

## editorial opinion

### A question of credibility

It isn't easy to criticize a report that rates Penn State among the top universities in the nation, but one must if the credibility of it is in question and the substance as well as the research methods are ridiculed by professors and educators alike.

The study that gave the University a 4.60 rating — out of a possible 4.99 — is the Gourman Report, a supposed in-depth ranking of worldwide colleges and universities released at the end of 1983.

Scholarly criticisms of the report, which examines nearly 50 fields of study, range from the sublime to the severe. And for good reason. Some have labeled the findings "questionable" while others such as the University of Pennsylvania's David Webster, who critiqued earlier Gourman studies during his graduate work, call the previous reports an "absolute disaster."

Probably the primary criticism is echoed by William E. Toombs, director of the center for the study of higher education at this University. He thinks the report's criteria are not valid or open to criticism. And he also attacks the report's methodology — mainly because the author doesn't explain how he arrived at his findings.

The author, Jack Gourman, a professor of political science at California State University at Northridge, is, however, quick to defend both his methods and criteria. But unfortunately, the vagueness of his explanation and the unscholarly methods used both lend credence to his many critics.

Gourman has stated that an explanation of his work was prepared, but the publisher of the report declined to include it because of the additional printing costs. No wonder — the explanation is hundreds of pages long. Toombs pointed out that the majority of "credible" scholarly evaluations of higher education are produced by an advisory committee, which traditionally publishes its

findings plus the explanation of the research methods. Gourman, instead, wrote his report alone.

His graduate program rankings have caught much flak also. Gourman evaluates each program by examining basic criteria in each area of study. These criteria, simply explained, are: the variety of different disciplines in each major; the number and quality of the instructors; the quality of the administration; the strength of the curriculum; the amount of faculty research in each field; the library resources available and the amount of money allocated for study in each field.

Each criteria is ranked, given a number, added to the other criteria and then averaged to ascertain the major's overall ranking. So far so good.

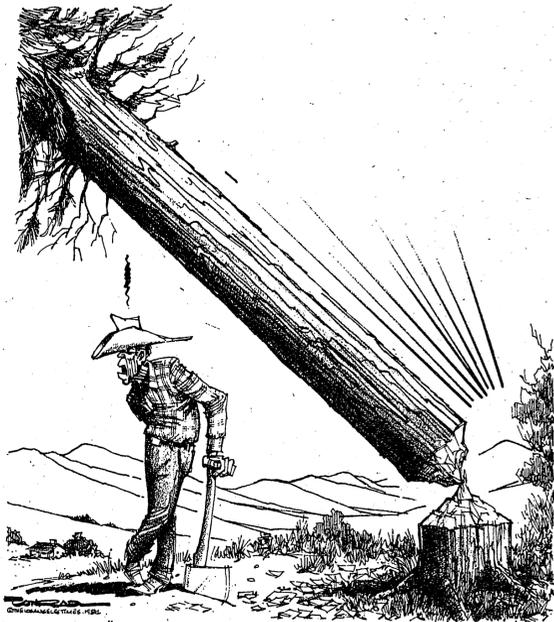
However, when examining the initial rankings of each criteria, an amazing similarity emerges. For example, a school with the 15th highest-ranked chemistry department also coincidentally has the 15th best chemistry curriculum, the 15th best chemistry faculty and so on.

Does the graduate school that receives the 15th largest amount of money or the 15th best research facilities necessarily have the 15th best program when all factors are considered?

Gourman has certainly produced an extensively researched report that does not exclude any major universities in the world. He obviously had to put much time and effort into it.

However, in view of the response and the accompanying lack of credibility the report now has, perhaps Gourman's time would be better spent improving the quality of education through his teaching skills.

His report certainly has not done anything to further that goal.



## the daily Collegian

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The Collegian reserves the right to edit letters for length and to reject letters if they 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 may be withheld on request. Letters may also be selected for publication in The Weekly Collegian.

## reader opinion

### Opinion confirmed

I follow the columns by Manjula Saxena with great enthusiasm. But, I have been following the letters to the editor in reply to her first column with even more interest. I find a paper's editorial letters an accurate reflection of the prevailing political opinion among its readers. Thus, I must thank all those who wrote in to berate Manjula — they confirmed my opinion as to the provinciality and narrow-mindedness of the general student body.

Manjula's expressed political opinions are so similar to mine, I will not bore everyone by repeating them. All I ask is that she continue to write with as much verve and sparkle as she did in her first column.

Thank you, Manjula for bringing some political honesty and wit to The Daily Collegian.

### Little 'beasties'

I would like to respond to Michael Vand's Feb. 6 column. As someone who spent last summer working in pest management (a.k.a. roach control), perhaps I can offer some suggestions to Mr. Vand and his like-wise plagued readers in controlling those disgusting little "beasties."

While it is true that having cockroaches is not a sign of

bad housekeeping, all possible efforts should be made at cleanliness. This means keeping food in tightly sealed containers, not leaving dirty dishes and pots on the stove or sink, wiping up spills, and mopping up wet counters. The last thing is especially important. Roaches love kitchens and bathrooms as they are usually very moist, warm areas.

Roaches can be introduced into an otherwise uninhabited area via their egg cases which can cling to cloth, paper, and cardboard. Be especially wary of used furniture unless it has been specially treated, and also cardboard boxes and paper bags.

Be sure to seal up any possible means of entry, such as cracks around windows, counters, sinks and stoves, and spaces around pipes.

As you may have noticed, pesticides do little good. Roaches are sturdy little critters and can develop high tolerances to chemicals (Why do you think roaches have been around so long?). While I cannot comment on using The Daily Collegian to kill roaches, I can suggest a better method.

Boric acid, a powder obtainable at drug stores for under \$2, is quite effective at killing roaches. If it is sprinkled in cracks, crevices and by baseboards, it kills the roaches by dissolving their insides when they ingest it while removing it from their fuzzy little legs. This method is infinitely better than using pesticides — it is cheap, clean, odorless and much more pleasant.

The roaches do not usually die at your feet, but rather in

the privacy of their own homes so that there are no dead roaches to clean up.

I cannot guarantee that all of your roach problems will be solved by following my suggestions, but there should be a definite reduction in number in a few weeks (be patient, roaches can be very prolific). If you make your dwelling inhospitable enough for roaches, they will go find someone else to live with.

Mary Russell, junior-biology  
Feb. 13

### Horror stories

I wish to thank Adam Trott for his "Blind Cuts" letter. He, unknowingly, illustrated the point of my original letter very well.

In my first letter I commented on the "horror stories" on the effects of budget cuts in education. Mr. Trott's response was that he lost \$500 a year, a "blind cut," in his words, by the Reagan administration.

It should be noted that Mr. Trott is a senior at this university. The loss of aid did not force him out of school, only to people getting an undeserved handout from the government.

While students who's aid has been cut back, like myself, may not be able to spend as much as they would want to on

non-school activities, they are able to attend college. Generally the cuts have not effected the number of students in college. The percent of people between the ages of 18-24 was the same as it was in 1980 (the last full year of the Carter administration).

Jonathan M. Jacobs, junior-public service  
Feb. 10

### Trap response

This letter is in regards to the one written by Jim Johnson titled, "Morality Trap" in the Feb. 8 issue of the Collegian.

Jim is operating under false assumptions, perhaps obtained by negative contact with church individuals.

The true Christian church of today encourages both men and women to be leaders, conforming to the spiritual, rather than the secular.

It's because God really does love us that he exhorts us to refrain from immorality: it's psychological as well as spiritual, and in some cases even physical, effects are debilitating.

Michele Fehr, senior-special ed.  
Feb. 8

## Student aid responsibility should be borne by the student

Government-sponsored financial aid for college students is a sensitive topic for discussion in today's era of fiscal austerity. Unfortunately, because of the emotional hysteria surrounding this issue, no substantive debate can occur. Students tend to respond vociferously to threatened cutbacks in aid in a manner that is devoid of much thoughtful analysis, and it is high time for someone to bring a measure of perspective to the issue.

Second, more is not necessarily better — even with educational funding. The notion that more dollars will fix anything is a fallacy that the American people appear to be especially vulnerable to. Specifically with regard to education, federal funding of educational programs has ballooned geometrically in the last two decades and the result has been a steady decline in standardized test scores. The image that many politicians attempt to convey, that by increasing aid programs we will become a nation of enlightened scholars, is not realistic. More dollars in aid of themselves don't help.

Third, while critics of the Administration are quick to call attention to waste in the Pentagon, they are passively ignorant of correspondingly flagrant waste in the educational entitlements programs.

These programs seldom incorporate performance standards into eligibility requirements — the result being that many students with sub-2.0 G.P.A.s are subsidized through college to get degrees that are all but meaningless. Investment, and that is what educational entitlements are, should always be based on anticipated

return. Students who don't perform up to acceptable levels of academic achievement ought not to be funded.

The preceding three points are not particularly profound; they are simply conventional wisdom that has been thrust aside amidst the furor of an emotionally-charged debate. This has resulted in action dictated by emotion more than seasoned thought — this isn't an optimal state of affairs.

Senator Claiborne Pell, the delightfully erudite legislator from the state of Rhode Island, envisioned a grant program as a means of ensuring that all Americans have access to a college education. While I concede that grants should be a component of a comprehensive financial aid program, they cannot and should not be the foundation on which the program rests.

It's a fact of human nature — if you take a person off the street and offer him a free meal at a good restaurant, chances are that he'll order surf and turf or some equally enticing and expensive entree. However, if he were picking up the tab himself, chances are that he would be a bit less extravagant. He would still eat, but he'd use seasoned judgment because the burden of payment would rest with him.

This must be incorporated into student aid programs. Simply handing someone money and saying go get yourself an education is foolish. Students must feel a

sense of responsibility; they must have an ongoing incentive to perform to an exacting degree as they are capable of.

An argument could be made that the Guaranteed Student Loan Program satisfies this criterion. It is certainly better in that sense than the grant programs, but so many students simply fail to repay the loan that it could clearly stand improvement. This improvement will be hard to come by, however, when students don't work their own money.

This has not been a condemnation of student aid programs; I firmly endorse the view that the public sector ought to facilitate educational opportunities for the less fortunate members of our society.

I merely contend that this ought to be done in a manner that ensures that resources are not being wasted. This requires that a large measure of the financial responsibility be borne by the student. This doesn't arise out of the belief that students are freeloaders; it simply acknowledges the aspect of human nature that Adam Smith recognized centuries ago.

David Klingler is a senior majoring in political science and a columnist for The Daily Collegian. His column appears on alternate Tuesdays.

## reader opinion

### True advocate

To Manjula Saxena: Forgive my bringing up your first article for which you have already received deserved criticism, but I would think that after that uninformative, shallow "attacks" on America, you would reexamine the validity of your views on America.

In your last article you discussed the lack of depth with which Americans sometimes approach the subject of communism. However, in discussing democracy, you show what seems to me (though perhaps according to you, I have no right to speak since I've not read Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism or The Gulag Archipelago) an inadequate understanding or else a suppression of facts by implying that the relatively low degree of voter participation is the reason for the stability of the American democracy.

Rather, they are both the effects of other causes. One major reason democracy works in America is the large American middle class. We are fairly well-educated, and we are not desperately in need of improving our economic status. The lower voter participation and the stability (economic leading to political stability) of our nation.

Another reason is the media who you criticize as adding to political confusion. You fail to note that the media and freedom of the press play an important role in protecting our democracy by exposing government myth. An obvious example of this is the Watergate scandal.

Third, the long tradition of democracy in Americans, and belief in democracy, makes it work. Yes, this is our system; we have "a haven of democracy" to quote your sarcasm in referring to our wish for other nations like Nicaragua.

Perhaps Americans have objected to the Nicaraguan government's swiftness in effecting democracy, but American ideals; if we were, our democracy would not survive in the world.

Your attitude in your two editorials makes it seem that you came to America not to get an education, but to tell those rich, complacent Americans what unintelligent uppity folks you think they are.

You from the unsmiling, socialist-democratic India that your first article tried to compare adventurously to America. If you wanted to praise India, you should have brought out the richness and depth of Indian culture and

the practicality of Eastern philosophy. India has much to offer, much that is praise-worthy. My parents are immigrants from India, and I wish someone had given you the advice my grandfather gave my father when my father came here: "Do not criticize something unless you have been doing for a long time. You may not know the reason, and may think it is wrong, but observe. The logic is there."

Manjula, he was a true advocate of thoughtful uncertainty.

Satwant K. Mehta, sophomore-pre-medicine  
Feb. 13

### Well worth it

This letter is in response to Robin Rhoades' letter of Feb. 8. Ms. Rhoades should be commended for her concern for the dancers' safety and well-being in the annual IFC Dance Marathon. I must, however, take issue with her opinion on the rules governing breaks throughout the marathon.

The rules call for a mandatory three minute break every eight hours. Ms. Rhoades makes the assertion that these mandatory breaks are not enough for the participants. And for some dancers they may indeed be quite insufficient.

The point she misses is that these breaks are mandatory. A dancer is free to take additional breaks at any time during the marathon and (with the exception of leaving during the last hour) still remain a participant. Dancers are in fact encouraged to take such breaks if for any reason they feel it necessary.

In addition to this, there is a medical staff on hand at all times, and a hoarde of morale people placed throughout the dance floor, constantly on the lookout for anyone who looks as though he or she might need help.

Having danced the last two years (this year will be my third) and having interviewed many of the dancers for the Marathon Committee's precautions. And the fact that some 75 percent of the dancers have successfully endured the grueling event over the past several years also speaks on behalf of the Marathon Committee.

In regard to the pain we endure: Yes indeed we do go through a lot of pain. But for me, this pain becomes a very

meaningful symbol. It is a sacrifice — a taking up your cross, if you will, for the kids who endure pain for nearly all of their lives.

And being there to show those kids that we really care and are behind them is as important to me as the money we raise. When the marathon is over and I've had my good night's sleep, the sacrifice that I and some 500 dancers have offered remains in my heart. And I have a feeling it touches the hearts of a few kids and their families as well.

Don Binder, senior-psychology  
Feb. 9

### Happy anniversary, Iran

Happy anniversary, Iran. In your "peaceful" five years of existence, you have invaded a U.S. embassy and held over fifty American citizens hostage. You blew up another U.S. embassy killing 17 Americans and you are responsible for the deaths of more than 270 U.S. marines.

It is bad enough that U.S. citizens have to put up with a country such as Iran, without seeing our daily paper being used as a propaganda tool for a nation that graduates its newly trained officer corp by having them march over a U.S. flag.

Happy anniversary, Iran. It is a real shame that the thousands you have executed for speaking against the present government are not around to celebrate with you, not to mention the hundreds of thousands who have died in the "unwanted war" that you refuse to halt, despite peace overtures by Iraq.

I would like to congratulate you on the wonderful economic progress you have achieved, as so vividly illustrated in your "paid advertisement" in The Daily Collegian. But because the figures quoted have all come from the Iranian government with no outside confirmation, please excuse me for being just a little bit sceptical.

In closing, I would like to share with the public the real spirit of the Iranian revolution.

In the same issue of the Collegian as the "paid advertisement" there was a small article detailing the assassination of two pre-revolutionary Iranian military leaders who were both shot in the head as they left their Paris apartments.

Such is the fate of unbelievers in Iran, where political assassination is governmental policy. Happy Anniversary!

William M. Whyte, senior-ceramic science and eng.  
Feb. 13

### Power pie

I was surprised to read in the Feb. 8 issue of The Weekly Collegian about the interest community housing being proposed by Benson Lichtig.

This arrangement would provide a setting, replete with a community center and three computers. "Where those students primarily active in student organizations may live and govern themselves." While I am impressed with Lichtig's innovative business spirit, the patriotic goals of this residential haven move me most deeply.

To improve the leadership of so diverse a student body as Penn State's by cloistering its representatives near Southgate Drive is quite a stroke of genius. It will all become so easy.

This nerve center of the elite will undoubtedly see a stream of varied student viewpoints on campus, state and world affairs rushing to be expressed at the community center. Soon, anyone wanting to probe the pulse of student opinion will need only to locate a terminal connected to the Orchard Park Village Interest Community's data bank.

In addition, Penn State's eternally troublesome student representation snags will be easily defused with a mere two thirds vote of Interest Community members.

There are those who will wonder about the few sectors of the University student community not represented in the Interest Community. Fortunately, examples of effective interest communities already exist in Manilla's Forbes Park and in most of South Africa. Now Penn State, too, can have a close-knit, efficient student leadership.

Step right up, all student activists, and rent your share of the power pie. If you miss this boat, Big Brother may already have leased the next one.

Daniel M. Bollag, Class of 1982-Science  
Feb. 13

Please Follow Smokey's ABC's  
ALWAYS hold matches till cold  
BE sure to drown all fires  
CAREFUL to crush all smokes

## MANCHESTER PROGRAM

Study Mass Communication at University of Manchester, England

Information on Penn State's Mass Communication Study Abroad Program

— Tuesday 7 pm 73 Willard —

Centre for Travel and Eastern Airlines have gotten together with Hi-way Pizza to

## Cut you a spring break!

Win a free trip to the Bahamas from Hi-way Pizza, Centre for Travel, and Eastern Airlines. Just pick up your entry blank at one of the four convenient Hi-way Pizza locations and tell us why Hi-way Pizza should "cut you a break" this spring. Deposit your entry blank at Centre for Travel and get ready for 5 fabulous days in Paradise Island!

Package includes air fare, hotel accommodations, tips and transfers. Winner leaves March 5 and returns March 10, 1984.

Hi-way Pizza's always worth going for!

## Notice to All Honor Societies and Their Advisors

An HONORS FAIR coordinated by Alpha Lambda Delta freshman Honor Society is scheduled for March 21 in the HUD fishbowl. The purposes of this Honor Fair are to alert academically successful students about the many honor societies and academic honors options at PSU.

An organizational meeting will be held. Announcements are in your HUD communication boxes. For further information, contact Dr. Betty Moore at 863-2020 (135 Doucke) by Feb. 20th.

## TONITE!

### LAST STATE COLLEGE CONCERT!

HUB Ballroom - Free Admission  
Doors open at 7:45 p.m.

### VALENTINES NIGHT DELIGHT!

Presented by the Student Union Board

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118 W. College Ave., half block east of the Corner Room

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**\$6.99** Regular 9.00 and **\$7.99** Regular 11.00

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open every day 9:30am-6:00pm, thurs. & fri. until 9pm and sunday 12-5pm