

opinions

The Daily Collegian
Thursday Sept. 1, 1983

editorial opinion

Looking for jobs

Thanks to apparent philosophical differences, the University's Advanced Technology Center of Central and Northern Pennsylvania will be hindered in performing the job that it has been established to do: create jobs and contribute to the growth of the Commonwealth's economy.

The Ben Franklin Partnership Challenge Grant Board — the board that approves the levels of state funding for four new advanced technology centers — gave the University's center second-year funding of \$1.4 million, only 34 percent of the \$4 million it had requested. That amount is less than what the state's other three centers — located in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and the Lehigh Valley — received.

The University's center will also receive about \$2.5 million from cash pledges and commitments of in-kind services from private industry. Nevertheless, cuts in the budget must be made, and some proposed projects will have to be cancelled.

Board chairman Walter H. Plosa, deputy state secretary of commerce for technology and policy development, said at the board's Aug. 11 meeting that the center's projects were not as likely to create jobs as the projects proposed by other centers.

But the University's center — serving central and northern Pennsylvania — encompasses an area larger and more diverse than the other centers and is the only one to include satellites, one serving the Harrisburg, Lancaster and York area and the other serving the Erie

area. The region, despite its size, includes few major industrial centers. Thus, the emphasis of the University's center seems to be on the creation of jobs in the long term through research and development.

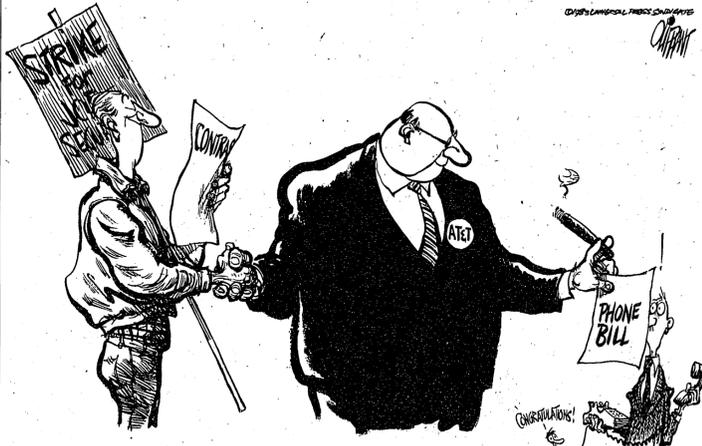
This is not the first time the board has expressed disappointment in the University's proposals. Earlier this year the board delayed granting the center its initial \$250,000 appropriation until the University agreed to adjust its proposal to follow six conditions, including an increase in funding for its two satellites.

However, John L. Leathers, executive director of the University's center, said he believes the center's proposal was a good one. Rather than complaining about the second-year budget, he wants to concentrate on creating a positive proposal for board consideration next week.

Perhaps next year the center will have made some progress and the board will have a better idea of what the University's center is trying to do. Perhaps then it will respond favorably with more funding.

Pennsylvanians need jobs now, but they must also look ahead to ensure that jobs will exist for them in the future. The partnership was created for economic development — as well as for job creation — and that goal should not be forgotten.

The research that results in improvements takes time. So the developments that will make the state's economy grow tomorrow deserve the patience and support of citizens, business leaders and government officials today.



the Collegian

Thursday, September 1, 1983

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The Collegian reserves the right to edit letters for length and to reject any that are libelous or do not conform to standards of good taste. Because of the numbers of letters received, the Collegian cannot guarantee publication of all the letters it receives.

Mail letters to: The Daily Collegian, 126 Carnegie Building, University Park, Pa. 16802. Names will withheld on request. Letters may also be selected for publication in The Weekly Collegian.

reader opinion

Vietnam vet

I read with sorrow in the August 26th edition in The Daily Collegian of yet another tragic death of another Vietnam veteran. This 30-year-old man, who baptized people in the Ohio River while he was dressed only in his fatigues, was killed by police as he was shooting at the police station while trying to fire-bomb the police station.

As the police had said about this man, "We all realized sooner or later we were going to have a prob-

lem with him." So, another "problem" out of the way. My guess is that at least 50,000 "problems" have been eliminated from society, whether in some such similar manner, or by even more directly self-inflicted wounds. Add to this the number of men finding their way into prisons around the country who could not "readjust" upon their return home from the war, and the number of "problems" removed from society soars!

The fact is the problems of Vietnam remain quite clearly im-

planted in our society today, and for many, the Vietnam War has not gone away so easily. The Vietnam veteran with residual "readjustment" problems is much like the alcoholic — he affects at least 10 others around him, from his family, neighbor, employer, to the unknown "other guy" he meets on the street corner. The Vietnam War was 10 years long — long enough to include nearly three million teenage men. Think of it this way: the combatant in World War II was, on the average, 25 years old; the Vietnam veteran was 19 years old. In

other words, he was like most freshmen or sophomores in college today who are in the midst of their identity revolution. Some identity! Survival instinct, anger and depression.

The problems, from the war itself to the unwelcome homecoming, are too numerous to explore in a single, short letter. Because Marines have recently been killed in Lebanon, and American troops are inland in South America, perhaps America's — like the individual Americans — experiences in Vietnam will be enlightening to us all. I would suggest to

anyone interested in a refined exploration of "The 10-year War," now 10 years old, to consider watching the Penn State PBS-TV series special beginning Oct. 4, which presents a 10-part series examining aspects of the war, from various personal, social, political, and historical perspectives. Some of the stories and some of the forgotten aspects of Vietnam need to be remembered.

James E.endorf, ACSW, graduate individual and family studies, Sept. 1.

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contrast: brotherly love?

Houses of camaraderie

By MATTHEW L. WOLFORD
1983 graduate-English

Each spring, you start thinking. You still haven't committed yourself to any living arrangement for next year. Spring terms end all too soon, and you know time's limited. You decide you want to join a fraternity because every time you've visited one it had cold beer, hot girls, and funky tunes.

forum

The guys at house A are flesh-crawling prima donnas, but the guys at house B are peachy-keen and well-fed. You'd like to join house B, but you're apprehensive about the entire frat scene: rushing (you may not get a bid), pledging (you may not want a bid), and being a brother (all your friends will disown you if you accept a bid). So, you wonder what you should do, and all you can think about are the scenes from "Animal House."

You decide fraternities are not for you, and you may be right. On the other hand, you may be wrong. The first thing to get straight in your mind is that fraternity parties and fraternity living are not the same thing. When the party's over, the house quiets down — just like the study lounge at the end of the hall, the room those five guys are crammed into.

I've found that the best way to look at fraternity living is as a cross between the dorms and the apartments. As the house I lived in, I had the freedom of choice and mobility I had in my apartment, and the camaraderie I enjoyed in the dorms. My food was cooked for me, my dishes washed, my bathrooms cleaned. I had a free parking space. And as if that weren't enough, I was allowed to have a coffee-maker in my room. "Unheard of," you say, but it's true. I did sacrifice some of the peace and quiet of an apartment, but not as much as I did when I lived in Geary Hall.

I know it's hard, but if you're going to rush, try to be yourself. If you like to eat spaghetti with your hands, do it. You may not be called out to dinner again, but you wouldn't have wanted to live with all those unsuited characters anyway. Rush dinners are not intended to frighten anybody, they are simply a means by which you can meet the brothers of a house, and they can meet you. Try to meet as many people as you can.

If you don't get a bid at the house you like, try not to hold a grudge. The brother might be saying, "Don't go away mad, just go away," but I doubt it. What usually happens is that you didn't have that certain something that lights up your scoreboard, that says "this guy's for us." No one is to blame; no crime has been committed. More often than not, it's their loss, not yours. Remember, you probably won't get every job you'll ever apply for either. Maybe for the same reasons.

If you do get a bid at the house you like, congratulations. But before accepting a bid, find out all the details (or as many of them as you can). Talk to your parents, talk to your friends, and think about what you really want. Also, stop by the house sometime when you're

not expected — lunch, for example. It could alter your impression a little.

One of the more popular misconceptions about fraternities is that "pledging" and "slavery" are nearly synonymous terms. Wrong. Granted, pledging is no picnic — but if approached with a positive attitude and a dash of optimism, it can be rewarding. Most pledge programs I've heard about (God forbid) are twofold in nature: 1. Learning — the pledges get to know the brothers, some facts about the house's history, and perhaps a few trivialities, secrets as it were; and 2. House maintenance — this is the tough part. Pledges are responsible for the menial labor and that goes for maintaining the house's physical plant. Sweeping carpets, cleaning toilets, washing windows, changing lightbulbs, raking leaves, you name it. (They have been known to move an occasional keg or two as well.) Depending on the number of pledges at any given house, daily "duties" can usually be completed somewhere between 20 and 45 minutes.

When you hear that house A's pledge program is tougher than house B's, what are you trying? Chances are, the difference in the programs lies in the "learning" aspect of the program.

From what I can guess, it's not what the pledges are being taught, but how the pledges are being taught. House A's brothers, for example, think that their pledges should learn the finer points of socializing, they lock them in a room with a keg of beer and instructions to finish it before coming out. "That's the buffalo chips," you say. "I'd never put up with that. Typical fraternity nonsense." Well, have you ever been locked in a room with five or six of your buddies and enough beer to last the night?

House B has a reputation for yelling and screaming at their pledges when the duties haven't been done. When house B's bathroom hadn't been cleaned in two days, leaving just enough slime on the floor for a good game of flip-flop hockey, the brothers decided it was time for a chat with the pledges. When I left a pair of underwear in my father's bathroom this past summer, you'd have thought Armageddon had arrived. Same thing.

A note about public buffoonery: Streaking, rain-dancing, and wearing suits for a week can be fun for some (God save them), hell for others. It's a shame that some traditions cannot be easily lost, but that's the way it is. If you've ever waited in a rain day and a half for a dorm contract, you know what I mean.

Of course, temptations do exist in fraternity houses. You may need to train yourself to study outside the house. You may decide that Wednesday nights aren't worth Thursday mornings. You may find out that all sorority girls are not the same; you may find out that they are. You'll definitely make some adjustments in the way you present yourself, which may be good or bad. And you'll probably find out that the secret isn't so great, the people aren't so different, and the food still doesn't rate next to Mom's.

You'll learn that living in a fraternity holds no mystique; it's just a bunch of guys in a big, old house — and you may wonder why so many people view them with contempt. If and when you reach that point, you'll know why I wrote this piece.

'Bastions of ignorance'

By KARL HOKE
1983 graduate-labor studies
and MARK STEVENSON
1983 graduate-prelaw

Reflecting upon our four years spent at Penn State and more particularly those spent in the Penn State fraternity system, we feel compelled to convey our abhorrence with the Greek system in general and its many and varied manifestations.

forum

We made a mistake as freshman when we associated ourselves with organizations we erroneously perceived to represent true camaraderie, academic excellence, and a culture of both emotional and intellectual growth are a part. Fraternities and sororities, we've discovered, are the complete antithesis of these three and many other qualities.

Indulgence in material objects (houses and the latest fashion, for example), their simple and easily understood designs and uses, preclude an appropriate understanding of the nature and purpose of higher education. Getting drunk, getting laid and partaking in intramurals are held to be sacrosanct by the Greeks. However, this preoccupation with sports, genitals and intoxication retards the achievement of the human intellectual potential. The phrase "bastions of ignorance" is all too appropriate.

The values exalted in Greek society here at Penn State should be subordinated to more intellectually and emotionally mature ideals. Greeks are so cohesive and conspicuous that students perceive them as trendsetters and cultivators of accepted social norms. This is tragic. The values and norms seen as acceptable by so many students are, in fact, a collection of sophomoric, ostentatious displays, a smattering of these are: 1. their simplistic, two-dimensional perceptions of the world; 2. their equation of Greeks with what is commendable and non-Greeks with what is not; 3. the dehumanizing aspects of pledging and initiation rites (which are for the most part meaningless and childish); and lastly, the exploitation and degradation of women manifested in the interest in tales of explicit escapades. This brief listing only suggests the immaturity that pervades Greek life.

For one Greek to call another brother or sister, there must first exist a period of debasement heavily laden with, notoriously traditional hazing. We term this "brotherhood by initial subordination." They contend the end justifies the means.

Brotherhood, as we understand it, is a bond emanating from a necessary precondition of equality and mutual respect, not one of inequality and humiliation. Friendship and brotherhood must be marked by simultaneity; they must be co-extensive. To suggest, as the Greeks do, that true brotherhood exists as a precursor to friendship is not only ludicrous and unfounded, but is consistent with their simplistic per-

ceptions of the world. How can brotherhood defined by these means be viewed as anything but hypocrisy?

Another flag of deficiency flown by Greek organizations is their exclusionary membership practices. Of 1,220 fraternity members pictured in the 1983 edition of La Vie, only four are black. This is one-third of 1 percent, or less than one-sixth of the current University-wide ratio. If blacks want to partake in the Greek experience, (why they would want to escapes us), they are limited to joining all black fraternities. Although no purporting to be one-gate of the current University-wide ratio, the degradation is ever admitted to, the discrimination result of exclusionary membership practices serve as sufficient evidence that fraternities are, in fact, racist. This same prevalent racism extends to sororities.

To establish and maintain a position in their social hierarchy, or "pecking order," Greeks, by consensus, judge their prospective initiates on superficial criteria. This amounts to a process that subordinates individuality to the procurement of clones.

Exclusionary criteria employed as tools of appraisal, combined with the reluctant, voluntary submission to this shallow scrutinization, is a perversion of man's supposed ability to objectively and independently evaluate himself and his peers. This inevitably leads to conformity (through less than sublime) coercion. Should one of the Greeks develop any inclination to venture from the narrow, preordained paths of materialism, ignorance, immaturity, arrogance and such, he or she is immediately mocked, chastised, labeled weird, and either pressured into conforming or is summarily ostracized from the order.

It is bewildering — even shocking — that organizations such as these not only exist, but flourish at institutions of higher learning. Any rational, educated, empathetic human being must hold fraternities and sororities as anathema. Pulling through our time of involvement in fraternal organizations cursed by pretentiousness, over-indulgence in useless luxury, postponement of the maturation process, and dogmatic conformity to regressive ideals, we cannot help but feel angry, bitter, ashamed and offended. In fact, the only solace we can find in our experience with the Penn State Greeks, is that to fully appreciate the light, one must first be submerged in total darkness. We've discovered that when one matures and realizes that values held dear by so many are preposterous and repulsive, one is forced to sever any semblance of identification with them.

We welcome responses to our commentary. For Aristotle spoke the truth when he said, "Men are competent judges only of that which they understand."

The Daily Collegian invites all readers to submit forums for this page to any current faculty concerning the University, the nation or the world. All forums should be three to five double-spaced typed pages long and should include the writer's name, semester and major, if applicable, and phone number. They should be mailed, or brought to The Daily Collegian, 126 Carnegie Building, University Park, Pa., 16802.

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