

Opinions

Students And Graduation: No Walking Until May

By Amanda Ponzar
Lion's Eye Staff Writer

Graduation is the culmination of the college experience - the climax of everything a student has worked for. After surviving years of classes, exams and papers, as well as meeting university and degree program requirements, graduates expect a public celebration acknowledging their achievements and education level. Seniors at Penn State Delaware County who complete their degree this fall, however, will receive no December graduation from this campus. Instead, they must either wait until May 2000 to participate in commencement at Delco, or travel the miles to University Park through the December snow to graduate with a group of complete strangers in '99.

This "no fall graduation" policy has come under fire by many students, including senior Nikki Gibson. "I don't want to go to University Park," said Gibson. She said the long distance to the main campus - three to four hours would be a serious travel burden for family members. "I don't think it's fair that we would have to walk with students and teachers we don't know," said Gibson. Senior Mary Doolittle agrees. "The [graduation] at University Park is weak." Doolittle argued that the main reason students come to the Delco campus is to enjoy the small faculty and close-knit community. "Why would you want to graduate at University Park?" asks Doolittle.

Senior Kelly Holmes, who will be graduating this fall, felt the policy especially unfair. "I just don't think we should be penalized for going to this school." Holmes wants to graduate here since she chose this campus and likes it. "I want my professors - people who have seen me through - to be there." Holmes thinks the small amount of resources needed to put together a service would be well worth it. "A quick ceremony - that's all I want," said Holmes.

Senior Brian Mollenhauer agreed. "Hey, you're paying for school. It's not

that difficult to put together a little ceremony."

Although most seniors think a fall graduation ceremony here at this campus is a good idea, some, like Joel Shafer-Harris (Senior) and Regis Fields (Sophomore, Associates Degree) are ambivalent. "I didn't even go to my high school graduation. It's just a ritual," said Shafer-Harris. In support of other students who want a ceremony, Shafer did offer a concession. "I would go if they had one here." Fields expressed similar views. "I'm not big on commencement," he said. "All I want is the piece of paper."

According to Dr. George Franz, dean of Academic Affairs, Penn State Delco's policy is quite typical. "As far as I know, the only Penn State campus that has more than a spring graduation is University Park." Franz explained that "while cost is a factor, it is more a question of numbers. It seems to me that holding a ceremony at the end of summer and fall for 5-10 graduates diminishes the impact of the ceremony. We are at the stage where most of our students complete their work in the spring semester." Franz admitted that he does not yet know the final number of graduates for this semester. "If it appears that we will have a substantial number of graduates for summer or fall, then I think the campus will move to holding additional ceremonies. However, at this point, I am not sure we have the numbers to make for a meaningful ceremony."

Whether or not Penn State Delco has a fall graduation is ultimately not the administration's decision; this university exists to educate and serve the needs of its students. "We the people" can vote to amend this policy and give fall graduates a proper commencement here. Students in support of fall commencement at Delco should contact Dr. Franz either at his office, Room 212 Main, or by email at gwfl@psu.edu. To discuss this issue and others relating to upperclassmen, juniors and seniors are also encouraged to attend the biweekly Keystone Club meetings.

LIFE IN HELL



'Out To Lunch'

Students Come Knocking, And Find Empty Rooms

By Alyece Wolff
Lion's Eye Staff Writer

Office hours are posted, but the door is locked and your professor is nowhere to be seen. How come? Where is your professor?

When a store posts hours of operation, you expect the store to be open. And if the store is not open for some reason, signs explain why the doors are locked: "Be Back at Three," "Closed for Labor Day".

Is the same courtesy too much to expect from our faculty? Not being able to find a professor can be extremely frustrating to students.

After doing an informal survey on September 20, I found that:

- *8 out of 13 professors were present during office hours
- *5 out of 13 professors were not present during office hours
- *4 professors were present (with the door open) even though their office hours were not during that particular time.
- *1 office did not have hours posted on the door.

Therefore, my survey concludes that most professors are in their office during office hours. But the problem is with the professors who are not in their office during posted office hours.

Penn State Delaware County has a great reputation because of its small and friendly atmosphere and its professor to student ratio. And when students cannot find a professor without a big hunt, sadly the well-known reputation of the school diminishes. Brian, a senior English major, is tired of hunting down faculty. He says, "Some professors post office hours and are never there." But he also makes it clear that some professors are really reliable, like Dr. Carol Kessler.

Steve, a junior American Studies

major, finds that professors are usually in their office during posted hours, but the hours are not convenient. But, he happily points out, "Most professors will meet with students at a different time." I found that to be true after doing a small personal survey:

- *7 out of 7 professors were reliable when it came to appointments
- *5 out of 8 professors e-mailed back right away
- *3 out of 8 professors e-mailed back in a few days
- *3 out of 3 professors who gave home telephone numbers were reliable (when students needed help outside of class).

According to Dr. George Franz, Director of Academic Affairs, "Faculty are supposed to have an average of six posted office hours a week, and they should be available in their office during those hours" (not including part-time faculty). He also points out that faculty "have responsibilities, including research and service that take them off campus and out of their offices." Students agree that the research benefits them as students, but the student and professor relationship cannot be ignored.

If something extremely important comes up and you have to miss work, don't you contact the people you work for? Students see office hours as a part of the professor's work. Therefore, professors should leave a message on their voice mail or post a note on their office door (which I have seen professors do, if they are unable to keep their office hours). If students know that office hours are cancelled, then they can alter their busy schedules.

I find that students at Delco cherish their relationship with their professors. Talking and meeting with professors is extremely important to them. And therefore, keeping reliable office hours is an essential component in the professor student relationship.

THE LION'S EYE

Vol. XXXI, No. 2

Penn State University

October 6, 1999

Delaware County

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Sarah Stover

STAFF

Cherjon Bailey

Bob Dugan

Doris Ruiz

Mesgana Teklegiorgis

Scherrie Bailey

Regis Fields

Sandy Sasse

Scott Troyan

Ed Blackburn

Jenna Montgomery

Al Stavola

Alyece Wolff

Mari DiMeglio

Amanda Ponzar

PHOTOGRAPHER

Melissa King

ADVISORS

Barbara Daniel

John Terrell

The LION'S EYE is published monthly during the academic year by the students of the Delaware County Campus.

Submissions are welcome from all students, faculty and staff.

Material must be typed, double spaced, and submitted in the LION'S EYE mailbox located in the Lion's Den.