

OPINION

THE DAILY
Collegian

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Letters

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VP job must help with transition

With a load of new policies aimed at fostering effective risk management set to take effect as soon as next semester, it makes perfect sense that the Interfraternity Council has decided to create a new position to help oversee the transition.

The vice president for risk management position was added to the IFC executive board through a constitutional change that was approved last month. This new position, IFC President Luke Pierce said, splits off some responsibilities from the vice president of standards role.

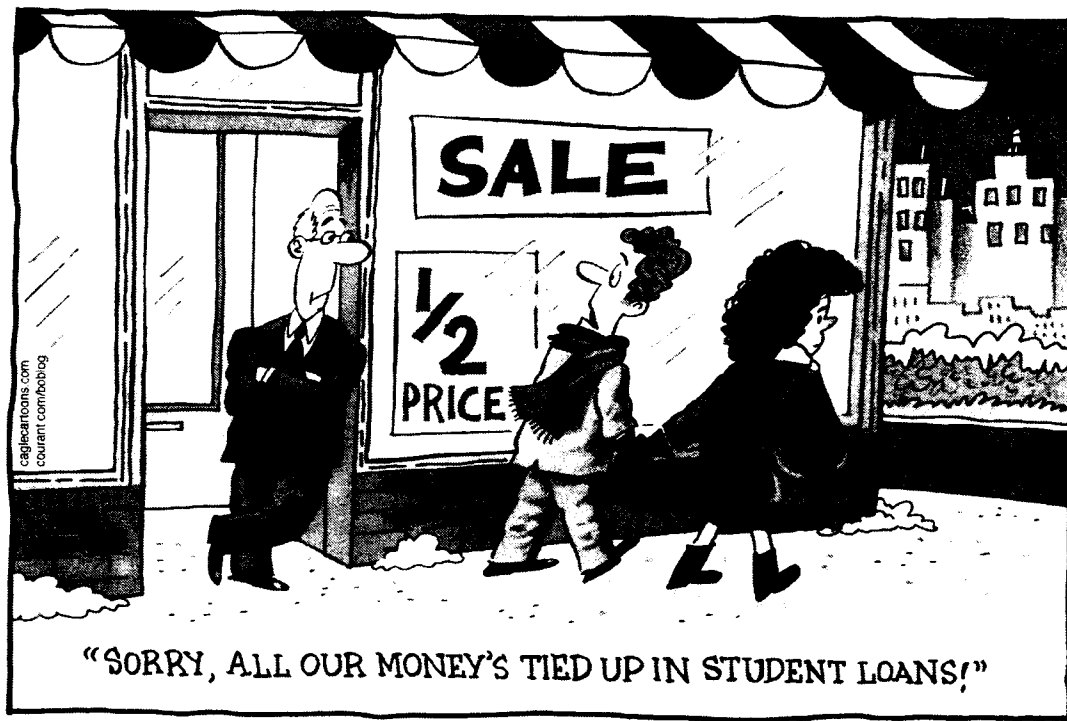
With the policies being implemented next semester — hired bouncers at parties, an about 300-maximum guest list, no away bars and registration of

parties for only certain days — it would be tough to have one person regulate them, oversee that every fraternity is following them and adjudicate any policy violations that may occur. Pierce said current vice president of standards Chris Smith has done well but experienced his fair share of stress in juggling both duties.

The prosecutor should not be the judge, and we commend the IFC for recognizing this. The vice president for risk management can focus more heavily on educating fraternities about these policies and investigating any breach while the vice president of standards can have the final say as to what consequences should be applied.

No doubt, next semester will be a big one for the IFC and it's encouraging to see the council make preparations. Success with the new policies mandates that the future vice president of risk management take his job seriously, as it will affect the direction the IFC takes once these new social policies are implemented.

We hope that direction is one of positivity and improvement. If executed properly, the new position coupled with the new policies can give Penn State's greek life a more streamlined system of handling risk management, in turn fostering a better environment for fraternity and sorority members and the community at large.



Formative decade a disappointment

By Patrick McDermott

WE'RE 23 days from a new decade, so in the nostalgic spirit com-

mon to years ending in 9, I think we should spend a moment recapping the decade during which many of us came of age.

And what an awful decade it was.

The decade has had its high points, to be sure, but any 10-year stretch will have its moments. Compared to any other decade, though, 2000-2009 seems to fall short in terms of positive events. Much of the common memory of the decade is marred by the numerous horrific events from 2000 to today.

Many of the most memorable events of 2000-2009 were both tragic and monumental in terms of world history. While it may be true that we only seem to remember the events that were disastrous or those that involved tremendous loss of life, the decade feels like it has a dark cloud hanging over it in retrospect. The attacks of September 11th, Hurricane Katrina, the current economic recession and the tsunami in Southeast Asia of 2004 all left the world in shock and cast a somber shadow across much of the globe.



MY OPINION

Like generations that came before us, those of us in college have lived through many events that will someday be viewed as our "defining moments." Our grandparents had the Great Depression and World War II. Our parents had Vietnam and Watergate. As unfortunate as it is, we seem to have plenty of events to choose from when narrowing down our generation's most negative and impactful situations.

Many people fail to realize just how much the world changes in 10 years until the end of a decade nears. When we were children in the 1990s, everything was so easy — not only for us as nine-year-olds, but for millions of Americans who reaped in the benefits of a booming economy and the persisting image of America continuing to be the world's main superpower. The dot-com explosion seemed to put money in everyone's pockets, at least in the perception of us children. Of course, we now know this was far from the truth, but we did spend our childhoods in a much more affluent time than we live in now.

This is not solely to bemoan our current situation — we still have enough financial means to attend college, presumably, and we'd have to be blind to compare our economic situation to that of third-world countries. Still, it's difficult not to think of how things have, in a number of ways, changed for the

worst during the past decade.

This is not meant to be a eulogy for the decade, and the dawn of the 2010s in no way ensures better times ahead. But I think we can all agree that we're ready to leave the 2000s behind, even if it only feels like the next 10 years give us a blank slate with which to begin anew.

On the cover of its Nov. 24 issue, Time magazine proclaimed the 2000s "the decade from hell," citing the controversial 2000 presidential election, the Bernie Madoff scandal and the crippling downfall of Detroit as part of its 10 worst moments of the decade. While the wording used by Time might seem extreme, a closer examination of the decade shows that it was far from a good 10-year stretch for both the United States and the world as a whole.

But here's the good news: The next decade doesn't have to follow in the 2000s' less-than-impressive footsteps. Obviously, it will take a lot of work by global leaders and the general public, but there's no reason to think that the 2010s have to be as poor as the current decade.

The next 10 years just have to be better than the stretch we're leaving behind — or at least we should hope so.

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Personal habit, not TV intake needs blame for distractions

Regarding the Dec. 3 Column, "TV dependency needs attention," I have a question for columnist Stephanie Goga: Are you going to unplug your modem cable as well as your TV?

Ms. Goga states that she disconnected her TV after returning from Thanksgiving break because, upon reflection of her habits during the break, found that she had watched too much of the boobtube and could not remember seeing anything "eye-opening, educational or inspiring."

I have some solemn news for Ms. Goga: Removing your TV is not going to stop you from wasting time. In our pervasive electronic age of cell phones, iPods and the Internet, the television is merely one more screen (and a dinosaur at that) in a triecta of digital indulgence.

In a Comm 180 class last semester, my professor challenged the entire class to a daunting assignment: Turn off and disconnect from all screens for 24 hours. Needless to say, during those 24 hours we had to find other ways to amuse and/or educate ourselves; I personally turned to my dusty stack of paperbacks and my trusty bass guitar. Of course, simply disconnecting from modern technology isn't automatically going to ensure you engage in "eye-opening, educational or inspiring" activities — one could simply play solitaire for a whole day.

The real crux of the "digital dependency dilemma" is not the source of our distractions (these are infinite), but the act of distraction itself. Perhaps Goga would be wiser to advocate not just turning off the tube but switching up our own habits.

Brad Klein
senior

information sciences and technology

Bus loop 'saga' too focused on specific group of students

In response to the ongoing saga over the expansion of the bus loop system with the student government's proposed Highlands Loop, it is clear that the proposal was not only futile but completely misguided.

According to the University Park Undergraduate Association, the purpose of such a loop, which would run closer to frat row during the late hours of the party happy days of the week, was to increase safety in those areas for students returning home.

While this loop may help a small percentage of those completely incapable of walking to a current bus stop, in actuality it gives Penn State students, most being underage, the excuse to party into the wee hours of the morning. Why not call it the "Ambulance Loop?" And the UPUA wonders why this proposal did not sit well with the borough.

Why not consider revising or creating a bus loop that would benefit the campus population as a whole, not a small minority?

When the UPUA finally realizes that this loop and others like it are unfeasible, maybe they'll work toward my plan: The Figure Eight, which hits hot spots like Beaver Avenue, the HUB, the Business Building, and the Katz Law Building, but that's another story.

Kristopher Park
senior-finance and mathematics

United States can be leader at United Nations conference

In response to the Associated Press article, "U.S.: Gases must face regulation," in The Daily Collegian Dec. 8, the news that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will look to set caps on greenhouse gas emissions is inspiring and encouraging. As one of the biggest emitters of greenhouse gases in the world, the United States has an obligation and an opportunity to lead the world toward a more sustainable future by capping our own emissions.

Right now, 190 nations have gathered in Copenhagen to take part in COP15, a U.N.-sponsored conference to address global warming. The United States has been criticized for not making strong commitments on climate change, and many have feared we would not be taken seriously in Copenhagen. The announcement from the EPA is a great step for the United States to take the lead in the climate discussions.

We're down to the 11th hour in terms of combating global warming. With thousands of activists calling for a fair, ambitious and binding treaty and 56 newspapers around the world running the same editorial calling for "decisive action," people around the world need to see a leader emerge in Copenhagen.

Where the United States was previously entering COP15 practically empty handed, with much stronger commitments coming from the European Union, the United States is now in a position to bargain.

Rose Monahan
sophomore
English and political science

blog lines

Make Plays

The MLB Winter Meetings have commenced and on day two a big deal just went down between the Tigers, Yankees and D'Backs. The Yankees get Curtis Granderson; the D'Backs get Edwin Jackson and Ian Kennedy; and the Tigers get Max Scherzer, Daniel Schlereth, Austin Jackson and Phil Coke. It's a good deal for the Yankees ...

Read more from the **Make Plays** and the rest of The Daily Collegian's blogs at psu.collegian.com.