

Eye On Campus

Dava Murray Gets Lively With Student Life

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Who better to work with Delco's clubs and organization than a recent college graduate?

Dava Murray, Coordinator of Student Affairs, has become the newest member of Student Life and is just the person to steer any concerned student in the right direction.

An experienced leader, Murray works out of the Student Life Office on the second floor of the Commons building. Faculty and student leaders, anxious to swap ideas and make a difference in Delco's livelihood, are constantly coming and going out of the Office.

Joining PSU-Delco's staff in November, Murray is assigned to work closely with the clubs and student organizations on campus, to create more community service projects, and to be a resource for students.

Murray spearheaded the campus' first community project of the semester, the Martin Luther King Day of Service, and it was a huge success.

"My first goal is to help clubs and organizations to become stronger and more organized," said Murray, whose future projects will include a Spring Break trip dealing with community service activities.

Murray, a graduate from Villanova University with a communications/business major, has a tremendous amount of experience to back up her plans.

As a student she served as a Resident Assistant and was involved in a planning

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board. Even then she was engaged in directing and assisting students. After graduating she worked at a conference in Washington, D.C. and enjoyed the programming aspect of the job.

Murray is again excited about working closely with students at this campus.

"[I'm] very open to direction. I would want students to feel I'm very approachable and to come to me with ideas," Murray said.

At a campus where no dorms exist and students

commute to school, participation, and attendance can be discouraging.

"I think it's most important to rely on how important activities are to education," Murray said. "To bridge the gap I would like clubs to be more visible to new members.

"The community service will be a wonderful addition to not only Delco, but to local communities in which we live."



Online Classes: A Whole New Kind of Home-Schooling

By JOHN MILLER
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Tired of the classroom environment? Like to sleep instead of reporting for class at 8:30 in the morning? Sick of buying all those textbooks you don't even bring to campus half the time?

If the answer is "yes," then online courses, via ANGEL, could be the answer to your prayers.

That's right, no more missing any more ballgames buried in those books. Students can now put those expensive laptops to good use by signing up for online courses, which are usually worth one or two credits.

Some of the advantages are obvious: there's no predetermined schedule, except for the due dates for assignments. Web courses are convenient for students who prefer to learn at their own pace. Students are able to choose what time they work in these courses. This alone could make the difference for balancing time with all their other scheduled courses.

Alternatively, there are students who might feel more comfortable with a live instructor - rather than a virtual one -- to

guide them through the course step by step.

Kelly Shultz, a graduate student working at University Park, is familiar with online course work. Shultz took COMM 160, also known as Basic News Writing Skills, as a student. She began teaching it online this semester to gain more experience in this new frontier for education.

"I believe that students do as well in the online environment as they would in a real classroom setting," said Shultz, adding that online learning really is an easy concept to grasp, even for students new to this technology.

Another advantage of ANGEL is that there are plenty of methods available to assist either a veteran student or a rookie toward success in a Web setting.

"I try to allow students to interact with me in as many ways as possible," Shultz said. "This includes allowing them to email me and post questions and comments on the bulletin board."

Online courses represent an alternative means of fulfilling requirements for certain majors at Penn State and all of its branches. Online courses can also save students money, not only with tuition, but with filling their gas tank too.

"Open and Friendly" Writing Workshops to Begin in April

By JESSIE ROWLAND
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Ethel Rackin became interested in poetry when she was in the seventh grade and a teacher encouraged her to join The Pen in Hand. She started reading works of contemporary poets whose voices she responded to.

"I learned to write by taking in these voices and by experimenting with different styles in my own poems," said Rackin, a student at Princeton and a former PSU creative writing instructor at Penn State-Delco.

Rackin, whose work has appeared in *Colorado Review*, *Poetry East*, *Volt*, *Brooklyn Review*, the *American Poetry Review* and elsewhere, will lead a poetry workshop as part of "Culture, Critique, Creativity and Composition," a 2006 Undergraduate English Conference being held at Penn State Delco from April 7-8.

Student and faculty from all Penn State campuses, as well as other Philadelphia area schools have been invited to submit proposals. Topics and formats are open to critical writing in all periods and genres, as well as research projects on texts or literary cultures, and compositions from writing courses, original, poetry, fiction, or drama.

Rackin believes poetry will always be written and read, even in this age of digital media.

"Despite the popularity of other media such as film and popular music, poetry never dies," Rackin said. "In difficult

times such as wartime, poetry becomes even more important for its ability to express what's often un-sayable in other forms of language."

When asked what advice she could give to aspiring young writers, Rackin said: "Read a lot. Find one or two other writers whose work you respect to exchange poems with regularly."

Rackin believes that the best way to find interesting writing is to subscribe to a literary magazine.

"Browse through bookshelves and magazine sections in the bookstore to find writers whose work moves you," she added.

Rackin feels strongly about the workshop she will be giving at "Culture, Critique, Creativity and Composition."

"My workshop offers constructive criticism for those who write poetry," she said. "The style that I use for workshops is open and friendly. I encourage students to come with specific questions on their work."

Keynote speaker for the Conference is Frank Wilson, book review editor of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. The Conference will also feature Litapalooza, an open mike for poetry and short presentations.

The cost for Conference participants is \$20. Dinner is included. To contact Ethel Rackin, e-mail her at: erackin@princeton.edu

The deadline for proposals for "Culture, Critique, Creativity and Composition" is Feb 13.

Send proposals as attachments to: delcoengl@psu.edu or contact Dr. Adam Sorkin at ajs2@psu.edu.



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