

Higher education, close to home

By JENNIFER JUDGE

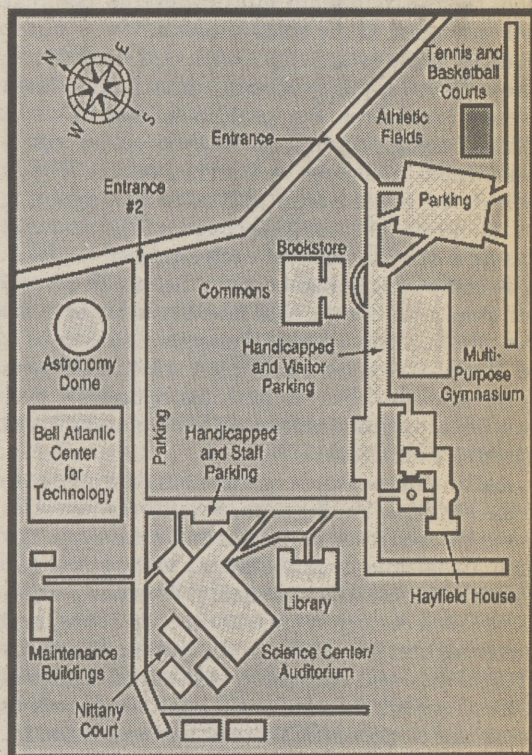
The Back Mountain is fortunate to have two of the Wyoming Valley's oldest institutions of higher learning right in its backyard. The Wilkes-Barre campus of the Pennsylvania State University was first established in Wilkes-Barre in 1916 to fulfill higher education needs in engineering and technical subjects, making Penn State the first higher education institution in the Wyoming Valley.

The Penn State Wilkes-Barre campus was moved to its present location in Lehman in 1968. The 50-acre campus was donated to Penn State by Mr. and Mrs. Richard I. Robinson, along with the 55-room summer manor and 19 car garage of the late Mr. and Mrs. John N. Conyngham. The Robinsons were descendants of the Conynghams. The manor, which came to be called Hayfield House, is used for administrative offices, classes, and university and community functions.

Renee Mintz, director of public relations for the Wilkes-Barre campus, notes that in adapting the house, the university attempted to maintain the original architecture. "We didn't knock any walls out," she said. Some of the rooms feature hand painted wallpaper, original paintings, original sculptures, and chandeliers.

Hayfield House was built in 1933 by John Conyngham at a cost of over \$1 million. The house features 12 working fireplaces, a floating staircase, a marble fireplace which is several hundred years old, gold bathroom fixtures, and a pillar and wall from Chipstead Place in Kent, England that date back to 1693. Although Conyngham employed European craftsmen in the building of the manor, he also employed many local workers, according to Mintz.

The Penn State Wilkes-Barre campus offers two four year degrees and seven two year associates degrees. The Bachelor of Science degrees offered are surveying and electrical engineering. Students can also choose to begin almost all of the 180 degree majors offered at the University Park campus. After beginning the degree program, a student can choose to attend any of the other Penn State facilities to



The Penn State Wilkes-Barre campus in Lehman has expanded in recent years with the addition of a gymnasium and science building.

complete his or her degree.

Cost of attendance for the 1996-97 school year was \$5,262 per year for Pennsylvania residents and \$8,178 for non-residents. Costs for the 1997-98 school year have not yet been determined.

The Wilkes-Barre campus is known for its intimate setting. The average number of students attending is 800. The campus employs 35 full-time faculty members and 42 part-time. Nineteen faculty members hold doctorate degrees. The student to faculty ratio is 16 to 1. Mintz commented on the advantages of such statistics. "The nice thing here is that whether you get the degree here or at University Park, it still says Penn State University."

The Nittany Woodlands provides on-campus housing for up to 90 students. Mintz explains, "People come from as far away as Towanda and we have a large contingency from Philadelphia." Housing costs per year per tenant are \$2,380.

Penn State Wilkes-Barre has a very active alumni association. The campus also has an honors program and a Non-Traditional Adult Student Club. The school also offers varsity athletics, including baseball, basketball, cross-country, golf, soccer, tennis, and volleyball, and club and intramural athletics, such as badminton, bowling, racquetball, and walleyball.

Penn State also reaches out to the Back Mountain to provide use of its facilities for cultural events. The

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