

Opinion & Review

P.S.U. Delco, Mundane Maybe, But Still Quality

By Mike Jamison

I recently attended a newspaper meeting at St. Joe's University. The meeting consisted of editors and staff members from area colleges, who discussed First Amendment rights and the importance of us all to stick together as the college Fourth Estate.

As the schools went around the room and introduced themselves, they each gave a short example of their paper's work and how their papers dealt with their college communities. As each editor got up and spoke, I saw a trend forming. Each editor would get up, introduce himself/herself, and then get into sordid stories of rape, crime, and public drunkenness. Specifically, each editor spoke of how his or her paper covered these stories on their campus: coed rape, police arresting rowdy Greek brothers, people breaking into classrooms after hours. When it came to my turn to spin a tale, all I could think to offer was, "Well, we diligently cover school picnics."

S.G.A. Debates Student Activity Fee, Duel Offices

By Mike Doyle

I have been to only a couple of Student Government meetings in the past, but I thought I knew how they were run. There was always lots of cold pizza and casual conversation, but not much work. I didn't expect any fast paced, roll up your sleeves and let's make progress attitudes, but it's a new school year so I went to the September 22 meeting.

The first sign that things had changed was when I found out that the meeting was not in the Lion's Den. I like the den as much as the next guy, but it's no place to hold a SGA meeting.

Amy McCarthy, SGA President, ran the meeting quite smoothly. The first order of business was to take a vote on whether an SGA officer can also be an officer of a club. After both sides of the issue were discussed, a vote was taken. It was decided that one student could not hold two officer

positions. Even I can't believe that, Well, I was a little jealous. Nothing exciting ever happens on this campus. We never, at this newspaper, have gang riots or school protests to cover. Instead, we cover pretzel sales and SGA meetings. I felt embarrassed that the PSU Delco paper was so small, compared to the other schools of the area, that were so big.

It took me three days to come to a conclusion about all this, but when it finally came, I knew it was true. After mulling it over, I decided, WHO CARES? So we are a small paper, a small, commuter campus. I've always enjoyed being the underdog. Just because we don't have 1 billion students crossing our campus doesn't mean we're any less unique or worse than any other area school. And just because our paper is twelve pages, compared to thirty or forty, doesn't mean we can't put out a quality publication, one we can all be proud of. Even if we are reporting about last month's pretzel sales.

positions.

Next, the proposed activity fee was discussed. The CCSG, or Commonwealth Campus Student Government, wanted to know how our campus felt about the fee. Another impressive debate began between sincerely concerned students, but no consensus was reached. Club updates followed to close out the meeting.

I was very impressed by the way the meeting was run and the general effectiveness of it. Of course, it's only one meeting, but I'll assume that this one was the norm. Credit should be given to the SGA officers, Amy, John Bishop, Secretary, and Jodi DelRossi, Vice-President, who seem to be doing a good job and who take the meetings seriously. Unfortunately, I cannot say the same for the faculty in attendance. Their continuous laughter and talking was the only distraction in an otherwise productive meeting.

Student's Rights Concern Understanding and Respect

By Emmanuel Seabrooks

Will we all ever get along? This is a question asked by many everyday? Why are we so crass and cold to one another? We are all one people, people who are similarly born of flesh, blood, and bones. People with families, friends, and other loved ones. But why do we (who all have these things in common some way or another) still separate ourselves from each other?

As Robert N. Marley once said, "One love. One heart. Let's get together and be all right." Not one person on this earth is without prejudice. We all have things we assume about one

another, but instead of assuming, we should learn first. Being one takes acceptance and understanding of each other.

Often we are too busy to care about anyone else but ourselves, because we have so many things on our minds that we never stop and think of how the other person might feel. We don't have to care about everyone, but we should respect each other and not judge on first appearances.

"One bright day people get together," sings Ziggy Marley. We are not all perfect, just as we are not all evil, but lets try to be easy together. Think about it!



Insights, opinions, and challenges were offered by speakers (l. to r.) Robert Ginsberg, PSU Delco, Frances Graham Lee, St. Joseph's University, and Burton Caine, Temple University, at the Bill of Rights Symposium. Priscilla Clement, PSU Delco (r.) chaired the session.

Photo by: WES TOMLINSON

P.S.U. Fees And Charges: Are You Being Ripped Off?

By s. cohoon

How often do you inspect your tuition bill carefully? Do you just pay the amount on the bottom line and assume that the rest is correct? Probably most students do just that, if they even look at their bill at all.

The point that I am interested in discussing are the "fees" which are added to everyone's bill. While there is at least one fee on every student's bill, it is very difficult to avoid having to pay other non-mandatory fees. Fees, in case people don't know what I am referring to, are charges which are not included in the listed tuition costs of Penn State.

The one fee that is on everyone's bill is a thirty-five dollar "computer fee." The computer fee is listed in the Penn State Operating Budget, which is available in the library, as a mandatory fee. What do the computer fee funds go towards? Computers would seem to be the reasonable answer. Actually, 3.74 million of these funds are specially earmarked for Computer and Information Systems, one of thirteen support units listed in the Operating Budget. The computer fees, of thirty-five dollars per semester per student, amount, university wide, to approximately 4.90 million dollars per year. (Using 70,000 approximate enrollment times the 35 dollar fee times 2 semesters). Where does the other 1.16 million go? It is lumped together with tuition under the grouping tuition and fees which makes up 55.2% of the General Funds Budget and 25.7% of the Total Operating Budget. Computer and Information Systems do not have an excessively large budget in comparison with other support units. Continuing Education had an initial operating budget of 27.756 in 92-93. Computer and Information Systems' was only 22.968.

So here is the question. How long have computers been in general use at Penn State? Quite some time, I'd say. How long will they be in general use at Penn State? Probably forever. Has a new budget been created and tuition increased since these two things were generally known and accepted? You and I both know that tuition is increased practically every year. So why have these ever so important computer costs not been

incorporated into the tuition? Maybe the costs have been incorporated and a "computer" fee is simply an easy way to raise money by preying on the general public's ignorance and fear of computers. After all, everyone knows that computers are expensive (though few know precisely how expensive). Also there is not a great degree of knowledge among the general public about computers. What is clear to all, however, is the importance of computers. Afraid to lag behind in this important area most would rather pay a small cost to insure that the Penn State educational continues to be state of the art. What is not clear to me however, is the necessity of these costs, relatively small in comparison to other university costs, being represented in the form of fees.

An example of another fee which, while non mandatory, is difficult to avoid is the "late" fee. A fine example of bureaucracy at work is the system of estimated bills for students. In this system, estimated bills are sent to students. Students are to examine these bills, do nothing more than sign them, and mail them back to the bursar's office. This system is in place to get an accurate account of the number of students attending for a given semester, certainly a worthy cause. But here's the trick, these bills are sent to the students very close to the deadline by which the students are supposed to return them. Then it is very difficult for most student to return them by the deadline. If the bill is not sent back within the proper amount of time, a twenty-five dollar late fee is charged to the student's bill. This semester is, I believe, the first time which I have avoided this charge on my bill. Revenues raised from these fees would also be lumped together with tuition under Tuition and Fees.

Revenue, whatever its use, should be raised legitimately. Hidden costs taken from students who depend on financial aid from the state is like stealing, not only from students, but from the tax dollars which the state uses to fund financial aid programs. A state institution should not have to steal from the state to fund itself. The ends simply do not justify the means. Income obtained from students should be obtained in the form of tuition increases, not in the form of fees.