

Surcharges hit students' wallets

By DAN ZACHER
Assistant editor

The Commonwealth is facing a new problem. This problem is an enemy that has slowly crept its way into life in the past few years. This new enemy has begun to change the lives of some of the students on campus. This enemy is the surcharge.

A surcharge is an extra charge, ranging from \$81 to \$878, which affects the tuition of both upper division and graduate students. These surcharges were originally instituted to provide funding for badly needed improvements and to keep up with changing technology.

Once you achieve a 60-credit standing, you graduate from lower division status to upper division status making you subject to the increase of tuition.

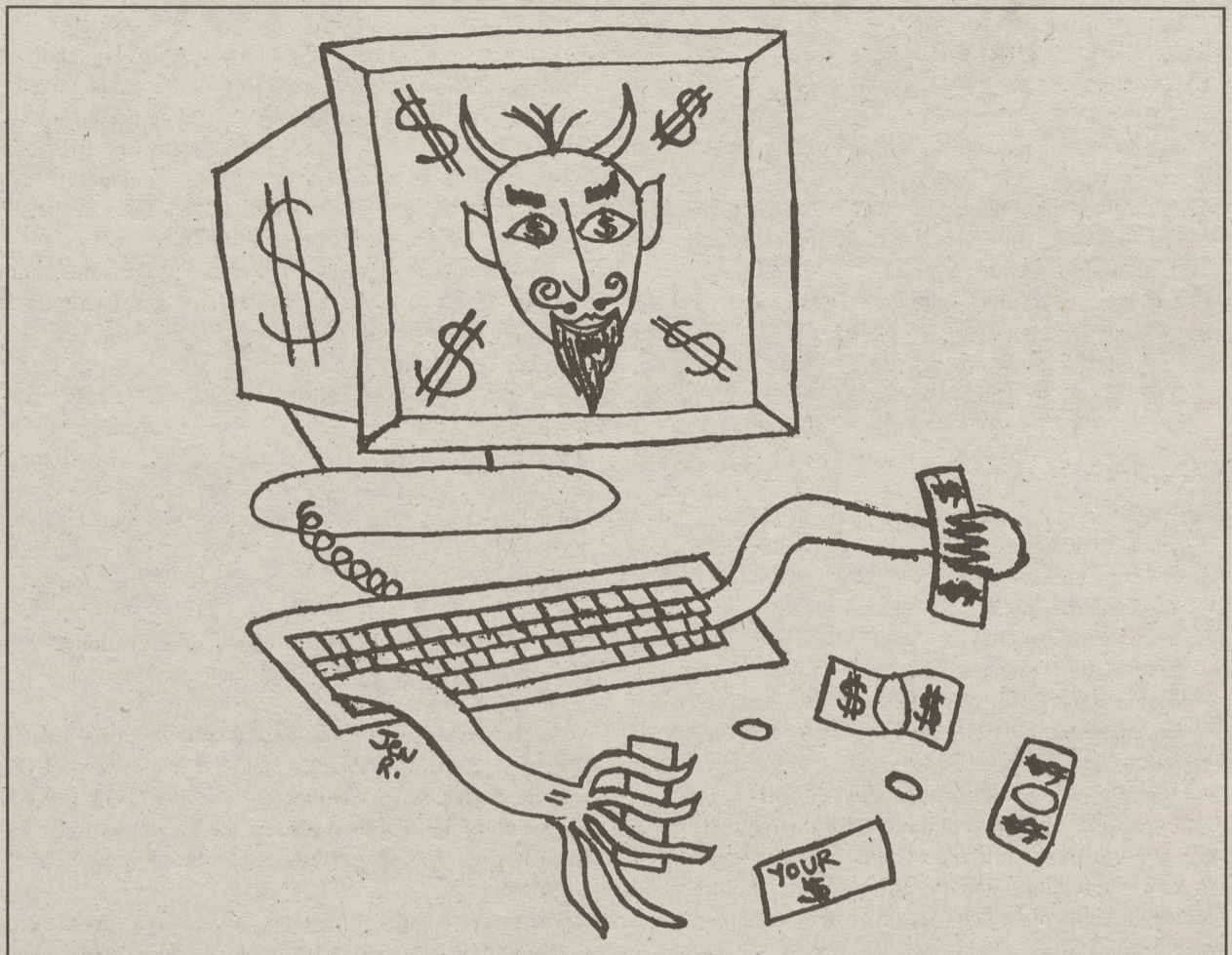
Recently, Penn State instituted a surcharge to its new Information Sciences and Technology (IST) major. With both the surcharge and the scheduled tuition increase, junior and senior IST students pay 30 percent more money from last spring to this fall.

Bitter feelings have arisen, not so much from the increase, but from the timeliness of the notice. All IST students received an e-mail about the IST surcharge in the summer weeks before the fall 2001 semester bills were due.

"I was very upset because of the timing," said Jonathan Leonhard, a junior PSU student who works as part of the Computer Services staff. "I was hit with the increase [of tuition] and the surcharge. There was only three weeks notice about the surcharge."

"I understand surcharges," Leonhard said, "but they knew very well that they would have it. Luckily I had enough financial aide to cover it, but some of us can't come up with \$1000 at a drop of a hat."

Reportedly, 80 percent of this surcharge is staying at each of the Commonwealth campuses. The other 20 percent will be going up to University Park to pay the salaries of their IST teachers. This fact has mixed reviews.



"[The surcharge] should stay here and the campus should get [the surcharge] in full," said Leonhard.

On the other hand, Mike Giordano, junior IST major, isn't as concerned with the 80 percent increase.

"I'm not happy about it, don't get me wrong," Giordano said. "Eighty percent stays at our campus. I'm pretty good with it; they're buying a lot of equipment for the IST students."

This surcharge is not looked forward to by many of the students.

Sophomore John Childers said, "I'd be really pissed if I had to pay for it out of my own bank account. Considering I don't have it, I guess my dad will pay it and I will just pay him back. I understand they have to buy new equipment but..."



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