

Editorial opinion

Finally

Elections Commission's decision will allow discussion of issues

The University doesn't have a primary to narrow the field of potential Undergraduate Student Government presidential candidates, but rest assured, the field has just been narrowed.

The USG Elections Commission ruled on a little-known USG bylaw regarding the eligibility of candidates. In the interest of getting the story straight, here's what happened: On Feb. 14, the Senate Appointments and Review Board held interviews to choose elections commissioners for the upcoming race.

But the elections code says that any person who participates in the interviewing of potential elections commissioners forfeits his or her right to run in the same elections. Seems pretty cut and dry, right? If you want to run, you can't have a hand in picking the people who will preside over the election.

Besides the obvious ethical dilemma violating this rule would present, it also makes sense that anyone who wants to be USG president should know how the organization works and therefore would not attend those interviews. Again, cut and dry.

Last week, in a rare showing of wise judgment, the USG Supreme Court decided that the interviews should be conducted by informed Senators. The court did not rule on whether the people involved in the original meeting could run.

You might be wondering why all this was necessary, because the names of the candidates have not yet been announced.

Well, if you haven't guessed by now, certain senators who were present at the meeting wanted to run.

But a USG component — the elections commission — handled this situation admirably. The commission decided that potential candidates who attended the meeting are now ineligible from running. And that's where it stands for now.

Still, the buzz is that some USG members think it's unfair that senators who were present at the Valentine's Day meeting are barred from running, since participation in the interviews was on a volunteer basis. They felt they should have been informed of the rule.

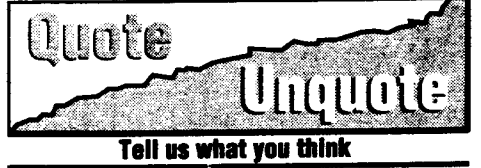
It bears repeating: If you don't know the rules, how can you run the organization?

We commend the elections commission for their quietly powerful decision as well as their speed.

If they had waited until after spring break, when campaigning begins, the possible violations could have turned into a much bigger and more troublesome issue.

With the squabbling aside, there might actually be time for the candidates to discuss some issues. But then again, we'll see.

What is your impression of the Republican presidential primaries?



—Wil Smith
freshman-athletic training



—Debbie Goldberg
junior-administration of justice



—Tor Winston
graduate-economics



—Rebecca Hayes
sophomore-business

"Right now I'm not caught up into it and it's a lot of backslashing and degrading each other, and it's a turn off. It shouldn't be like that. Who needs the slander?"

"I think Dole has been around a little too long. Some of Buchanan's views are a little radical, especially his views on gays working for him. He's come right out about his opinions on blacks and Jews...I don't think a bigot should be in office."

"I think it's entertaining. I'm a Democrat so it's nice to see the Republican Party going through the whole process of trying to define the party. And the candidates are taking extreme views to try to get the nomination."

"At this point I don't have an overwhelming interest in any one of the candidates. Most of them don't stand for things that I agree with."

Letters to the editor

Hammer of truth

The Madagascar Revolutionary Council would like to respond to the whinnings and grumbings from certain campus politickers at the Feb. 20 USG Senate meeting regarding campaigns that flaunt the so-called "authority" of USG. I'm not really certain of the details; who has time to follow the masturbatory words and nonexistent deeds of The Great Nittany Sham, aka USG?

However, let me reiterate our position, so that we may all be perfectly clear: We, the MRC, will not be placing our candidate on the ballot for the election of the Clown Prince of the Sham of Shams, the honorable presidency of USG. Where we're going, my small friends, we don't need ballots. We will be taking our message to the people, and asking them to write our candidate in on the ballot. Please, we beg you, USG — try to fine us — you can't even define us. Are we a campus group, a grassroots political organization, a coalition of anti-establishment forces or simply members of the lunatic fringe? Betcha can't wait to find out.

One thing is for certain, though. The last thing this campus needs is another glad-handing, resume-building, pearly-toothed snotjob as student leader — we have enough of those in the administration. The undergraduate population of Penn State needs a leader who can muster public opinion. A leader who understands the needs of real students (as opposed to these bureaucratic pseudo-government clowns), a leader not afraid to stand up for his beliefs. A leader who will not stand idly by as the administration appropriates zillions of dollars to keep the flower beds pretty while real problems go unattended.

Problems such as the decreasing value of your dollar as a student/customer of the University. Safety issues like inefficient campus lighting, and simple fair-play issues like the profiteering of the parking crunch (town and campus), for example — all are drowned out by the chorus to "Dear Ol' State," thrust upon you by the marketing juggernaut that is the true identity of this so-called "learning institution," and perpetuated by the mind-control victims on the second floor of the HUB. This is OUR Revolution, ladies and gentlemen of USG, and it fills me with joy to say that your rules have no jurisdiction over us. You've had opportunity galore to change the way you do things, and you've failed miserably every time. You've had your

time to do things your way — now it's our turn.

And the Hammer of Truth belongs to us.
Chris Larkin
Class of 1995
minister of propaganda-
Madagascar Revolutionary Council

HUB bowling alley

This letter is to announce my candidacy for Undergraduate Student Government president. My campaign focuses around taking the activity fee money and putting it towards something useful, something the students really need and want. I'm going to convert the upper floor of the HUB to a bowling alley. My plan has 50 lanes and we would have half price happies from 8 p.m. to midnight every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Screw the cultural center crap.

We the students of Penn State are in need of a bowling alley that all students have easy access to. My running mate has yet to be determined but I am willing to accept applications from anyone who can consistently bowl over a 200 and will dedicate themselves to my dream. Thank you for your time.

Scott Okrent
sophomore-economics
and mechanical engineering

Icing on the cake

When people think of Penn State sports, I'll admit, it is nearly impossible not to immediately think of football. With one of the most successful programs in the country since the inception of collegiate football, Paterno and Co. have no doubt brought not only large amounts of money to our university, but have also built tremendous school spirit. But for those of us who really know our PSU sports, we shall recognize that the most successful sports team at Penn State for the past 15 years has been "Joe-Ba's" team. I know, I know. You're probably saying to yourself, "Who the hell is Joe-Ba?" Well, let me enlighten you.

Joseph Battista, head coach of the Penn State Icers hockey team, is one of the most respected and well-known coaches in college hockey. The truth is, my friends, that watching a live Penn State hockey game is one of the most exciting activities at Penn State. Even if you don't like hockey, just

being there with that die-hard crowd is worth the \$2 price of admission.

And while I budget my time well enough to go see most of the Icers home games, I cannot help but think...while I sit and watch them kick the snot out of the other team, how much better the program could be if it were considered a varsity sport by the University. Without this status, the Icers are forced to play in the ACHA, a club hockey league in which they win the championship almost every year. There is low funding for the team, consequently hurting their chances to enter NCAA collegiate hockey.

If the Icers were in the official collegiate hockey league, the benefits to the University would definitely be worth the effort. In the past four to five years, particularly the past year or two, many people have compared our school to the University of Michigan. Let's go down the list here for both schools for a minute... great academics — check; a bargain education for in-staters — check; national powerhouse in football and basketball — check; a nationally competitive hockey team — check for Michigan, no check for good 'ol State. Not only does Michigan have a Division I team, it is among the top five programs in the nation. It kills me to think how many hockey recruits pick Michigan over Penn State every year because of the huge difference in competition. I strongly believe that if we had Division I hockey, eventually we could start getting some of the top recruits and the best sport in the world would simply take off at Penn State. And, in some people's eyes, we would finally be "equal" to the University of Michigan, whatever that means.

A few weeks ago, being the detective that I am (yeah, I inquired to some authorities on the subject as to why the Penn State athletics department cannot or will not simply elevate the Icers to varsity sport status. The answer I got was the same everywhere: NCAA rules say that no university shall have more "varsity" men's sports teams than women's, and vice versa. If hockey were to be made an official "sport," the University would need to find a new counterpart for the women (perhaps women's ice hockey!)

Sigh. Now, here is my challenge to you, athletics department: Find some way to promote the Icers. Go out and recruit some female equestrian jumpers or create a women's basketweaving team for all I care.

Just do it and do it right.
David Pressman
freshman-communications

The opinions page is an open forum for discussion for the entire Penn State community. Diverse viewpoints in columns, reader forums and letters to the editor are encouraged to promote an ongoing intellectual dialogue on issues important to our readers.

the daily Collegian

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Students' letters should include semester standing, major and campus of the writer. Letters from alumni should include the major and year of graduation of the writer. All writers should provide their address and phone number for verification of the letter. Letters should be signed by no more than two people. Names may be withheld on request.

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.

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Students are slop that feeds pig known as State College

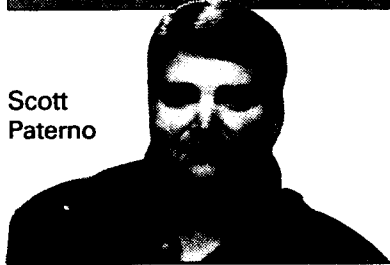
The centennial. One hundred years of State College. Robin Williams, in a concert on campus in the spring of 1986, called this the "last generic town in America," obviously a reference to the unique and imaginative name, one that then University President Eisenhower tried to change. The name survived and the town has thrived, for 100 years.

Now, to celebrate this moment in this generic town, the Borough has decided to put a bronze pig in front of the Tavern Restaurant as a symbol of the town and its agricultural roots. Many of us locals laughed and others among us were dismayed, but in reality a pig as the symbol of State College is a perfect match.

As students, you must have realized by now that you are not a part of this town. You are a tolerated outsider, someone who visits for four (or five, or six) years, spends a lot of money that keeps the town alive, and then leaves, making way for a new batch of disposable residents.

You are the slop that fills the

My opinion



Scott Paterno

pig's trough, you are the source of food that lines the pig's belly.

Look at it this way: without the University, the town would not be here, as evidenced by the fact that the University predates the town by 40 years. Without the students, the University would not be here. So, by using the transitive property of existence, we see that without the students the town would not be here. It is logical to see this, even though many would argue otherwise. But, I ask them, why would a town grow here without the Farmer's High School population?

It is really hard to get here, even with the roads built in the last 50

years. State College has no major waterway, it is surrounded by mountains, and there was no major route that existed prior to 1855 that ran through Happy Valley.

One hundred years of State College have not yielded a train station, a real airport (although that is improving) or a major highway. In fact, the nearest interstate is closer to Bellefonte and Milesburg, both towns with longer histories than this one.

The bottom line is that without the University, and more importantly without the students, there would be no State College.

I grew up here, and I know that many of the locals see the students as nuisances that have to be tolerated.

Why else would they 1) protect their neighborhoods with that unconstitutional, ridiculous "no more than three unrelated adults in a house" law, 2) find new ways to keep us contained in already "infested" areas with protectionist zoning and this landlord responsibility garbage and 3) treat the students as second-class citizens by

having an open container law, unforgiving noise violations, and impossible parking restrictions?

Over the last 100 years the town has grown, but mostly due to the forty thousand 18- to 22-year-olds who each year dump disposable wealth all over State College. Would there be countless pizza places, 4 bagel stores, 5 CD stores, 12 bars, numerous clothing stores, 8 downtown movie theaters, a 96,000 seat stadium, a 15,000 seat arena and thousands of apartments without the students?

Obviously, the answer is NO.

The pig (State College) has gotten fat on the slop (all of us students). Downtown businesses have high prices. Retail rental property rates are artificially high downtown because building owners know the average student won't go to a store that is not in walking distance from his or her apartment. Apartment owners charge increasingly higher rents because there is no real other option, thanks to neighborhood protectionist measures. Service in most downtown restaurants is abysmal. And most jobs pay the

minimum wage because, as one merchant has been heard saying, "if one quits there are twenty more to take their place."

Why do we put up with this? It is hard for me to be part of either "we" because I am part of both. But my heart is as a Penn State student. My parents love the students, as do some of the locals.

But the police hate us, the merchants exploit us, and the local government protects the mouth being fed instead of the hand doing the feeding. Why?

Because as a group, we are fragmented. We are not, by and large, registered to vote in State College. If 40,000 students registered and voted it would create a block that the town could not overcome. Students unite. Register and vote. Get rid of a Borough Council full of people who do not care about you or your interests yet have a profound impact on your life and choices while you are here. Let's run our own candidates. Let's take charge of the town built with our money, our loans and our parking fines. Let's fight back. Contest

every parking fine and clog the system. Live with six people in one house. Drink a beer on a street corner, and when they arrest you ask them why it is legal to do it at the stadium (where 75,000 non-student sources of revenue party). Complain about lousy service, demand to be treated better by people who make their living on your money.

For one month intervals we should boycott a different group of downtown businesses until they change policies. If we could all get together, things would change. They would have to change because in reality we have all the power. We have their slop and if we make the trough run empty for a while they will notice.

Everything State College is and has flowed from us and those who came before us. Let's make its benefits flow back to the source.

One hundred years ago a town grew around a population of students. And for 100 years the pig has gotten fat on the slop.

Scott Paterno is a senior majoring in political science and a Collegian columnist.