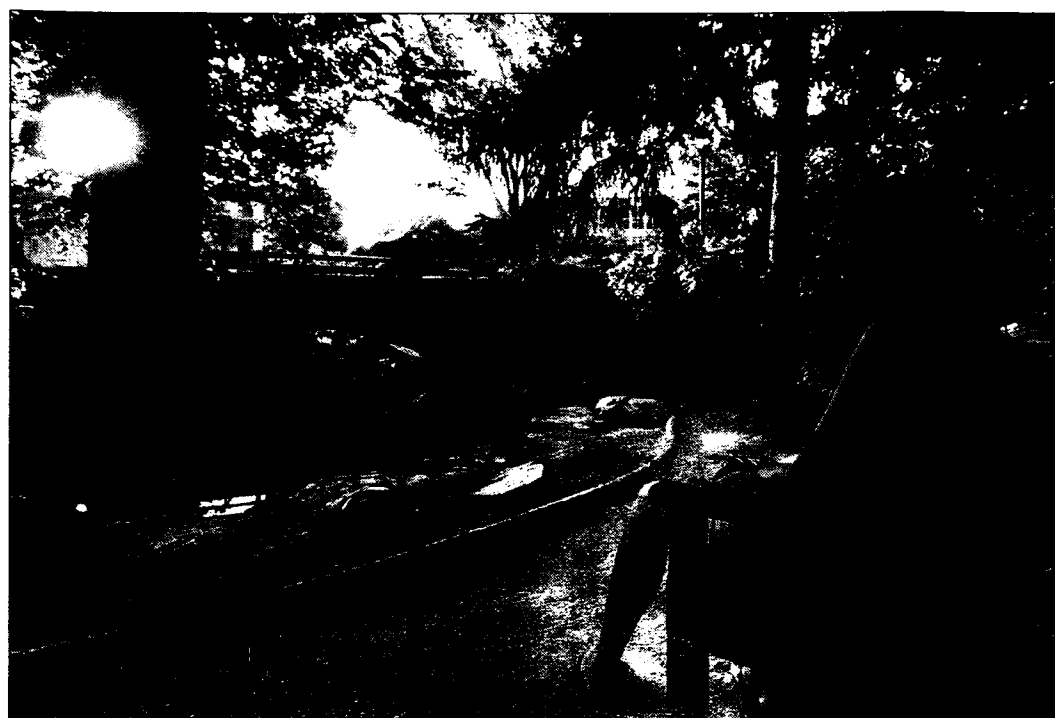


WALK IN THE PARK



Andrew Dunheimer/Collegian
Melissa Volpe (freshman-biology) and Kyle Martinez (junior-finance) enjoy the sunset near the Hintz Family Alumni Center on Tuesday evening. This weekend's warm weather carried over into the school week.

Scholarship funds reach record levels

By Sarah Peters
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Students grappling with the effects of the recession may be pleasantly surprised when they visit the Office of Student Aid.

Office of Student Aid officials have a record amount of scholarship funds to award this year, said Melissa Kunes, senior director of student aid.

"I'd say mostly because of the Campaign for the Future fundraising efforts, we have more scholarship funds to award than we've ever had before," she said.

The Campaign for the Future is Penn State's capital campaign, an initiative targeted at raising scholarship funds.

But some Penn State students said they haven't seen relief.

Ryan Glynn (junior-security and risk analysis) said he originally thought he would graduate with very little to no debt at all.

But all that changed with tuition hikes.

The increases were especially hard on Glynn, an out-of-state student. Now Glynn, who hasn't received any financial aid, estimates he'll find himself in five digits of debt, — likely \$20,000 or more.

Glynn said he understands Penn State's financial aid office is doing the best it can, given the recession.

"If this was the current policy, and there wasn't a recession, I'd say it'd be a bit stringent," he said.

But Kunes said last year the Office of Student Aid processed \$1 billion worth of aid in the 2009-2010 year, an increase from the \$450 million awarded a decade ago, in the 2000-2001 academic year. In the 2009-2010 academic year, the

office saw 71,000 students receiving aid, an increase of about 3,000 from the year before.

Ten years ago, 56,000 students received aid.

Glynn said other than his loans, he hasn't been greatly affected by the recession — but he has friends who've had to transfer or drop out completely because of it.

Kunes said students don't have to show need to tap into low-interest loans. Families may want to take out low-interest loans because their cash flow has dried up in the recession, or because low-interest rate loans appear to be better than tapping into other sources of investment, Kunes said.

Jacqueline Nelson (sophomore-human health and development), said she gets a fair amount of financial aid.

"For the most part, I feel like I get a good amount of financial aid for my family's socioeconomic status," Nelson said. "Personally, I haven't had to sacrifice a lot. My family hasn't had to either."

Nelson said she also has friends who aren't as fortunate — one may have to sell her horse to finance her Penn State education.

Kyra Swick (sophomore-Chinese) said her parents were handling her college finances, but are now struggling to keep up with the expenses. Swick, also an out-of-state student, said she was in the financial aid office to find different ways to help her parents and plan out the next two years.

"I'm trying to be more proactive about my finances and in control of what's going on," Swick said. "The recession is difficult, so I'm trying to take a proactive role in managing my college expenses."

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Fair boosts seniors' morale

By Brendan McNally
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

If seniors could use one word to describe their mood going into the job-hunting season, it'd be "worried."

"All seniors are in this position — having to find a job," Rob Eckerle said at the Penn State Career Services' Career Kickoff fair Tuesday at the Bank of America Career Services Center. "I'm in the same boat as everyone else."

But that's why Eckerle (senior-recreation, park, and tourism management) said he went to the Senior Big Ten Career Kickoff, an event meant to teach students the skills they need to land a job.

Eckerle said the event gave him a better idea of how to go about job searching, which he said has become one of his top priorities.

Holly Temple, interim associate director of Career Services, said the event was an opportunity for students to gain new skills in job searching, resume writing and interviewing while learning about all the career resources

"You're worried you won't get into grad school and worried about getting stuck in a job you don't want for a year. Overall, it's just a really stressful time."

Joanna Malfitano
senior - biobehavioral health

the university has to offer.

Eleven booths were set up around the perimeter of the room.

At each station a Penn State career counselor gave seniors tips and advice on one aspect of finding a job or graduate school after college.

Temple said it's a good idea for students to start finding a job early — the sooner the better, she said — because the average job search can last anywhere from six to nine months.

But even in the second week of the first semester, some students didn't think they were starting soon enough.

Joanna Malfitano (senior-biobehavioral health) said that even though it's only the fall, she could have started earlier.

"I feel like I've had a late start," Malfitano said.

She said she wants to go to graduate school, but that the deadline for new applications has already passed for some of the schools she'd like to apply to.

"You're worried you won't get into grad school and worried about getting stuck in a job you don't want for a year," Malfitano said. "Overall, it's just a really stressful time."

But Temple said Penn State offers services like career fairs, one-on-one career counseling and on-campus interviews to help students land jobs. She said the most important message she wants to convey to seniors was simple: "Let us help you."

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