

# Faculty Senate faces new issues

By CHERYL FRANKENFIELD  
Collegian Staff Writer

In addition to the much-anticipated passage of a fall break, faculty reviews, an informational report from the General Education Implementation Committee and a presentation on the university budget also were on the agenda at the University Faculty Senate meeting yesterday.

The Senate committee on faculty affairs recommended a constructive review that will look at accomplishments and future goals of faculty members, a revised proposal of one which failed to pass in April. The committee passed the

review to learn more about faculty development, program quality and learning environments of students.

The general education committee proposed some suggestions and further explanations about general education recommendations, which were passed by the Senate in December 1997.

Discussion included concerns about substituting language credits for general education credits.

Louis Geschwindner, professor of architectural engineering, said the committee recommendation of substituting credits overstepped its authority in making decisions about general education.

Committee members agreed to

take Senate suggestions into consideration at the next meeting.

John Brighton, executive vice president and provost, gave a presentation on the university's use of funds and a report on the 1999 to 2000 budget. The university saw a 3.25 percent increase in state support but is asking for more in the future to assist the new School of Information and Science Technology, workforce development and outreach programs.

There is a small increase in the student activity fee, Brighton said, but it is preferred to increase the fee at an inflationary level, rather than increase severely in one year.

At the Senate meeting, a motion

to extend domestic partner health care benefits to faculty with same-sex partners was proposed.

The motion stated, "In the past five years, a number of academic institutions have offered domestic partner benefits to their employees. In addition, there is some evidence that Penn State is now placed at a competitive disadvantage in its efforts to attract and retain high-quality faculty, staff and students without health benefits for same-sex domestic partners."

For the next Senate meeting, the motion will be discussed as old business, said Leonard Berkowitz, chair of the Senate.

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# Cultural class added for Spring Semester

By KATIE O'HARA  
Collegian Staff Writer

Next semester, Penn State will offer Asian American Experience, its first ever Asian-American course.

"The course is not designed specifically for Asian-American students," said Virginia Mansfield-Richardson, associate professor of communications, who will be teaching the course Spring Semester 1999. "It is designed for anyone interested in American history, politics and economics and how an important group of people helped shape American history."

The course's mission is to provide students with information about the historical, social, economic and political nature of the diverse population of Asian-Pacific heritage.

These groups include Chinese, Filipinos, Indians, Koreans, Vietnamese, Japanese and Pacific Islanders, said Jit Chatterjee, Asian Pacific American Coalition president.

The class will feature readings, lecture films and class discussions about race and ethnic relations, media coverage of Asian-American assimilation and the social and cultural identity of the Asian-American community.

Penn State's Asian-American community has been lobbying for an entire program for nearly five years, Chatterjee said.

"Asian-Pacific-American heritage is extremely vast and diverse," Chatterjee said. "It's hard to put everything in a single course."

The course is cross-listed and can be scheduled either through American Studies 197A (Asian American Experience) or Communications 197B (Asian American Experience).

Chatterjee said he feels Penn State has been slow to offer a course about the heritage, which represents about 5 percent of the University Park population and is also the fastest growing minority population within the United States.

# Ridge allocates funds for future

By SARAH CASSI  
Collegian Staff Writer

Penn State will receive \$9.2 million of the \$42.1 million that Gov. Tom Ridge announced yesterday will be distributed to Pennsylvania colleges and universities for construction and design projects.

Of the \$9.2 million, \$5 million will go toward safety improvements, technology upgrades and renovations, and \$4.2 million will be used to modernize the university's telecommunication technology.

Paul Ruskin, Office of Physical Plant spokesperson, said the renovations will include road improvements, window replacements and roofing needed in campus buildings. The upgrades involve the placement of switching devices and fiber-optics, he said.

Ronald Dodson, director of special projects, said those technological improvements include the rewiring of 27 buildings, including the HUB, Old Main and Pattee.

In a press release, Ridge explained why the money was allotted.

"We must ensure that Pennsylvania's students receive the high-tech education they need to become leaders of the 21st century," he said.

"Penn State is a substantial educator of Pennsylvania young people," Tom Charles, Ridge's deputy press secretary, said, adding that was one of the reasons why the university was chosen to receive funding.

Other Pennsylvania schools with funding are the University of Pittsburgh, Shippensburg University, Lock Haven University and Temple University.

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