

Graduates have alumni opportunities available

By Jill Leonard
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Though thousands of students will be graduating in two weeks and leaving Happy Valley, they have the chance to keep in touch with the university by becoming members of the Penn State Alumni Association.

Penn State's Alumni Association ranks first in the nation with 143,000 dues-paying members, said April Scimio, director of communications for the association. "It says a lot about the loyalty of Penn Staters," Scimio said.

Following a year of free membership in the association after graduation, yearly dues will cost a new graduate \$25 for five years after graduation, a discount of \$5 off the standard fee of \$30, Scimio said.

"We just realize how difficult it is for graduates getting right out of school," Scimio said. "Sometimes you have a little bit of financial difficulties, and we've done this for a number of years to give new graduates a price break."

To entice graduating students, the Alumni Association offers a number of benefits for them to take advantage of during their introductory year of membership.

Each graduating student will receive a resource guide and can design his own electronic graduation announcements to send to family members and friends, Scimio said. She added the Alumni Association also provides free e-mail forwarding.

"It's a nice way to keep connected once they leave," Scimio said.

Many new graduates opt to purchase a yearly membership to the association for several years after college, Scimio said.

However, she added the organization offers electronic funds transfer, where

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senior-forestry

about \$25 will be automatically taken out of a person's checking account for two years to pay for a lifetime membership in installments. A lifetime membership costs \$500.

"We've started to see people become lifetime members sooner," Scimio said. "People are really latching onto that."

Several Penn State students said after graduation, they plan to join the Alumni Association to stay abreast of university events.

"I plan on joining the Alumni Association after I earn some money in the real world," Saskia van de Gevel (senior-forestry) said. "I would do it for \$25 a year."

The membership benefits of joining the Alumni Association also attract some students.

"It sounds sort of cool — I thought about it," Dustin Moore (senior-forestry) said. "I think the benefits you get out of it would be worth the \$25 membership fee."

The benefits and the networking potential remain the two most important assets of the association, Scimio said.

"(The association) is a really good networking tool and we encourage new graduates to get involved with them to help them get assimilated into a new environment," Scimio said. "It is amazing how many alumni are out there and are willing to help other Penn Staters."

Faculty salaries low, report says

By Alison Kepner
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Although Penn State's lower salaries might affect the university's recruitment and retention of faculty, money is only a small part of a much bigger picture, faculty members say.

According to an external comparison of Penn State's faculty salaries to other large universities, Penn State's faculty salaries are lagging behind those at other Big Ten schools and universities across the country.

The report, presented at Tuesday's Faculty Senate meeting, compared Penn State's salaries with those at 25 other public institutions that participate in the Association of American Universities Data Exchange.

Although Penn State's salaries appear to be falling behind its peer universities, some Penn State officials caution not to be blinded by numbers.

"It's important for us to have very competitive salaries," said David Wormley, dean of the College of Engineering. He added although money is important, it is not the only factor to examine.

"When you add everything up, salary is only one side of the issue," Wormley said. Potential faculty members also look at the local community, school districts, cost of living and teaching environment, he said.

J. Randall Woolridge, finance professor, sits on the Senate Committee on Faculty Benefit's subcommittee, which produced the comparative report.

"Small differences aren't going to cause somebody to move," Woolridge said.

Faculty must be given a large incentive to leave their current positions at Penn State or for new faculty to accept positions here, said Woolridge, adding Penn State must be proactive in both its hiring and retention efforts.

Wayne Curtis, chemical engineering professor, said his department had three recent failed job searches, but salary differences are not the only factor to blame.

"Someone who is good is going to have a series of offers," Curtis said. "Jobs are pretty prolific." Job candidates weigh a number of factors when considering new positions, he said.

Lower salaries also can make it more difficult to retain quality faculty members.

Penn State faculty salaries vs. Association of American Universities Data Exchange

College	Rank	1998-99 Average salary	
		AAUDE	University Park
Agricultural Sciences	Professor	87,750	87,222
	Associate	65,772	64,112
Arts and Architecture	Professor	66,314	66,644
	Associate	50,127	48,474
Business Administration	Professor	114,289	113,190
	Associate	86,504	81,317
Communications	Professor	73,829	75,698
	Associate	52,805	57,500
Earth and Mineral Sciences	Professor	77,773	85,095
	Associate	55,685	60,950
Education	Professor	73,640	73,200
	Associate	54,406	52,223
Engineering	Professor	93,534	89,687
	Associate	68,590	66,551
Health and Human Development	Professor	75,934	78,714
	Associate	56,074	57,451
Liberal Arts	Professor	77,244	84,357
	Associate	52,400	53,455
Science	Professor	81,052	88,860
	Associate	58,566	56,946

Source: University Faculty Senate Committee on Faculty Benefits

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