

UPUA encourages students to know issues

By Paul Osolnick
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

A meeting Thursday between the student government president and the Penn State Grassroots Network featured discussion of the importance of students getting involved with issues that affect the university.

University Park Undergraduate Association (UPUA) President Christian Ragland said he met with Grassroots Network Director Alan Janesch to determine ways in which the two organizations could work to increase student involvement in groups that promote interest in university-related issues in the state government.

Ragland (senior-political science) said the meeting focused on a mutual effort to get students to join groups like the Grassroots Network and take the initiative to contact their local representatives about issues like Penn State's budget and how the appropriations affect tuition for students.

"We want students to talk to



Ragland



Janesch

[representatives] and let them know how important the funding is for Penn State," Ragland said.

Ragland said the organizations will continue to rally student interest with events like Capitol Day — an event organized by the Council of Commonwealth Student Governments (CCSG) — while developing new events that focus on the Grassroots initiatives.

Janesch said he believes it is important to work with student leadership organizations to build interest among students.

"One of the reasons I first sought out student leaders was because I wanted to find students committed to Penn State that

wanted to make the university better," Janesch said.

Janesch said the Grassroots Network is planning an event during the Parents and Family Weekend in the fall to highlight their major initiatives.

Janesch said the event will be held on Saturday, Oct. 2 sometime in the afternoon and will target students and their families to hopefully encourage them to get involved.

"I wanted to have an event that particular weekend," Janesch said, "that combined two things: dessert and an academic, educational component."

Janesch said the event would provide families with some

desserts around 1:30 p.m. and inform the students and parents about topics like the importance of state appropriations and its affect on tuition and the quality of the education.

The event would include a panel discussion and speeches from faculty members and legislators, Janesch said.

Ragland said they talked about the possibility of having state Sen. Jake Corman, R-Centre, speak at the event.

"Grassroots is a good organization to be apart of," Ragland said. "We want to see more students involved."

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LGBTQA leader leaves mark on PSU community

By Megan Rogers
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Claire Gonyo has only been working in the LGBTQA Resource Center for a little more than two years — but some of the students she's worked with say she made a big impact in that time.

Although her time was short Gonyo said her job has been full of small moments of successes.

As the assistant director of the Penn State LGBTQA Resource Center, Gonyo worked to plan the center's activities, like Pride Week and National Coming Out Week.

Gonyo said leaving Penn State will be bittersweet.

But she's excited to start the next challenge of her life — earning her Ph.D. in higher adult and lifelong education at Michigan State.

Gonyo was the welcoming face

"Watching a person get comfortable in their own skin and being proud of who they are is just so powerful for me."

Claire Gonyo

Assistant Director of the LGBTQA Resource Center

of the LGBTQA Center, Penn State graduate Steve Lucas said.

Lucas, Class of 2010, interned with Gonyo for a year and was also the president of Rainbow Roundtable, the club for which Gonyo was an adviser.

"What Claire was good at was building bridges across the university that lead to the center," he said. "Claire is an incredibly approachable person."

Gonyo's colleague Allison Subasic agreed that Gonyo has been a friend and mentor to many.

"We're going to miss Claire," she said.

"She's really made her mark on the university."

Gonyo said that's all part of the job. Each time the center hosts a panel or activity, it's raising awareness for someone in the LGBTQA community, Gonyo said — and that's the overall mission of her work. Gonyo said awareness and attendance was up at the Spring 2010 Pride Week, making the event a huge success.

The respect between Gonyo and the students she works with is mutual. Gonyo said she has been honored to work with so many "phenomenal" students.

Mentoring and advising students are the best parts of her job, she said. She said she especially enjoys helping struggling students come to terms with their identity.

"Everyone's story is so unique," she said. "Watching a person get comfortable in their own skin and being proud of who they are is just so powerful for me."

Gonyo was not only an advocate for the LGBTQA community but for all students, Lucas said. Gonyo was involved in several university initiatives like LeaderShape and the commission for LGBT equity.

"One thing that Claire's really brought to Centre County and the university is someone who's committed to student affairs in general as well as being an LGBTQA advocate," he said.



Kelley King/Collegian

Claire Gonyo, right, speaks with a student after this year's Pride March.

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