

Hillel welcomes students

By Matt Scorzafave
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Students munched hot dogs, listened to music and mingled with new and returning members of Penn State Hillel on the HUB-Robeson Center's back patio at the Jewish student organization's second annual barbecue Tuesday night.

The group hoped to familiarize both incoming freshmen and previously uninvolved students with Hillel, said Aaron Kaufman, Hillel's executive director.

Hillel held its first cookout last fall during Welcome Week.

The event drew so many new students that the group decided to make the barbecue an annual tradition.

"We did a little bit of planning over the summer and wanted to continue the event, since last

year's was so successful in bringing new people to the organization," said Hillel's THON chair, Brittany Musaffi (junior - psychology).

Tuesday's two-hour event allowed students to interact with each other and learn about what Hillel has to offer, with poster displays of the group's various activities and programs.

"Our goal is to create a welcoming, low-barrier opportunity for Jewish students to connect to one another and for all students to learn more about opportunities at Penn State," Kaufman said.

Returning Hillel students were excited to meet potential new members.

"I've just come back from Israel and with that experience, I'm really excited to meet more people in the Jewish community at Penn State," said Rachel Brown (sopho-

more-human development and family studies).

Jenna Heffler (freshman-division of undergraduate studies) said she was excited to meet other Jewish students at Penn State and wanted to participate in the Taglit-Birthright program — a free trip to Israel — with Hillel. Aside from traveling, Hillel has a consistent following of students who practice routine worship and attend Friday night dinners, said Musaffi. Kaufman said one of the cookout's goals was to get students interested in all of the opportunities the group has to offer.

"While Penn State Hillel has grown tremendously in the last few years, some students are not yet aware of the wide variety of programs and opportunities we offer," Kaufman said.

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Katie Silvis/Collegian

Lauren Schuchart, Director of Engagements for Penn State Hillel, passes out food to students at Hillel's barbecue.

Speaker advocates assault awareness

By Sarah Peters
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

About 70 students became the jury in a mock trial of a sexual assault case in the HUB Auditorium Tuesday night as part of an awareness initiative.

Brett Sokolow, president of the National Center for Higher Education Risk Management, led the initiative, entitled "Drunk Sex or Date Rape: Can You Tell the Difference?"

Sokolow, who's also an attorney, outlined the murky details of a sexual assault case on a college campus thirteen years ago.

The case concerned two students, "Amy" and "Todd," who met at a house party. Both had a few beers, but later Todd offered Amy Jell-O shots made with the grain alcohol Everclear.

That meant those shots were about 90 percent alcohol, Sokolow explained to gasps from the audience.

The next morning, Amy woke up to a note from Todd explaining they'd had sex — but she said she didn't remember it.

"Guys, would that worry us?" asked Sokolow. "Ladies, put yourself in Amy's shoes.

How would that feel?"

The "jury" of audience members voted 60 percent to 40 percent to convict Todd of sexual assault.

Audra Hixson, Program Coordinator at the Center for Women Students, said the program is timely because of the high number of cases of sexual assault seen in the fall, most involving drugs or alcohol and occurring between people who know each other.

"I hope it, number one, increases their awareness of the links between sexual assault and alcohol, but also starts conversations about sexual assaults among students," Hixson said.

Abby Yochum (sophomore-security and risk analysis) said it's an issue that also hits close to home.

"I know people who've been date raped, and it really bothers me," Yochum said. "I'm really passionate about it."

Toward the end of the evening, Sokolow revealed that the jury in the real-life sexual assault case had unanimously voted Todd guilty.

After serving prison time and registering as a sex offender,



Sarah Finnegan/Collegian

The president of the National Center for Higher Education Risk Management spoke Tuesday about sexual assault awareness.

Todd got an associate degree at a community college. Amy dropped out of school and attempted suicide. She couldn't bring herself to cash a check for over \$1 million she received in a settlement with the college.

The audience fell silent. "There's no amount of money in the world that can fix something like this," Sokolow said.

Tanner Fitzgerald (sophomore-finance), a member of Men Against Violence, said he was pleased with the program.

"Really, all it takes is one person to hear, and [Sokolow] can save two people's lives," he said. "I was glad that there was a majority [who convicted Todd], but I wish someday it would be 100 to zero, not 60 to 40."

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Rendell disappointed by federal grant rejection

By Kathy Matheson
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

HARRISBURG — Gov. Ed Rendell on Tuesday blamed Pennsylvania's loss in the second round of the federal "Race to the Top" educational grant competition on the lack of a special route for midcareer professionals to become teachers and inadequate support for linking teacher pay and tenure to performance.

Rendell said he was "very disappointed" that the state finished in 18th place as the U.S. Education Department doled out \$3.4 billion in funding to nine states and Washington, D.C.

He had hoped the state would receive up to \$400 million to help more than 100,000 additional students reach grade level in reading and math; to halve the number of students testing at the lowest level; and to ensure that at least 85 percent of students in the most struggling schools reach proficiency.

The "Race to the Top" program, part of President Barack Obama's economic stimulus plan, rewards states for implementing ambitious changes to improve struggling schools. Tennessee and Delaware

obtained grants in the competition's first round earlier this year.

Rendell said some of the winning states announced Tuesday have made promises about merit pay that they will not be able to keep.

Pennsylvania's application, he said, was more honest in how it dealt with the restrictions of union contracts.

He said other states provided letters of support from all district superintendents.

Pennsylvania, he said, instead went district-by-district to obtain agreements regarding the state's plan to improve achievement.

Superintendents, school board presidents and teacher union presidents signed those agreements for 122 districts and 69 charter schools.

"We could have put in that all 500 districts are willing to do it based on the supers' [superintendents'] OK," he said at a Capitol news conference, "but that couldn't have come to pass."

The state's application pledged to create an evaluation system for teachers and principals with input from school districts, charter schools and teachers unions, as well as other professional associations.

**Writers,
Take Note**

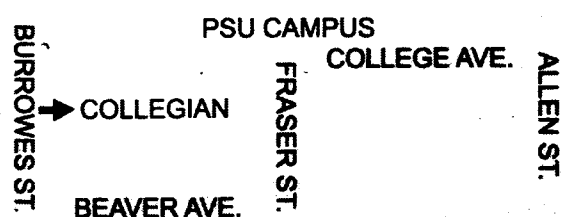
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