

Getting Around

Penn State students, administration work together to improve accessibility

By Adam Fablan
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Jeff Hantz is like every other college senior.

He attends classes. He plays sports. He goes to bars on the weekends. He's involved.

And like most students, when Hantz wakes up in the morning, his route to class from his Atherton Hall dorm room depends on his mood and energy level. "It depends on how lazy I feel in the morning," he says with a slight laugh, noting an oft-utilized shortcut through the HUB.

Things weren't always this easy for Hantz, a computer science major. He has learned, adapted and gained strength.

For his friend Maggie Redden, a freshman living in Hiester Hall, things aren't as hard as she thought they might be.

The communications major has a room on the ground floor and a roommate. It can be loud sometimes living so close to the door, Redden says, but she likes it nonetheless. She hears everything; she can say hello to everyone.

Their lives sound like every other Penn State students' — but there are differences.

Hantz isn't like everyone else. Neither is Redden. Nor are the other 748 other Penn State students receiving services from the Office for Disability Services.

Hantz is a double above-knee amputee. He has been in a wheelchair ever since he began attending school as a young boy and will be for the rest of his life. Redden also uses a wheelchair, and has

used it for as long as she can remember. She got polio around the age of 1 and has been paralyzed ever since.

Bill Welsh, director of the Office for Disability Services, works with these students and employees. It's his job to ensure they can get around, go to classes and get anything else that may be needed to live comfortably.

With more than 700 buildings on campus, some of which are more than 100 years old, the task of providing access can be daunting for Penn State. The campus, as well as downtown, must be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), which has only been around for 13 years.

The campus, meanwhile, is about 150 years old.

But given Penn State's size, location, topography and the varied weather conditions of central Pennsylvania, ADA Coordinator and University Access Committee Chairman Bill Ritzman believes the campus is accessible.

Although he says Penn State's campus isn't perfect, he said the committee is always working to make improvements. "It's an ongoing process, but anything pointed out we try to fix," he said. "We're always looking for suggestions."

THE ADA OF 1990

In 1990, President George Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act into legislation.

The act sought to establish a prohibition of discrimination on the basis of disability. The law, based on findings by the U.S. Congress, noted that at the time, about 43 million Americans had one or more physical or mental disabilities, a number likely to increase as the population continued to age.

Before the legislation became law, many places were difficult to access — but now accessibility is required everywhere.

Many disabilities covered under the law are not visible. Problems with vision, hearing,



Lauren A. Little/Collegian
Jeff Hantz is one of about 750 University Park students who receives services from the Office for Disability Services.

mobility and even heart troubles are included, requiring accommodations to be made based on the functional limitations of the individual.

Ritzman said reasonable accommodations are made for Penn State students and employees based on their limitations. For example, a sign language interpreter is provided for a student with a hearing impairment. Priority scheduling and priority snow removal are also offered to students in wheelchairs.

Accommodations are also made for employee settings.

In the case of a disabled Penn State worker, it is Ritzman's responsibility to ensure appropriate modifications are made to the structure and the manner of the work.

"Every case is looked at on an individual basis, and a lot of time and attention to detail goes into each employment accommodation we work with," Ritzman said in an e-mail message.

Without the ADA, however, the campus would likely be much different than it is today, Stew Koontz, the university's facilities access coordinator, said. In fact, he says, accessibility is much better today than it was 20 years ago.

"We've come a long way, baby," he said. "[The law] is a darn good piece of legislation."

GETTING AROUND

Despite changes and efforts by UAC, Koontz said the campus would never be

See ACCESSIBILITY, Page 5.

Paterno responds to arrest

By Robert Spruck
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Penn State football coach Joe Paterno isn't happy with Tony Johnson and for once it has nothing to do with his play on the field.

Johnson was arrested early Friday morning for driving under the influence. His blood alcohol level was at 0.136 percent, which exceeds the state's 0.08 legal limit.

Paterno said yesterday at his weekly press conference that he would suspend Johnson for the incident.

"I am probably going to have to suspend him for a game or so," Paterno said. "Because I have to send a message to the squad that it is inappropriate to be out in the middle of the week having a couple of drinks."

But Paterno later contradicted himself and said that he hadn't made a decision on the situation.

"I said I didn't know what I was going to do," he said. "I really don't know what I am going to do."

Paterno called Tony Johnson "a really good kid" and "a hard worker."

He claimed that the media would cause Johnson's situation to become out of control.

See PATERNO, Page 2.

2 athletes to attend alcohol program

By Nicole Charsar and Rob Riva

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Penn State football players Jeremy Kapinos and E.Z. Smith both had their cases decided this week.

Kapinos, a punter for the Nittany Lions, was found not guilty on the charge of disorderly conduct and entered a provisional guilty plea to the charge of underage drinking.

"[The prosecution] did not prove the element of the crime and that [Kapinos] did it," District Justice Ronald Horner said in reference to the disorderly conduct charge.

The underage drinking charge was Kapinos' second in as many years. He was charged in an earlier incident on Aug. 25, 2002.

Kapinos was referred to the Youthful Offenders' Program for the alcohol violation.

"There was no hearing, he just uses the Youthful Offenders' Program," Horner said. "It's a summary offense. He pays the fees, and then it is dismissed."

The program is an alternative to the standard fine and permanent police record for youths cited for underage drinking or drug use in Centre County.

Kapinos is required to pay a program fee of \$175 and complete a total of 15 course hours of class.

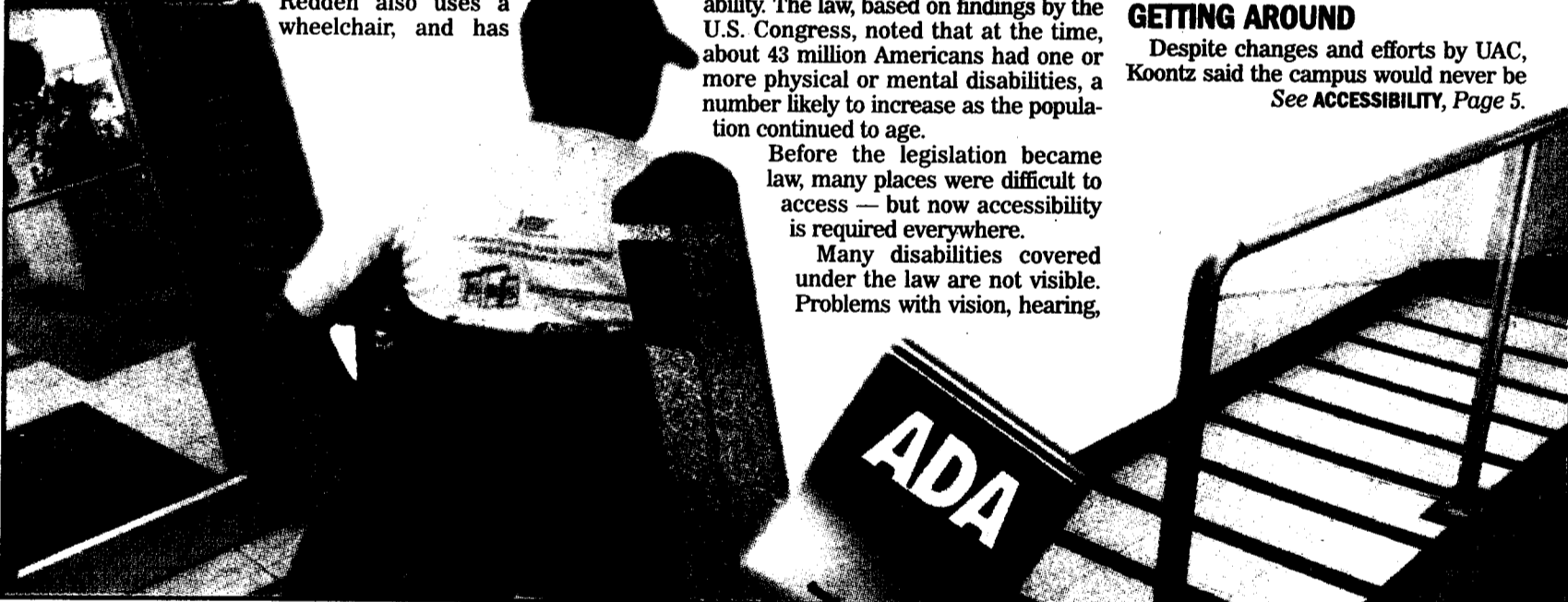
Both charges stemmed from events involving a fight outside of Nittany Apartments on September 7.

Smith, an offensive lineman, was cited twice for underage drinking, once on July 27 and once on Aug. 2, outside his residence at Nittany Apartments.

Smith was found not guilty on the second underage drinking charge, but he pleaded a pre-adjudication disposition in regard to the first charge.

As with Kapinos, Smith was referred to the Youthful Offenders' Program. Upon completion of the course, the underage drinking charge will be dropped.

Smith was suspended from the football team by the Office of Judicial Affairs and has not played in any games this year.



Increase in students leads to record enrollment

By Daniel Bai
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Penn State officials announced yesterday another increase in the amount of students for the 2003-04 academic year, which has led to a record enrollment university-wide.

Overall enrollment stands at 83,177, which is an increase of 139 from the 2002-03 academic year.

At University Park, enrollment rose from 41,445 to 41,795, an increase of 350 students, or 0.84 percent.

James Wager, assistant vice provost for enrollment management and university registrar, said the university plans for a deliberate slow growth within established boundaries.

"If we get too big, it starts to stress critical people support systems," he said.

John Romano, vice provost and

dean for enrollment management, said Penn State attempts to maintain enrollment numbers between 40,000 and 42,000.

"[The numbers] have to do with the available facilities, number of faculty and staff, and how can [the university] accommodate that number on and off campus," he said. "We do everything possible to keep the number in that range."

Romano said the university attempts to calculate what the enrollment flow will look like and what the projections will be for each campus.

"We try to administrate these flows so we don't have too many students," he said.

University spokesman Tysen Kendig said Penn State has taken a hard look at the capacity of the University Park campus and believes it has the ideal number of students.

"We've got a record enrollment and are continuing to see a growing

interest in the university," he said.

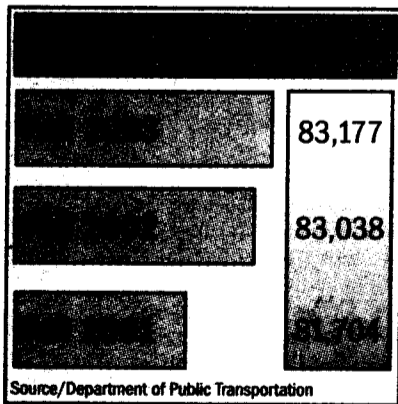
Although it seems class sizes would continue to grow, Kendig said students have not shown any concern.

"More and more students say they are surprised and enjoy the fact that class sizes are 20 or less when they get into their major concentrations," he said.

Wager said the university is working on a number of initiatives to regulate the number of incoming students, but the university does not have any plans to change or cap the number of students admitted.

"There are also places where we want to increase the amount of certain types of students, without increasing the number as a whole," he said. "There are certain target areas where we want to see increases, such as international students."

The university recently announced a marketing campaign to draw more



Source/Department of Public Transportation
Melinda Reidemach/Collegian

students to Commonwealth Campuses instead of University Park as their first choice.

Wager and Romano do not anticipate the number of students surpassing the designated limit of 42,000.

Romano said there are forces that

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Creamery starts flavor contest

Soon University Creamery customers will have another flavor of ice cream to choose from. To celebrate Penn State's 150th anniversary in 2005, the Creamery will develop a new flavor dreamed up by customers. Anyone can suggest a flavor name and ingredients until December 31. | LOCAL, Page 6.

President of MPAA to speak

Movies, universities, and file-sharing will be a topic of discussion and debate this afternoon when Jack Valenti, president of the Motion Picture Association of America, visits the Penn State. The event will include lunch and is sponsored by the Penn State Faculty Staff Club. | ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT, Page 9.

Football record hurts business

The Nittany Lions' 2-5 record has not only affected their overall standing, but has also let down area businesses that partly rely on a good home-game turnout. Some vendors have noticed a decrease in their sales and number of customers because of the Lions' losing streak. | LOCAL, Page 4.

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Coming tomorrow: No Refund Theatre to perform 1st musical ever

