

# Faculty, students receive awards

By Colleen Boyle  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Some of Penn State's most talented and involved students and faculty were honored during an intimate ceremony Tuesday afternoon in the Hintz Family Alumni Center.

The 19th annual Senior Awards and Diversity Recognition Reception was sponsored by the Multicultural Resource Center (MRC), which provides professional counseling and educational services for minority undergraduate students.

Six student awards were presented at the ceremony. Allura Jiles (senior-bio science and engineering), who was described at the event as a "promising young scholar," received the Academic Scholarship Award. Jiles was commended for her active role in research projects and will return to Penn State in the fall for graduate school.

The Resilient Student Award was presented to Alisa Shockley (senior-geography), a student who has faced adversity since she was young, battling poverty and homelessness. In the fall, Shockley will continue her educa-



Asit Mishra/Collegian

Assistant professor of psychology Jose Soto receives the Faculty Diversity Recognition Award during the Multicultural Resource Center's senior award ceremony on Tuesday afternoon.

tion at the University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign.

Will Dennis (senior-business and finance) was honored with the Volunteer Service Award in recognition for his service to Penn State and the outside community. Dennis accepted his award and held back tears as he thanked those who have helped him throughout his time at Penn State.

"Someone asked me why am I so involved," Dennis said. "And I said, 'I'm passionate about it.'"

The Leadership Award was presented to Mercedes Davis (senior-supply chain and information system).

"It really means a lot," she said after being presented with her award. "You don't really go about leadership activities to be recognized. I thank God for allowing me

to affect change in the organizations that I belong to."

Crystle-Lynn Rendon (senior-civil engineering), who received the Inspiring Student Leader Award, was described as a student who "toils behind the scenes" to ensure success.

After accepting her award, Rendon recalled her friends in high school and said many, especially the girls, never considered engineering as a career. JoAnn Chirico, Jose Soto and Elizabeth Kupp received the Faculty/Staff Diversity Recognition Awards. All three were commended for their work with underrepresented students at Penn State.

"Today is a good day for diversity," Soto said.

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# Census provides temporary work

By Will Schultz  
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

Penn State seniors looking for a post-graduation summer job with the U.S. Census Bureau may find themselves facing tough competition.

The Census Bureau began hiring workers last year to collect census information from citizens, with a starting hourly pay rate of \$11.75, Census Bureau Media Specialist Pamela Golden said.

The prospect of temporary work with good pay is drawing plenty of interest: Golden said college students are competing against jobless workers and senior citizens for positions. But students have an edge over older applicants because they are familiar with the testing procedures applicants go through, she said.

"Students tend to do very well on the practice test," Golden said.

Laura Peck (senior-advertising and public relations) helped organize the on-campus group Count Centre County, which promotes taking the census to students. She said the jobs help present unique opportunities for students who are graduating.

"For seniors who haven't landed a job right out of school, this gives them the opportunity for a couple of months of relatively easy pay while still looking," Peck said.

For students, the \$11.75-per-

"Students tend to do very well on the practice test."

Pamela Golden  
Census Bureau Media Specialist

hour pay is one of the more attractive features of working for the census.

If students pass the test, applicants then undergo a background check before they can be considered.

Once hired, workers undergo a four-day paid training period. On the job, they'll travel to homes that did not mail back the 10-question census by the April 1 deadline, Golden said.

Alex Stepanian (sophomore-industrial engineering) cited the pay as one of the main reasons he would consider applying for the job.

"Great pay. Flexible hours. What's not to love?" Stepanian said.

Both Peck and Stepanian said they see the job as a valuable building block, even for undergraduate students, who could put a government job on their resume.

"This type carries more weight on a resume than working at a gas station," Stepanian said.

Those interested in working for the bureau can get an application online at [2010census.gov](http://2010census.gov).

# Organization discusses Pagan beliefs, practices

By Julie Mastrine  
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

Members of Penn State's Pagan student organization set the record straight about their religion during a discussion in the Paterno Library on Tuesday.

Alyssa Yukevich and Chris Rainville, co-presidents of Silver Circle, discussed Pagan deities, rituals and holidays with about a dozen curious audience members.

"There's always those inquisitive looks when I tell people I'm a Pagan," Rainville (senior-biology) said. "Most of the time, people are ignorant of what that means."

The presentation was part of the University Libraries Diversity Committee's Religion and Culture Speaker Series, which has included discussion of religions like Islam and Hinduism. Yukevich (sophomore-elementary education) said she was happy to have been asked to discuss her religion in a public forum.

"There are a lot of misconceptions about Paganism, and it's easy for things to get rolled into a ball of confusion," Yukevich said.

Paganism focuses on reverence of nature and pre-dates Abrahamic religions such as

Christianity and Judaism, she said. It is very diverse, and communities and individuals that practice the religion may have differing beliefs, she said.

"There are less absolutes in Paganism than other religions — it's more a world of gray," Rainville said.

Yukevich and Rainville said Paganism is often mistaken for witchcraft. They discussed the differences between the two, saying that Paganism is a belief system, while witchcraft is based in specific practices. They also discussed rituals that Pagans may perform, including a moon ritual that Silver

Circle recently held by the Hintz Family Alumni Center duck pond.

Xan Hall, Class of 2008, said that during her time at Penn State, she never had a problem practicing Paganism.

"If I spoke to a professor about needing to miss class because of something relating to my religion, they would allow me to be exempt from classes without a problem," Hall said.

Audience member Wilson Hutton, visual communications specialist for University Libraries, said the presentation was helpful in clearing up what exactly Paganism entails.

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—Refrigerator Guy

"He better hope I never find him, or else I'll run him over with my car."

—Guy selling Camry

"I can't believe that guy is writing a book. He better wear kevlar to his book signing."

—Guy selling ugly couch

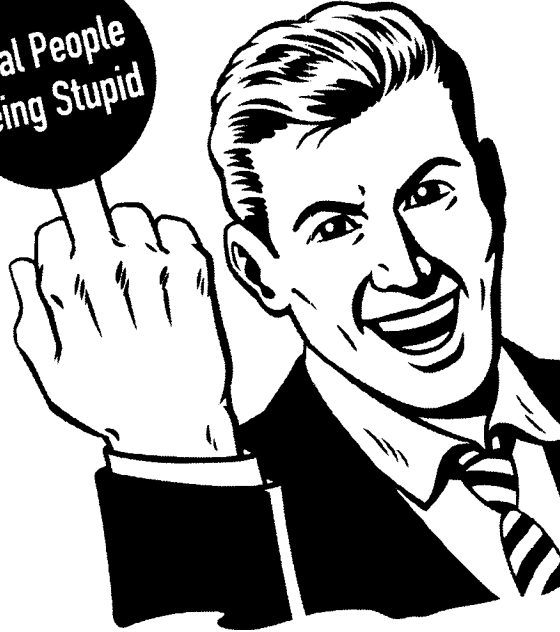
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