (in legal, responsible ways, of courses) and to learn from each other, out of class. You may not realize that there are some such "opportunities" available already. For example, some faculty, at least once per academic year, have organized field trips that are open to all campus students — trips usually involving some interesting places off-campus and offering the chance for shared meals, conversation, and more. (One example: Dr. Severance, my English colleague, has more than once created a bus trip to the Folger Shakespeare Theater in Washington, D.C. The trips have enabled students and faculty to share in sightseeing, eating and drinking together, attending a play, etc.) In addition, various faculty members sometimes invite classes — if they are small enough — to their homes for dinner and conversation. (In a related vein, one of my friendlier classes of students suggested enthusiastically that "we" all meet for a post-course "happy hour," either at the Locust Crest or at Chi-Chi's. Of course, while I won't say here whether such a meeting occurred or not, such suggestions must be measured against the laws of the Commonwealth of Pa. and the real obligations faculty have to act as proper role-models!)

In any event, though a few such extra-curricular occasions take place, you're quite right there should be more — if enough students really want them. And that's the problem; it is an ongoing problem for our administration and faculty to arouse much student interest in any events/activities offered on campus beyond class hours. But if enough

students feel as you do, I strongly believe many faculty would be receptive to non-classroom experiences that are potentially fun as well as educational to all of us. You should talk with the officers of the SGA (campus Student Government Association), with individual instructors, and with those who run our Student Programs and Services office (in the Main Building). You can also — if you're serious about striving to create the kind of activities that can make students and faculty more comfortable with each other, and that enhance the campus' life — write letters to this newspaper, suggesting any specific ideas you may have (that are fit for public reading, that is).

I do have, from my own inclinations and from conversation with some colleagues, the following ideas on possible activities of the kind you want. Since almost everyone (including aging, creaky-limbed faculty whose best athletic days may be behind them) enjoy sports such as volleyball and softball, and since the annual Orientation cook-out is so popular, we might create a spring campus gathering (on a Saturday?) for a picnic and gameplaying, at a time when students and faculty of a given year have become well-acquainted. Or, since the campus' new Commons Building has some nice large conference rooms — as well as the cafeteria facilities — we might organize one or more evening dinners/discussions to which faculty in a given subject, and their interested students, would be invited. (Imagine being able to share in festivities of food and drink, over hot conversation on a teacher's quest to eliminate "runon" errors from the world, or a prof.'s most memorable lab mishap, or whatever.) But seriously, the relaxed atmosphere of a shared feast, even on campus, could promote an enhanced relationship between students and faculty — and all kinds of additional learning. Ultimately, though, you students must make such events occur — if you really want them; faculty are usually too busy or shy or skeptical of your interest to take much initiative in such matters. So I close by applauding your suggestion and hoping you'll act further on it. How about it?

(Editor's Note: Letters to Dr. Orlov, or comments on his answers are solicited from students, faculty, and staff. Place them in the Lion's Eye mailbox in the mailroom. Those selected will be included in future issues.)

## — Video Vault —

by Bob Reap

Salut! Welcome back to another edition of VIDEO VAULT. This video worm was kinda low on cabbage this month, so I only picked one film to review, but what a doozy! So kick way back, you potato tubers, and dig right into...

"BEING THERE." This modern classic (1980) stars the late Peter Sellers in perhaps his greatest film ever, a picture that defies categorization, and leaves the audience with their own impression of just who Chance the gardener really is. Is he an idiot, blessed with the proper response at just the right time, or is he somehow more, much more than this?

The movie opens with the main character, Chance, waking up and watching the television. We see him mimic the set in gestures that we associate with an infant. Louise, the maid, enters the room and tells him that the old man has died, and she will be leaving. Chance tells her it looks like snow and returns to his television. Surely this man has the mentality of a little child.

Chance is not mentioned in the will, and the attorney coldly tells him he must leave by noon tomorrow. He learns that Chance has never left the house, but is adamant nonetheless. Chance must enter a world he has only seen reflected through the world of television. He cannot read or write. Everything he knows he has learned through television.

student upon graduation has a good chance of finding rewarding employment with preferred employers or entrance to preferred graduate schools. It makes the transition to adult life easier if you have a good job upon graduation or if you will be starting graduate school. From a less pragmatic point of view education opens doors to the world. It expands vision. It helps an individual begin to understand the larger issues of humanity and civilization. Broad based, general education develops different ways of thinking (and hence, creativity) and, as importantly develops the communication skills necessary to communicate those thoughts more effectively and efficiently. This makes life richer, not necessarily in monetary terms, although it can certainly do that. Hopefully and idealistically, the most important thing education can do is to provide the tools for each of us to more fully understand ourselves and the surrounding world and to think more clearly. You may not appreciate that at this point in your lives, but I'm betting that as you get older you will.

Remember, in order to succeed you'll have to give course work your best effort. In order to do so you may have to reset your priorities so that course work receives higher priority, and you certainly will have to cast off the "midsemester blues." Being semi-depressed will only deprive you of the necessary focus and energy to give your best effort. Be serious about your school work, but also have fun.

A cold winter and colder world await.

We see the man-child in the next scene trying in vain to change the stations in a TV shop window with his remote control. He steps back in puzzlement and is pinned behind a limo backing up. This is the event that pivots the entire story line.

The incredibly rich Mrs. Rand (Shirley MacLaine) is in the limo, and she takes the slightly wounded gardener into her car. She mistakes his name for Chauncey Gardener and assumes he is a rich aristocrat. From this point on, whatever Chance says or doesn't say is assumed to mean much more than we assumed he intended.

Now the stage is set. To tell you any more of the plot would surely be to rob you of one of the most enjoyable stories ever written. I only saw this film after the demise of Peter Sellers, and I thought it was a great tribute to perhaps the greatest comedic actor of our time. If you haven't seen this film, or any of his others beside the Pink Panthers, do yourself a great favor and see this film. You'll remember it forever.

Well, it's time to get my video back to the store before it's overdue and I have to skip lunch tomorrow. See you in December with a few more, unless I'm broke, in which case I'll be watching cable at my friend's and eating his popcorn! Late.

(All videos available at Video Intermision, Media, PA)