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OUR OPINION

Some tuition money does get put toward university expansion

Students have been staring up at cranes and construction crews for years as the university administration continues to remake Penn State in our growing corporate image. And it comes as shrinking state appropriations and growing costs related to the university doing general business are causing our tuition to go up every year. Both phenomena continue to march on with no end in sight.

The old adage goes that nothing is certain in life except death and taxes. However, at Penn State, nothing is certain except tuition increases and constructing that shiny new building for students soon to be sitting in some pharmaceutical company's lab. Students may look toward Old Main with a silent or not-so-silent rage: "How dare they rebuild this place to the point where I won't recognize it in five years, when it will take me 50 years to pay off the increasing bills this university throws on my back?"

The boxed university response to such inquiries has been steady throughout this latest phase of expansion, rebuilding and revamping. Time and time again, the answer has been that Penn State keeps tuition dollars and the money given from the state and private donors that go toward supplementing those dollars, separate from the capital budget, which pays for construction and physical repairs to campus infrastructure. In many ways, it is an accurate statement. The state legislature provides money earmarked for general university operations — the things that tuition dollars also help pay for — separate from its capital appropriation. Also, money is solicited from private donors for specific purposes; separate for supplementing education and construction.

But there is a hole in this rhetoric, one you can drive a Mack truck through — or more like a Mack truck full of cash out of our pockets. The university takes out loans to pay for construction projects that exceed what is available for them in the capital budget. Penn State spokesman Tysen Kendig has said that a "significant portion" of ongoing construction has loans taken out on them, and that tuition money is used "routinely" to help service debt.

In other words, tuition money is being used regularly to pay for construction projects — just in a round-about way that takes an accountant to explain. So if you are a student OK with your extra pocket cash going to that bridge across Atherton Street, then it's all good. But if you've had that sinking feeling, that latent anger that your money is going to feed the steam-rolling construction trend, then guess what? You were right all along. So make your voice heard the next time Penn State decides to put a Taj Mahal next to your dorm. It's partially your dollar.

Who we are

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E-mail: collegianletters@psu.edu

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Letters should be about 250 words. Student letters should include class year, major and campus. Letters from alumni should include major and year of graduation. All writers should provide their address and phone number for verification. Letters should be signed by no more than two people. Members of organizations must include their titles if the topic they write about is connected with the aim of their groups. The Collegian reserves the right to edit letters. The Collegian cannot guarantee publication of all letters it receives. Letters chosen also run online at The Digital Collegian and may be selected for publication in The Weekly Collegian. All letters received become the property of Collegian Inc.

OPINION



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Wolfowitz's selection shows radical ideas

Having Paul Wolfowitz head up the World Bank is like having a fox guard the hen house.

But President Bush II's choice Tuesday is typical — not surprising — of his mismanagement. According to Wolfowitz's neo-conservative ideology, the World Bank should not even exist.

For him, all aspects of social life are subordinated to the logic of the marketplace, and thus, any laws or social programs that get in the way of a company's profit-motive are bad and unnecessary.

According to the market fundamentalism of the neocons, "greed is good."

However, the very existence of the World Bank is a testament to the fact that Bush and Wolfowitz's satanic "greed is good" approach to governance does not actually work in practice.

If greed were indeed good, then the poor wouldn't be getting poorer and the Bank wouldn't have to help out all the nations which were formerly the colonies of greedy empires.

Moreover, the former head of the World Bank, Joseph Stiglitz, and many others have already

explained why market fundamentalism is idiotic policy for the World Bank.

But we should not be surprised. Early in 2001, Bush appointed John Negroponte to the U.N.

He is a man infamous for the Iran-Contra Affair and partially responsible for the deaths of thousands of children in Nicaragua.

For Secretary of Education, he appointed Rod Paige.

Paige said that teachers unions were terrorist organizations.

Christine Todd Whitman resigned from the Environmental Protection Agency because Bush wouldn't let her ... protect the environment.

And now Wolfowitz.

Steven Thomas
graduate-English

University Park must get to capitol rally

I would like to applaud all of the commonwealth location students that attended the Rally in the Rotunda yesterday in Harrisburg. The Commonwealth came out in what I felt was an excellent representation, but again this year, University Park was virtually non-existent.

This is a major concern, since

these appropriations affect all students at every location, and it's time that the students of University Park step it up and show that they as well are concerned with the increasing tuition.

Contact your local legislator, or call the CCSG office or your USG governmental affairs representative.

They can help show you how to make a difference.

This inaction is what has allowed the appropriations to decrease so sharply over the last 10 years, and will continue to haunt students for years to come if we do not change this negative trend.

David Mory
junior-American studies

Administration must make Easter day off

It was nice to see all of my family over spring break, but it wasn't so nice knowing that I can't see them for an upcoming major holiday that Penn State is not recognizing — Easter.

More people on this campus do not behave in this manner: However, those that do put a bad taste in my mouth.

Recently I have heard a lot of opposition to Penn State.

That is because of various political ideologies alumni associate with the university. Some conservatives now hate Penn State because of Moore's appearance here in the fall.

And some liberals now hate Penn State because of the apparent lack of racial diversity and intolerance for the LGBT on campus.

As students, I think most of us try to make Penn State what we want it to be for ourselves.

Most of us would like to see the campus become more racially and ethnically diverse.

And I am sure virtually all of us would like to see an end to the random and unwarranted acts of hate that have been reported on campus within the past few weeks.

For alumni to hold each individ-

weekend, but Easter is on a Sunday, so we would just be traveling on that Sunday to be back for classes on Monday.

Earlier this year, we were granted Martin Luther King Day off starting in 2006, and now I read in Wednesday's Collegian that a statue honoring him is being considered.

Don't get me wrong, King was a very important figure in shaping our nation.

But the administration is just trying to give a good name for themselves after all of the racial pandemonium happening here.

I have never met one person in my life who travels somewhere for MLK Day.

But I know that thousands of others on this campus wish they could for Easter.

Having the Monday after Easter off would give a majority of students the opportunity to travel for the holiday, whereas having MLK Day off will just give students the opportunity to booze it up for one extra night.

Christianity is the largest religion on campus, and the administration will not grant us its biggest holiday?

Please, give me a break. An Easter break, that is.

Mike Skurko
freshman-meteorology

COLUMNIST

Alumni must not think students to blame

By Jen Winberry

"Hi my name is Jen, and I am a Penn State student calling to talk with you about some things going on at Penn State ..."



MY OPINION

Three nights each week I utter this phrase to hundreds of Penn State alumni on the phone in an attempt to inform them of changes and projects going on around the university and to stress the need for support for the academic colleges here.

Sounds simple enough, and for the most part, I do not encounter any opposition at all.

Most of the alumni with whom I speak are delighted to catch up on the happenings in Happy Valley.

However, every now and then I come across a disgruntled alumnus.

He or she likes to vent to me for 15 minutes about the most ridiculous reasons as to why they hate Penn State.

Believe me, I have heard them all: bad football seasons; student riots; speakers such as Michael Moore; conservative professors and the overabundance of on-campus construction.

To me, though, all of these complaints seem minute when compared to the positive nature of the university.

In the good old days before I came here, I could walk down the street with a Penn State shirt on in virtually any American town.

I would get stopped by at least one friendly alumnus who insisted on a 20-minute conversation about football, State College bars or life on campus.

But now I am more likely to get stopped by an alumnus who wants to chew me out about why they despise the school.

As I listen patiently to their gripes, I cannot help but wonder why I have been chosen to receive the brunt of this unnecessary anger.

Have I wronged them in some way? No.

Do I encompass absolutely everything bad about Penn State? No.

I cannot help but wonder if the tumble of the football team has taken over the past few years is at the unfortunate epicenter of these heinous events.

Winning records, bowl games and national championships seem to wipe away all the concerns of everyone associated with the university, including its over 450,000 alumni.

But without this gridiron success, the Nittany Lion faithful just aren't as faithful.

Attendance is significantly lower at each game, school spirit amongst students is almost nonexistent, and interactions between alumni and current students are bitter.

I feel as if I am being held personally responsible for the struggles the team faces on the field, as if I can get on that field and make them any better.

"Zach, right here, I'm open!" Trust me, you wouldn't want me out there with the big kids, and if I were, we'd be a lot worse off than we are now.

It seems as though we attend

What is more absurd is those people who can do something to fix the problems alumni have with the school, officials specifically, are rarely called upon by these irate alumni.

the games in masses, sport the blue and white each day of the week and even goes as far as to road trip it to away games.

But still disgruntled alumni blame us for not bringing home a national championship each year.

I do not like to make sweeping generalizations, because often times they are wrong.

And in this case, I am not trying to make such a generalization because I do not think all alumni behave in this manner.

In fact, I think most alumni do not behave in this manner: However, those that do put a bad taste in my mouth.

Recently I have heard a lot of opposition to Penn State.

That is because of various political ideologies alumni associate with the university. Some conservatives now hate Penn State because of Moore's appearance here in the fall.

And some liberals now hate Penn State because of the apparent lack of racial diversity and intolerance for the LGBT on campus.

As students, I think most of us try to make Penn State what we want it to be for ourselves.

Most of us would like to see the campus become more racially and ethnically diverse.

And I am sure virtually all of us would like to see an end to the random and unwarranted acts of hate that have been reported on campus within the past few weeks.

For alumni to hold each individ-

ual student responsible for whatever unresolved issue they have with the university is absurd, as if we could really do anything about it anyway.

What is more absurd is those people who can do something to fix the problems alumni have with the school, officials specifically, are rarely called upon by these irate alumni.

I understand that I am a representative of the university.

And in some way or another we all are.

I understand that virtually all of our alumni are friendly, considerate and genuinely good people.

But the few that aren't make the school look really bad to outsiders just as students who riot and commit assaults on campus do.

But it doesn't have to be this way. Alumni don't have to hold grudges against the university and its students for decades after they've graduated and students don't have to do dumb things to make us all look terrible.

If we all just try to be a little more considerate to each other, then we can very easily change those 15-minute rants.

We can change them from unhappy graduates into the 20-minute pleasant conversations between Penn State's past and future graduates.

Jen Winberry is a senior majoring in political science and is a Collegian columnist. Her e-mail is JenW@psu.edu.