

## Ragland best choice for UPUA

Come Wednesday, Penn State students have the opportunity and obligation to vote for leaders they feel will best represent them next year.

Although the idealistic goals of David Adewumi and running mate Devin Weakland are intriguing, the experience of Christian Ragland and Colleen Smith and the practicality of their platform makes the Ragland-Smith ticket most deserving of the University Park Undergraduate Association presidency.

On one hand, the campaign of Adewumi is ambitious. For example, his "10.i.10" initiative proposes to lower tuition by raising \$100 million through private donations and the Penn State Alumni network over the next 10 years.

But what experience does Adewumi have when

it comes to student government? Ragland and Smith both serve as chairpersons for UPUA and have proven track records. They are knowledgeable when it comes to the structure of UPUA, and their goals seem much more attainable in comparison to Adewumi's long-term initiatives.

One example of that tangibility is their proposal to introduce a non-voting student council member on State College Borough Council to better town-gown relations. It doesn't have the bells and whistles of mobilizing 10,000 students and raising \$100 million for tuition, but it's an attainable goal that is realistic and a great starting point.

And that's how student government will succeed. Not with huge, magnanimous endeavors but by going one step at a time.

Having said that, we do not support a "business-as-usual" mentality. If the Ragland-Smith ticket is elected, we expect them to stay true to their promise of bringing student government back to the students.

Be sensible and accountable, but don't be afraid to shake things up.

Not all of Ragland's platform is clear and tangible, and perhaps his campaign could use some of the goal-setting mentality of Adewumi — whose fervor and enthusiasm is admirable. However, students can't vote solely on rhetoric and a nice looking resume.

Ragland and Smith have the experience and the passion necessary to lead UPUA, and by taking an aggressive yet practical approach, they have the better ability to succeed in their roles.

## UPUA Encampment event proves to be worth the price

In response to the March 29 column, "Event worthwhile but too expensive," I went to Encampment as a "free agent." While there are some time allotments I might change, I thought overall the event was great. It's a shame that the tradition ever died. I think the money spent on the event was completely justified, and holding Encampment in the HUB would not produce similar returns.

Because this was the first Encampment since 2001, it was important to get it right the first time and leave a good impression on all attendees. Holding the event in a professional setting like the Penn Stater set the tone that the University Park Undergraduate Association was taking the event seriously. This might be an overlooked point in Bill Wellock's analysis. Sure, it could be done cheaper by holding Encampment in the HUB and serving pizza, but what kind of setting and attitude does that send to participants?

Almost all initiatives cost money. If it costs \$7,500 to hold a quality event like Encampment, then it's \$7,500 well spent. I applaud Bill for being critical of government spending, but let's be careful not to take it overboard to the point where we're scared to spend any money.

Rich McMillen

senior-accounting and information, sciences and technology

## Students can't afford to be content with status quo

It is of no surprise that Gavin Keirans and the current University Park Undergraduate Association administration endorse the Christian Ragland-Colleen Smith ticket. Both have been involved in UPUA for the last two years and have a great deal of experience within the organization. However, I would question the assertion that this experience is actually valuable to the students of Penn State.

Currently, UPUA has done very little to tangibly benefit students. An expensive concert that steps on the toes of other student organizations? A downtown office that goes unused for an entire semester? Why should the endorsement of an organization that has wasted students' money so frivolously mean anything to me? Sticking with the status quo is unacceptable.

David Adewumi has big plans for Penn State. He is a dreamer. I harbor some reservations about whether his plan to reduce tuition in his "10.i.10" plan can actually deliver on its promises. Despite these doubts, I will still be voting for him. Maybe what Penn State needs right now is someone who can dream big and change student government at University Park. If anyone can do it, it's David Adewumi. I've met him within the past semester, and very few people have his drive and passion. The current UPUA administration does not benefit students, and a continuation of its current policies will be a step backward for Penn State students. I urge every student who dreams big and wants their student government to accomplish something meaningful to vote for David Adewumi.

Mark Weaver

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## THE DAILY Collegian

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## Group protests need clear points

By Kevin Sullivan

**T**wo Saturdays ago, I was relaxing in a bar on South Street in

Philadelphia when suddenly someone noticed some commotion outside.

I walked to the window of the second floor of the establishment and looked out at a street full of teenagers running away from a handful of police officers. I thought I could smell smoke, though I couldn't see any.

This scene continued for about two hours, as an innumerable amount of teenagers walked up and down the street as police patrolled, making sure nothing got out of hand.

Stores closed early. The kids kept walking up and down the street, occasionally gathering in mass conglomerations in the middle of intersections.

No one was violent, though I did see one young man handcuffed and forced into the back of a police van.

I was of course just between Fifth and Sixth streets the whole time, not venturing far from Tattooed Mom's Saturday night special: \$1 PBRs until 11.

However, this scenario apparently stretched from Front Street to Broad, which for those unfamiliar with Philadelphia, is 15 blocks.

As tame as the crowd seemed from my vantage point, the reality is the gathering, known as a flash mob, was not so innocent

on the whole. According to the Associated Press, there were three arrests and several assaults, many of which involved several offenders.

Flash mobs are generally described as fun, amusing events with silly purposes such as the mass pillow fights that have occurred in downtown Toronto and New York. In the City of Brotherly Love, they are becoming a huge problem.

This was the fifth such event in the city in the past year, all of which have resulted in violence and destruction on some level. Though the majority of participants do not take part in such negative acts, those who do can get away with it much more easily because of the massive and confusing crowds.

Many teenagers were charged with felonies for two other recent incidents, but the heightened punishment didn't put an end to the incidents.

The obvious question is why have these flash mobs been happening? When I was in the midst of this most recent one, I asked several kids walking by. All of them told me they heard about it from MySpace or Facebook, but none could give me any answer as to why they had gathered there, looking away numbly after proudly explaining their ability to organize.

Nothing was being protested. No statement was being made.

It was a mass gathering of boredom and aimlessness.

If you really wanted to, you could blame the parents. You could also blame a city that lacks institutions to provide entertainment for children and places for teenagers to hang out.

But these aren't exactly

organized events. Mass gatherings happen all the time, and whenever such an occurrence arises, there's always the chance that someone will do something dumb.

It's happened here. When Penn State beat Ohio State last year, streetlights were destroyed. Anyone involved in any such mass gathering should always keep himself or herself in check of an agitating herd mentality. When you become part of a group, that group subsequently speaks for you, whether or not you like it. Don't allow yourself to become part of a runaway train, drunken on hysteria. Think for yourself.

The Tea Party protests have turned toward this recently as well, and the party should probably take a long look at itself.

The language at rallies has become more obscene, and during this past week, violence against government officials has begun taking place as well, with several House Representatives and Senators receiving threats and bricks through windows. One politician even had a gas line cut at his brother's home.

These sorts of incidents go beyond protests and counteract any positive one could do for his or her cause. If the bored teenagers of Philadelphia can organize thousands in flash mobs, certainly more effective action can be taken. These violent acts are pointless and do nothing but damage the message protesters are trying to spread.

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MY OPINION

## blog lines

### Footblog

The Collegian's new football staff is busy breaking down the 2010 Penn State football team position by position as spring practice continues.

In part four, the offensive line is analyzed. With two starting spots to fill, how will the group come together to protect a new quarterback?

Check back with the Footblog every day for more analysis.

Read more from the Footblog and the rest of The Daily Collegian's blogs at [psucollegian.com/blogs](http://psucollegian.com/blogs).

### Snap, Crackle, Pop

I've heard of making art out of Popsicle sticks, but this is insane — and insanely intricate.

Yep, art out of toothpicks, folks. The talented artist is Stan Murno of Syracuse, N.Y. According to Flavorwire, Murno's unusual pastime stemmed from an assignment in elementary school, when he had to create a toothpick structure in art class. These days, he's still building with this unconventional medium — and with good reason.

See photos on the arts blog Snap, Crackle, Pop and read the rest of The Daily Collegian's blogs at [psucollegian.com/blogs](http://psucollegian.com/blogs).

### Seventh Inning Stretch

Sophomore Lisa Akamine became the second Penn State pitcher in three weeks to be named the conference's pitcher of the week when she got the honor on Monday.

Akamine won both of her starts this past week and pitched a total of 18.1 innings and surrendered just three runs (two earned) on nine hits to help the Nittany Lions split both of their double-headers for the week. The California native has been on an upswing lately going 8-1 with a 1.07 ERA in her last 12 appearances. In fact, in those dozen appearances since Feb. 19, Akamine has given up one run or less in 10 of them.

Read more from the softball blog Seventh Inning Stretch and the rest of The Daily Collegian's blogs at [psucollegian.com/blogs](http://psucollegian.com/blogs).