



The Lion's Eye

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A Sad Farewell...



Dr. Michael Madden, (in clown suit) the ultimate class clown, with his MWF 8:30 a.m. HDFS 311 class. Madden was suddenly let go on April 1, leaving his students wondering the fate of their classes and grades. Many students were visibly shaken by Madden's departure and argued that he was a great professor who kept his students on their toes and always wanting to learn more, doing creative things to keep them showing up. (photo courtesy Melanie Morales Rosa)

By **Judy Bowker**- Editor-In-Chief of the *Lion's Eye*-jlb5706@psu.edu

As the rain fell and an abundant number of stunned students looked on, Dr. Michael Madden, Instructor in Human Development and Family Science (HDFS), was released from his position at Penn State Brandywine on Friday April 1. Madden's termination is a personnel issue and as stated by law, Penn State University is not allowed to discuss the reasons for Madden's abrupt exit.

As Madden packed up his office, a significant number of his students attempted to come to Commons 211 and say good-bye, however, due to the rising emotions by both students and Madden himself, security sent students away and many were not able to say good-bye.

As such, Madden's students formed a barrier across the main entrance and exit of our school in order to have the opportunity to say good-bye and show both their appreciation and heartache. Some students, however, were not able to wait for Madden to leave campus.

"It's really sad," said Erin Voelker, a junior HDFS major. "We didn't even get to say bye, I feel that he should have been able to have a closure class or finish out the semester. I feel like I am never going to get to see him again."

Many HDFS students have raised their voices on this tragic situation, and one of their primary concerns is that they have three weeks left of school, and they now have to get used to a new professor. Many students have also said that specifically took a class with Madden for what he brought to the classroom as a teacher, and they no longer feel like going to the specific class that they were enrolled in.

Several students are also concerned about Madden's feelings and what this has done to him on a personal level. Said HDFS major Melanie Morales Rosa, "I think he feels embarrassed, but I think he feels proud for what he has done here... when I got to say goodbye, you could see it in his eyes he was upset."

In an act of solidarity for Madden and in trying to get answers, several students met with Chancellor Sophia T. Wisniewska and the Director of Business Services, Lisa Yerges on Wednesday April 6.

SGA Vice President and HDFS major Bobbi Caprice, SGA Treasurer and Corporate Communications Major Vinny Gallo, HDFS major Melanie Morales Rosa, and Sociology major Laura Boyd met with the Chancellor in order to try and gain more clarity, to explain to administration exactly how students feel about Madden's abrupt departure, and to hear from the University a little more of why exactly this had to happen.

The Chancellor was very welcoming to the students that met with her, and she began the meeting by acknowledging that she appreciated the students wanting to speak to her.

"I know you have some concerns and I want to thank you for expressing them," said Wisniewska to the four students sitting before her. She then reiterated that, due to both university policy and state law, she could not talk about the details and give details regarding the termination of Madden, but that her hope was that she could help address the students' concerns and give them a sense of stability. The students talked about what a great teacher Madden was, and all tried to explain his style of teaching.

"If Dr. Madden gave me a test on stuff he taught me two years ago, I would do fine!" said Vinny Gallo.

Bobbi Caprice backed up Gallo's sentiments and added more of her own. "He (Madden) teaches human development," she said with poignancy. "You can't be taught social skills... you need to physically work on them. Dr Madden made us all interact, which is what we need. That is what our major [HDFS] is about."

Laura Boyd echoed Caprice's thoughts. "Dr. Madden is so involved with his students and he cares so much... teachers are good here but none of them care the way he does," she said.

The four students who met with the Chancellor also expressed that many students are extremely worried about their grades and how a new professor is going to effect the rest of their semester. Caprice voiced these concerns, and then added, "I trust all of your decisions, but I just can't process that there are four weeks left and we had to be thrown a new professor. There could have been better options."

Chancellor Sophia Wisniewska acknowledged those concerns. "I know this is a difficult situation, to finish out the semester with a new professor, but I hope you learn that they are caring and helpful... if there was another decision we could have made, we would have," she told everyone.

When asked what the university was going to do for students that feel that their grades and experience suffered due to the last minute change in professors, the Chancellor held firm and stated that Madden's students already have grades up to this point, and with four weeks left of the course, these grades should still be the same, and that course descriptions that are created by Penn State University aid in course continuity.

Madden currently is looking forward to other opportunities in his life and is concentrating solely on his experience at Penn State being all about his students and the relationships he has built with them over the years.

"Please share with the students how much I valued the opportunity to share this stage of my life with them," Madden told *The Lion's Eye*. "These last classes were so filled with the best exchanges and the most positive memories of my long teaching career."

The day before he left the Brandywine campus, Madden's Facebook status reflected these same thoughts. "My Students of PSU ...thank you for your gifts and joy of teaching and learning with you. Our learning community was a great place to complete my teaching career. I will no longer be with you in a physical way, but may my love and intentions raise your curiosity and desire to rise to the occasion. Goodbye, and my prayers are with you."

Madden summed it up, however, when he thanked the students who stood in the rain to wish him farewell.

"Thanks for the send off. My heart is warmed through your love and support. You were the best students with whom I could have shared this semester."



Budget Could Slash PSU Funding by Over Half

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Penn State University may be forced to consider closing several campus locations, as well as other desperate measures within the next year, should the proposed budget cuts, by Pennsylvania Governor Tom Corbett be passed, Penn State President Graham Spanier said.

"We will have to raise tuition, but we don't want to unduly affect our students. At Penn State, our largest source of income is our tuition. If any students are scared away or don't come back, we lose their tuition, and there is a multiplying effect from the cuts," Spanier said. "We are willing to do our fair share, but this is not our fair share."

State schools such as Penn State, University of Pittsburg, Temple, and Lincoln universities, as well as 14 other schools in the State System of Higher Education would be affected by the proposed cuts to the budget. Within Penn State, programs, personnel, campuses being cut, salaries, and employee benefits also could be reduced or frozen in order to deal with the \$182 million budget cut.

At the state level however, higher education budgets are being leveled with other budgets such as highway improvement. In a radio interview, Corbett said he was stunned by the reaction of the university and does not think that education should be "recession-proof". Corbett's spokesperson Kevin Harley confirmed this statement, and said that "the governor maintains his position that sacrifice must be collective, and higher education will not escape cuts."

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Students Head To Harrisburg

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Capitol Day was celebrated last Tuesday at the State Capitol in Harrisburg. Over three hundred Penn State students from numerous campuses attended the event. Our Brandywine campus was ranked third in attendance. There were thirty students from the Brandywine campus that boarded a bus and headed to Harrisburg to speak with legislators about the budget issues affecting Penn State University along with many other state colleges and universities. Since there has been a proposal to cut state funding to Penn State by 52%, the concerns were widespread and many students spoke out about their concerns.

Stephen Iastesta, the Governmental Affairs Chair, organized the trip including securing transportation, compiling the contact information of all the students attending, and keeping everyone informed of the day's events. He did a fantastic job and was responsible for the trip running very smoothly from beginning to end.

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