

UPUA suggests assault policy change

The student government wants Judicial Affairs to strengthen its policy on sexual assault on campus.

By Casey McDermott
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Student government representatives and other on-campus groups will meet with Judicial Affairs officials today to make the case for a stronger response to sexual assault on campus.

According to legislation passed two weeks ago, University Park Undergraduate Association (UPUA) wants the Office of Judicial Affairs to amend and strengthen its current sanctions

for those convicted of sexual assault.

Currently, "moderate" punishment constitutes disciplinary probation with a notation on the offender's transcript. UPUA wants the maximum punishment increase to include the possibility of disciplinary suspension.

Its recommendations also change the range of "major" sanctions from "suspension to expulsion" to "indefinite expulsion to expulsion," according to the legislation.

Student Life and Diversity Chairman Christian Ragland said the meeting with Interim Director of Judicial Affairs William Huston will hopefully be received as a call to action from the student body.

"It can't be just a student gov-

ernment thing," Ragland (junior-political science) said. "It has to be a whole student body issue, where we can have a diverse group of student leaders come together and say, 'This is something affecting our campus.'"

In his request, Ragland plans to be accompanied by other student leaders, like Penn State's Commission for Women Sexual Assault Committee Co-Chairwoman Dahiana Tejada, Panhellenic Council President Sarah Linkosky and Interfraternity Council President Max Wendkos are also invited.

Wendkos said all of Penn State's fraternities and sororities are already required to adhere to host or attend programs on sexual assault and gender issues.

"[This policy] promotes an awareness campaign, but it would be beneficial to pursue other courses of action such as strengthening the penalty against students that violate Penn State's sexual assault policy," Wendkos (senior-marketing) said.

UPUA President Gavin Keirans agreed, asserting the importance of acting to combat sexual assault at Penn State.

"We're looking to act and make some changes through concrete university policies," Keirans (senior-business management) said. "We hope that Judicial Affairs is receptive to that and we can get the ball rolling on what is a really serious issue."

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Proposed changes to assault policy

UPUA supports strengthened sanctions for sexual assault.

Current sexual misconduct and abuse policy

Moderate: Extended disciplinary probation
Major: Suspension to expulsion

Recommended changes

Moderate: Extended disciplinary probation to disciplinary suspension
Major: Indefinite expulsion or expulsion

Source: UPUA Resolution 41-04
Ashley Rickard/Collegian

Eich may challenge Corman for Senate seat

Jon Eich is the only Democrat petitioning to be on the ballot in May.

By Megan Rogers
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Jon Eich, chairman of the Centre County Board of Commissioners, hopes to challenge Sen. Jake Corman for a seat in the Pennsylvania Senate in the upcoming midterm elections.

Eich said he is the only Democrat circulating petitions to be on the ballot in May. If he is voted as the Democrat candidate, Eich will challenge Corman, R-Centre, for the 34th District

Senate seat, which is comprised of most of Centre, Mifflin, Union, Juniata and Perry counties, Eich said.

Eich resigned as chair of the Centre County Board of Elections on Feb. 9. Because the Board of Elections supervises the elections and counts the ballots, it is a conflict of interest for a candidate to be on the board, he said. Eich will, however, retain his commissioner post.

One of Eich's main goals is to improve the state budget process, he said — this year's 101-day

budget impasse shows there is a need for change.

"Centre County and other counties in Pennsylvania struggle to keep programs and staff paid," he said. "We need to find a way to change the budget process."

And he wasn't pleased with the final product, calling some of the cuts made during last year's budget process "inappropriate" and citing Corman as a leader in imposing cuts on libraries over taxing cigars.

Pennsylvania is the only state in the nation without a cigar tax, he said. If a cigar tax is implemented — as Gov. Ed Rendell recently proposed in his budget — libraries would not have had to face severe cuts to their funding, Eich said.

But Corman said he was protecting jobs by not supporting Rendell's proposed taxes, which included the cigar tax.

"During a recession, we just didn't want to raise taxes that would cost jobs," he said.

Eich also said he supports a natural gas severance tax on businesses that operate in Pennsylvania and wants to reevaluate Pennsylvania's tax structure and the method of determining legislative districts. A non-partisan group should decide on the districts, rather than the legislators, he said.

But to make these changes, Eich first needs to get his name on the primary ballot. Feb. 16 is the first day to circulate petitions, and

a minimum of 500 signatures is needed to add his name to the ballot.

Dianne Gregg, chairwoman of Centre County Democrats, said she supports Eich's decision to run for election.

"Jon Eich is a public servant. He does things he thinks are right, whether they are popular or not," she said. "He expects public service to have more accountability to the people."

Eich served for 20 years in Centre County's planning office and was a county administrator for more than four years. He has been the chairman of the Board of Commissioners since 2008.

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Eich

SPEED SKATE



Matt Dunham/Associated Press

Gold medallist Martina Sablikova of the Czech Republic skates in the 3,000 meter women's race at the Richmond Olympic Oval at the Vancouver 2010 Olympics in British Columbia, on Sunday. During the 2010 Olympic Winter Games, many more athletes — approximately 2,500 — will compete in 15 sports and over 86 separate medal events, according to the Vancouver 2010 Web site.

Residents denied marriage licenses

By Laura Nichols
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

One at a time, the five couples asked to apply for a marriage license. And one by one, they were rejected.

In the last few days of "Freedom to Marry Week," Penn State students and State College residents in same-sex relationships went to the recorder of deeds office in Centre County to ask for a marriage license — even though they already knew what the answer was going to be.

Behind the counter, Register of Wills and Clerk of Orphan's Court Kimberly Barton answered each couple's request the same way.

"Marriage is defined as a union between a man and a woman, so I can't give you a license," she said.

Allison Jones (junior-nursing) went to Bellefonte with her girlfriend, Yvette Lerma (senior-sociology), after taking part in the KissOut in the HUB-Robeson Center earlier that day.

Although the answer Barton gave them may have been inevitable, the ban on same-sex marriage is like a slap across the face, Jones said.

Eric Rhodes, who helped organize the local chapter of the nationwide LGBT event, said it is important to have conversations about the ban on same-sex marriage — especially in a place like Centre County where it is a silent issue.

Each couple that attempted to apply for a marriage license in Bellefonte on Friday simply left the office once they were turned down — no protest, no sit-in. Their request was an act of justice, State College resident Shani Robin said.

"I think it takes a lot to come in and be rejected to your face."

Tee Haines
State College resident

"People are people, and this is a birthright — not a privilege," she said.

Barton said no same-sex couple had ever come into the office in her 32 years working there. She recommended the couples contact their local government officials, but there was nothing she could do, she said.

Robin wasn't angry with Barton for refusing her a license. It is a problem with the whole Pennsylvania government as a whole, she said.

"She works for the system — she has to uphold the unjust laws," Robin said.

State College resident Tee Haines and her girlfriend and Amy Anderson, Class of 2009, were told they were not allowed to apply for a marriage license because one side of the document is for a man to fill out, and the other side is for a woman.

If either Haines or Anderson attempted to fill out the part of the document designated for a man, they would be effectively committing perjury, Barton said. But the couple said the event was groundbreaking, even if they knew the request was going to be denied.

"I think it takes a lot to come in and be rejected to your face," Haines said.

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Fullington buses to provide transportation at Olympics

By Hanna Vovchanska
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

Olympic athletes, officials and spectators will be transported between events by State College's very own Fullington buses in the Winter Olympics that began Friday in Vancouver.

More than 1,000 buses were summoned from across the continent by the International Trailways to meet the high demand for transportation at the 2010 Vancouver Olympics.

Fullington Trailways contributed 18 buses and 36 drivers, along with two mechanics, a service truck and two driver supervisors, Vice President of Intercity Coach Service Milt Weisman said.

Twelve chairlift-equipped buses will remain for the 2010 Vancouver Paralympic Games taking place March 12 through 21. The team journeyed more than 2,700 miles across the country and across a border to reach the Olympics.

"We are very proud to be out there," Weisman said. "We feel like we're representing the U.S."

While Vancouver benefits from Pennsylvania's team of expert drivers,

Fullington profits from the supplementary economic opportunity in this otherwise slow month of business, Weisman said.

The arrangement also included partial compensation for the cost of diesel for the buses to drive across the country.

The company was chosen to commute passengers around Whistler Mountain due to the drivers' experience of maneuvering on similar road conditions.

"We are from Pa. — we know how to drive in snow," Weisman said.

But before anyone could cross any border, piles of paperwork had to be completed. Human Resources Director Loretta Wagner coordinated the gathering of drivers' working papers, birth certificates, passports, and credentials. Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Fullington Trailways Michael Fullington coordinated the necessary bus inspections.

The drivers were uniformed with specifically designed ties of the Trailways logo. They also had to undergo a three-day training program of security measures and procedures, including not communicating with the athletes or officials unless addressed first.

VOTING STARTS TOMORROW

GO TO WWW.COLLEGIAN.PSU.EDU TO VOTE FOR YOUR FAVORITE DESIGN!

Voting starts Tomorrow, February 16th at 8 am and ends Friday, February 19th at 4 pm

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