

# the daily collegian opinions

editorial opinion

## Educator ethics

PSU officials should show income sources

Have you ever wondered whether University President John W. Oswald gets paid for sitting on the board of directors of General Public Utilities Corp., owner of the nuclear power plant at Three Mile Island? Ever wondered what other University officials hold paid positions with companies outside Penn State — or, if you're really curious, whether there could be any connection between those jobs outside the University and administrators' performance within? Too bad. That kind of information just isn't available. Penn State officials don't have to file financial disclosure statements.

Administrators at state-owned colleges have to provide the statements. Elected state officials have to provide them.

Last week the state Supreme Court ruled that all local government officials, appointed and elected, have to fill out the forms, which reveal sources of outside income but not specific amounts.

The state's ethics law, one of the better of its kind in the country, was enacted in 1978 after what seemed like half the state Legislature was indicted on charges of corruption. The core of the legislation, financial disclosure provisions, means that if there are conflicts of interest involving public officials and private sources of income, the public must know about it.

For example, if an official in charge of buying asphalt for the state Department of

Transportation gets "consulting fees" from asphalt firms, his financial disclosure forms would reveal that information.

University administrators are not state employees — the benefits of their independence from state control in everyday matters is clear. But there's no reason why their sources of income shouldn't be made public just like all other public officials in charge of millions of tax dollars.

Most of the local officials who came under the ethics act last week didn't object to having to file the forms. Among their comments: "I find no problem with it... It sounds like more of invasion of privacy than it really is."

I personally have been filling it out, and I don't view it as invading my privacy. "I am for disclosure of sources for all elected and appointed officials."

"I don't think it hurts anyone — it probably keeps some people honest."

We haven't heard that kind of talk out of University officials, but maybe we should. If the law can bolster public confidence in the efficiency with which the University spends its money, University administrators would help their cause in Harrisburg by voluntarily filing financial disclosure forms.

If not, the ethics law should be strengthened so they don't have any choice.

The Daily Collegian's editorial opinion is determined by its Board of Opinion, with the editor-in-chief holding final responsibility.

## Costly joke

Congress shows high-class hypocrisy

The United States Congress can be accused of a lot of things, but it can't be accused of not having a sense of humor.

Last week, those crowned-princes of Capitol Hill trundled into court jesters when they realized they were butting up against the midnight deadline for passing an emergency spending bill.

Senate Republican leader Howard Baker sternly offered this one-liner: "The whole government of the United States stops functioning if we don't pass this bill."

More comic words were never spoken. But with the government theoretically about to go broke, Senate leaders, somehow maintaining a straight face, ordered all clocks stopped at 11:50 p.m. Who says time can't stand still?

That hilarious illusion lasted about 20 minutes when the senators ordered time to proceed, but their real knee-slapper was still in the hopper.

With the audience, budget-tightening words of President Reagan echoing in their ears, those diligent lawmakers, dedicated to the task of reducing federal spending, truly outdid themselves. Just for laughs, they voted themselves a pay raise, while hitting limits on their tax-deductible spending accounts.

Get it? The Reagan administration goes about taking free lunches away from grade school children and cutting welfare benefits to millions of needy people, and Congress, which says fit to pass those thrifty proposals into law, could not pass up the opportunity to make their comparative lives on Easy Street even easier. Heck, congressmen make only \$60,662.50 a year now.

What a great joke! Those congressmen really are a funny bunch. What will they think of next?

## Tell Mr. Reagan where he can put his missile...



- Ⓐ land based
- Ⓑ airborne
- Ⓒ other

## reader opinion

No help

For the past couple of years a group of us have been getting together to go out to Centre Crest Nursing Home once a week. Through the University Volunteer Service Center we were able to arrange these visits and organize activities for the elderly. Upon returning to school this year, we found that the volunteer center was dissolved.

What we want to know is why? Was it another victim of the budget cuts? Was it a lack of awareness, or just another case of student apathy?

For whatever reason, we find it somewhat appalling that at a university with an enrollment of over 30,000 there is no such service. It seems a shame that more of the positive energy that exists at the University could not be funneled into an organization that would benefit both the community and the students.

Kathy McMahon, 10th-individual and family studies  
Rita Dealy, 10th-general arts and sciences  
Oct. 2

## Stadium DMZ

Last Saturday I saw people climb up 10-foot railings. I watched them destroy a snow fence. I looked on as two 5-foot girls were crushed against a metal post. That was too much.

I was supposedly a volunteer student usher at a Penn State football game. Instead, I felt like an observer in a DMZ. People were hurting each other.

I will be back again on Saturday, doing what the stadium management tells me to do. I hope like hell the situation improves. I would hate to see someone get a concussion, blinded, cut or hurt in any way.

Whoever came up with "Fight on State" didn't mean the people in the stands.

Student usher number 1087  
Oct. 5

## Federal sex discrimination law under fire

By ELIZABETH ANGGOTT

14th-civil engineering and general arts and sciences

14th-civil engineering and general arts and sciences students of one sex. Discrimination on the basis of marital status is prohibited, as are admission inquiries into the marital status of applicants.

Title IX prohibits sex discrimination in academic, extracurricular, research, occupational training and other educational programs. Schools may not have different rules for male and female students. Recruitment and admissions procedures must be nondiscriminatory. Financial aid and other awards or prizes given by the school itself must be distributed in a non-discriminatory manner. This includes graduate teaching fellowships and research assistantships. Athletic scholarships must provide opportunities for both sexes to receive aid in proportion to the number of students of each sex participating in athletic programs.

Title IX prohibits sex discrimination in housing and health benefits. Men and women may have separate housing and be required to live in dormitories; however, housing rules must apply equally to both sexes and housing as a whole must be proportionate in quantity and quality for both sexes. Comparable health benefits must be provided to men and women. If full health services are provided, gynecological services must be included. Health insurance offered by an institution must be non-discriminatory.

Sex discrimination in athletics is prohibited by Title IX. Schools may have separate teams; however the

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Thus, any school receiving federal aid must comply with Title IX regulations. Since nearly every college and university receives federal aid, nearly every college and university is covered. Some of the major provisions of the law are summarized below.

Title IX prohibits sex discrimination in school admissions policies; however, single-sex, undergraduate schools may remain single-sex. Schools may not rank-IX. Schools may have separate teams; however the

## A teacher profiles six students

She was having trouble with the course. She was behind on the few quizzes, was worried about the upcoming midterm, and had stayed after class to ask what she should do.

"I guess I'll go home and memorize all the formulas."

"No! Re-read the text, and try to figure out why what it's telling you is true."

She stayed after class again a week later, after the exam.

"I took your advice, and did very well on the exam. I wanted to let you know."

"Thanks for telling me. I was worried about you. I checked to see whether she seemed to understand what I was saying, and encouraging her to ask questions."

After the end of the term, I looked for the comments portion of her student evaluation form. I'd used the computer-coded forms rather than the ones I usually use which request a signature, but I thought I recognized hers by her handwriting and use of words.

She'd concentrated on criticizing "Mr. Brackin" for sometimes being late to class.

He was taking a differential equations course, but had trouble doing high school algebra, and he'd just failed the first midterm. He'd been an indifferent student for years, but now had a pregnant wife, and he was rapidly running out of money. He needed that course, and an engineering degree and a job, and he needed them fast. He came to me for tutoring.

I told him I couldn't make any promises, but would see what I could do. I met with him two or three times every week.

He worked hard, very hard, both at the overload of courses he was taking and at the work I gave him. After a few weeks, his math was much better.

He passed the course — he even came close to making a B — and came back to see me several months later.

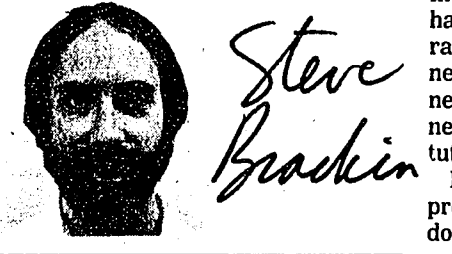
"I've got a daughter!"

"Congratulations!"

"And we're in a place where we can live rent-free if I fix it up!"

"You know, I haven't told you this before, but I envy you."

Steve Brackin is a graduate student in mathematics. His column appears on Tuesdays.



Steve Brackin

## Faculty-student contact deserves attention

Editor's Note: John Vargas is an assistant professor of environmental science at DuBois campus and served on the Freshman Year Experience committee. Because of his location, he did not "adopt" a team of freshmen as other committee members did. Daily Collegian Staff Writer Becky Jones interviewed Vargas on the phone about his work on the committee. The following transcript is edited for length and clarity.

COLLEGIAN: What was the most significant fact that you thought the committee found out?

VARGAS: The relationship between the freshmen at University Park and faculty was cited from time to time. But on the basis of my discussions with the committee members and by reading some of the paragraphs that were written for English 10, by examining some of the reports that were given to us, the aspect of personal relationship between faculty and students just wasn't coming out at University Park. There was a remoteness typically indicated by the members of the committee.

It was a recurring thing. I think we found some things that the University was doing well. I certainly wouldn't want to slight that.

One of the things that came out strong was the registration procedure.

There are a number of concerns that we feel need additional examination and additional consideration. One of them is faculty interaction with the students. I don't think the faculty or every faculty member should be expected to bring that home. I think that we're all qualified, nor are we all interested in establishing an aspect of personal relationship with the freshmen.

COLLEGIAN: Do you have any recommendations to remedy the lack of interaction?

VARGAS: I think the recommendation of the committee was that — and this frequently happens in the University system — we see a need to establish another committee to investigate means of dealing with that concern.

I don't think it's something that exists even on our own campus. I think there are personality differences among the faculty that may not be conducive to the

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But I just don't see how that could be possible at University Park. The majority of students there are not from the State College community, where here they are. I think size is an extremely important thing.

In all of the stress for further consideration, I really think that many of them are problems that relate to the size of the University, the bigness of the University, and the systemic nature of the problem. It's not just a matter of the communications process within it. There are just things that are difficult to deal with. I think the University deals in an admirable way with some of them, with many of them, but there are some problems that I think one of them was something with bureaucracy. I think it's a problem.

I don't believe that it's really a bad thing or a totally negative thing that there is not personal interaction between faculty and students.

In many instances that's a good thing. I really don't think you can say this is the faculty's responsibility or it is solely a student problem. If a student really wants or needs that kind of interaction, if he pursues it, even at University Park he could find a faculty member that would be a listener for him.

I feel as part of the learning process, there has to be a

## Research methods should be more precise

By GREG HYDUKE

10th-communications and business

Allow me to plead ignorance. I don't know Patricia Farrell or any member of her special Freshman Year Experience Committee, created last year to measure the ups and downs of first year life at this University. I'm even less acquainted with the members of the Faculty Senate, whom along with Provost Edward D. Eddy, planned, appointed and implemented the said committee.

I do, however, know how to conduct a survey in a carefully valid and reliable manner with respect to the objectives of the investigative task. Consider this: a normally listless, impassive observer's avenue into the thick of things. But somebody, somewhere at some time, a veteran researcher in his own right, advised me upon inquiry that "humanistic/empirionistic investigative style" is a nice way of saying sloppy and unsystematic.

It's an inappropriate lack to assume when part of the committee's initial task was to "propose some possible solutions and perhaps most importantly to suggest specific administrative remedies which could be implemented where appropriate." Imagine a specific administrative remedy based on what a random sample

of freshmen talked about over ice cream cones at Baskin-Robbins.

Another possible cause of the negligent, yet intentional idea to allow committee members freedom to choose their own data collection approaches. What kind of systematic method is over the board in mixing the disparately recorded results of open-ended or scale-item questions? To make matters worse, written questionnaires were distributed at the beginning held group meetings of participants and their group leader, where issues were discussed and oral responses to questions subsequently found on the questionnaires) were recorded. This action borders on putting words in the mouths of the respondents. I've raised, deviant participants. Didn't the committee realize the pitfalls of group conformity (distortion, bias, reluctance to maintain a dissenting view, etc.) as decided on this team interview method?

Thirdly, there is a researcher's maxim involved here that would sound something like this: "You shall not act in a manner so as to elicit socially desirable responses. Taking participants to the Terrace Room is not the strictest adherence to this rule of thumb. By meeting and I'll tell you anything you want to hear. This isn't an accusation of at-

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tempted subtle bribery. But I can't fathom why the committee thought going to the Terrace Room was a good idea. This is all a joke. I believe I'll have another More rum place and less Coke I live in tempo. And how it makes me sore It seems every day now 'They send us "just one more" I lost my pink slip Boy it made me blue 'They said we're sorry young man So sorry that you're through Those funny upperclassmen They think they are so cool They call heavy drinking 'Oh it's really great.' Others complain But the dorm food is fine I get so hungry



## the daily collegian op-ed

### Ode to Fellow Freshmen

Here I am at Penn State It's left me all aghast Those wild and crazy parties I swear they are a blast Loose girls in make-up Sit down in my class They sort of giggle quietly When I pinch their ass Please don't imagine This is all a joke I believe I'll have another More rum place and less Coke I live in tempo. And how it makes me sore It seems every day now 'They send us "just one more" I lost my pink slip Boy it made me blue 'They said we're sorry young man So sorry that you're through Those funny upperclassmen They think they are so cool They call heavy drinking 'Oh it's really great.' Others complain But the dorm food is fine I get so hungry

Just standing in line The food's cooked with care I hit the bathroom Just five times a day Seventy-eight dollars for five measly books At least back robbers admit they're crooks Those Nitany Lions never ever lose The fans love the games As well as the booze My midterm went nameless But others are dumber They're in real trouble Their tests had no number I got in the hospital Made the wrong decisions Next time I go there I'm taking along provisions So when I'm home at term break And they say how's "Good Of State" I'll smile a while and then say "Oh it's really great."

Brad Desch, 1st-pre-law  
Oct. 5

## A 'clear impression' University pays the price for size, variety

Editor's note: Paul Bell was a member of the Faculty Senate's Freshman Year Experience committee.

By PAUL BELL

Student Trustee

The "Freshman Experience" is a difficult concept to nail down. Each freshman is an individual and each does it with what he will. In citing difficulties and concerns, the Freshman Experience Committee pointed mainly to University-wide problems. These concerns are unique to freshmen only in that they have had less time to get used to them and are still freshly upset.

Poor academic advising, remote instructors and bureaucracy are not problems for any one group of students at Penn State. Similarly, students at all levels experience a rich variety of educational opportunities, great facilities and many excellent faculty.

The freshman gave encouragement for things that are done well and re-emphasized the need to work on the bugs in the system. Let us hope that some fresh ideas and motivation will come from this to improve the learning experience.

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However, I do not think this document should be taken as an inventory of the University's isolated strengths and weaknesses. The report is a good look at the reality of Penn State. If we want to know what Penn State

## Freshmen need help with social, roommate coping

By MICHAEL MCGEE

Member, Joint Committee on Freshman Experience

During the Fall and Winter term of last year, the Joint Committee on the Freshman Experience was formed to study the freshman experience at the University. As a member of that committee representing Residential Life Programs, I was particularly concerned and sensitive about those freshmen who were having a difficult time adjusting to the University.

The methodology used by the committee consisted mainly of interviewing freshmen and cataloging their residence halls impact on freshmen of temporal events, one frames beginning with pre-Penn State attendance up through the reactions at the end of Winter Term.

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After interviewing many freshmen it became apparent that residence halls had a significant impact on the freshmen. This impact was not mainly positive. Freshmen gave good reviews, in general, to Resident Assistants and Orientation Leaders, and even though these were positive comments, they seemed to indicate at least a moderate degree of satisfaction with the present structure.

When looking at other data, however, freshmen seemed to possess only a very meager amount of both social coping skills and academic orientation. This was of particular concern to me because I feel that this is one area that needs to be addressed immediately and on more than a trial or error basis.

Surely some research or other steps could be taken into the whole area of easing freshmen into this high-voltage collegian environment with emphasis on how to deal with raising their coping skills and simultaneously eliminating the most harmful obstacles that, as a system, put in their way.

In recommending action along these lines, it is my feeling that freshmen are particularly apprehensive about roommates and being compatible with them. Dealing with these anxieties before hand by being more flexible in the way we assign freshmen could be beneficial.

Grouping freshmen by major and simultaneously recognizing the limitations and hardships it places on students, and particularly freshmen.

The freshman experience at the University is, indeed, a unique and often undesirable world. It is a world of number two cards and all-nighters, Ols and Ras, social jitters and building fraternities, Beaver Stadium and Delta Building — a virtual RUBIK'S cube of emotions, peer pressures, good times and values.

In closing, I would like to state that as a Residential Life Program staff member and as a member of the Freshman Year committee I feel that it is my obligation and the obligation of all those who work with freshmen to help them solve that RUBIK'S cube and in the process make their freshman experience at the University a positive one.



## the daily Collegian

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