

Teach For America PSU applications rise

By Vera Greene
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Since education has become a hot topic in Washington, Teach For America has seen more Penn State students applying — and being accepted — than ever before.

Founded to recruit college graduates to teach in low-income school districts, the nonprofit organization is suddenly seeing an influx of Penn State students, with a 35.9 percent increase of applicants from last year and an 8.6 percent jump in the acceptance rate.

This year, 49 Penn State students have already been accepted or placed on the waitlist. With the application deadline approaching at 2:59 a.m. on Friday, Feb. 19, there is still a chance to get involved in the "Peace Corps of America," said Andrea Schwartz, Teach For America recruitment director.

Schwartz, a Teach For America alumna herself, said teaching in inner city schools is an eye-opening experience.

"Awareness translates a lot to Penn State — everyone is really service-oriented," she said.

Accepted for 2010, Jessie Welch (senior-hotel restaurant and institutional management) said Teach For America is about changing the national mindset.

"I think there are a lot of people who either don't acknowledge the achievement gap or aren't aware of it," she said. "I grew up living a fortunate life — it was never on my radar because it didn't need to be."

Welch will be teaching at a school in Richmond, Calif. — considered one of the most dangerous cities in the country.

Schwartz said there are many challenges that come with teaching in an inner city community, because many students are drastically far behind in academics.

An average fourth grader in the lower-income school districts is reading at a first grade level, which causes large achievement

"Awareness translates a lot to Penn State — everyone is really service-oriented."

Andrea Schwartz
Teach For America recruitment director

gaps that cost the country about \$400 billion to \$670 billion per year, she said.

"In lower-income communities, 50 percent of high school kids drop out and less than 10 percent go to college," Schwartz said. "There are 13 million children growing up in poverty that need a little extra support in the classroom."

And many of the students don't have sufficient food, clothes or shelter, she said, so encouragement within school is paramount.

When Schwartz was in the program, she taught a student in her Advanced Placement English class named Luwam Debru, the daughter of immigrants who spoke very little English.

Debru's dream was to go to University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and become a doctor so she could one day open a free health clinic for struggling families.

Schwartz worked with Debru and pushed her to new levels of academic proficiency. In the end, the student scored a passing grade of 3 on the AP exam.

In August, Debru asked Schwartz to write her college recommendation, even adding in her application essay that she hoped to join Teach For America some day and be a role model like Schwartz.

Last Thursday, Schwartz got a call: Debru had been accepted to UNC-Chapel Hill — and received a partial scholarship to top it off.

To e-mail reporter: vhg5003@psu.edu

ASHES TO ASHES



Christine Reckner, Collegian

Students receive ashes at the Pasquerilla Spiritual Center on Ash Wednesday, which marks the beginning of Lent. Along with Ash Wednesday, Catholics abstain from eating meat on Fridays during Lent.

Rep. Conklin considers new position

By Megan Rogers
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Rep. Scott Conklin is considering running for Lieutenant Governor of Pennsylvania, a position he would use to campaign for legislative downsizing and reform.

Because Pennsylvania allows for representatives to run for both a seat in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives and lieutenant governor, Conklin, D-Centre, has begun to circulate petitions for both races. Conklin's chief of staff Tor Michaels said, Tuesday was the first day candidates could circulate petitions.

While Conklin is running for lieutenant governor, his main focus is on campaigning for reelection as state representative, Michaels said.

Michaels said Conklin began to consider running for lieutenant governor after he received positive feedback about his Jan. 25 constitutional convention forum in State College where Conklin was encouraged to take his reform message to a higher platform.

His campaign for House representative in 2006 focused on legislative reform, Michaels said,

which is the message he wants to push in both of his campaigns for this election.

Jon Eich, Centre County Board of Commissioners chairman and Senate hopeful, attended Conklin's forum on a constitutional convention, as well as his earlier forum on the state's budget process. He thinks Conklin's election to lieutenant governor would be great for the area.

"We don't often get candidates for state legislative offices here in Central Pennsylvania," he said. "It might have some benefit for Centre County to have someone high in the government to talk about the needs of the county."

Eich said he would like to discuss the current freeze on county-owned nursing homes and transportation issues in the county with Conklin if he were to be voted into office. If he decides to run for lieutenant governor and is elected, Conklin would assume the role of leading Pennsylvania Senate sessions and advising the governor on leg-

islative initiatives. He would also continue to advocate for downsizing the legislature, Michaels said.

And Conklin believes the reform message needs to be taken to another level, Michaels said. Though the House passed 31 reform measures in the past year, there's still a long way to go — which could include a constitutional convention, he said.

Limiting government spending or making the legislature part-time would be among the issues discussed at a constitutional convention, Michaels said.

Penn State College Democrats President Jessica Pellicciotta said with the delay of the budget and a state government some call dysfunctional, a constitutional convention may be necessary.

"A constitutional convention — even if it is just to think about it — would be a good step," Pellicciotta (junior-political science) said. "It would show that politicians don't just care about their careers, but care about the functionality of the government."

Conklin will not make a formal decision on whether he is running for lieutenant governor until March, Michaels said.

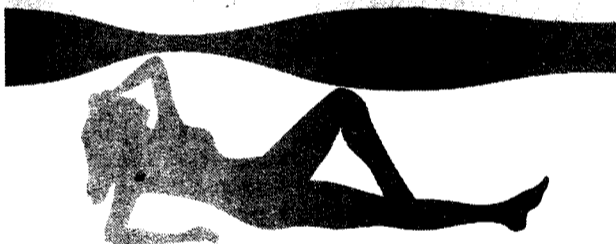
To e-mail reporter: mer5200@psu.edu



Conklin

Euphoria at Le Salon

112 South Fraser Street • 814-238-6440 • 814-237-3117



IN TIME FOR SPRING BREAK...

Impress the rest with our hair and body services!

STUDENT HEALTH TUNE-UP

THURSDAY @ 5 • 102 STUDENT HEALTH CENTER

February 18 Ready, Stretch, Go!



Avoid injuries by stretching right.

All programs FREE and are held 5-6 p.m. in the Student Health Center.

Bring a friend and tune up this spring!

For more information call (814) 863-0461 or e-mail promotinghealth@sa.psu.edu

PENNSYLVANIA University of State Affairs University Health Services www.sa.psu.edu/uhs

AURUM

JEWELERS & GOLDSMITHS

Show your support for THON

With each purchase of the THON bead pendant, Aurum will donate \$20.00 directly to THON.

132 South Allen Street, State College, PA 16801
(814) 237-1566 • www.aurumjewelers.net

DELIVERING 20" ALL NIGHT LONG

BIG ASS THURSDAYS 20" Cheese Pizza or 20" Pokey Stix \$9.99 <small>*Extra Toppings \$2.50 Each Valid Thursdays Only!</small>	PASTA THURSDAYS \$3 Off Any Pasta Dish
---	---

300 S. PUGH STREET
814-234-4862

Proud sponsors of THON SINCE 1987.

THE Communication Station Has A NEW LOCATION

Serving all your Verizon Wireless needs!

On the corner of N. Atherton & W. Cherry Lane across from Blockbuster Video on N. Atherton!

Fast, Friendly, Knowledgeable Service!
Quick attention to your Verizon needs!
New Activations & Phone Upgrades
Text and Picture Packages!
Weekly Phone Specials!
Open 7 Days A Week!

Visit us at our NEW LOCATION across from Blockbuster Video on N. Atherton!

Call Us Today! (814) 231-2600

FREE car charger with new activation or phone upgrade!
Promotional Restrictions may apply. See store for details. Offer ends 2/28/10

A service event sponsored by the Center for Ethics and Religious Affairs.

Feel free to donate and make a difference throughout the year!

Donations include tray toppers for patients at the University Hospital, door hangers and magnets for the residents in Centre Crest Nursing Home, and decorative meal tags for Meals on Wheels!