

Student Objects to Off-Campus Graduation

Dear editor,

I rounded the corner in the Science Building and smiled to myself; there were only four people ahead of me for advanced registration. The line moved surprisingly fast as I hurriedly filled in my course numbers, class abbreviations, and class times.

"Next, please," said the woman behind the counter.

I walked over and handed her my almost completed registration form and my I.D. card.

She began to methodically calculate the number of credits that I had signed up to take and to figure out my semester standing when all of a sudden...it happened.

She turned my card over, raised her eyes up to mine, paused for a moment and asked, "Are you graduating?"

Am I graduating? Am I graduating? Am I graduating?

I was so deliriously happy that I had to do a double take. "Am I what?" I asked in a daze.

"Are you graduating this semester?" she inquired again, pointing to the back of my registration card.

Yes, yes, yes, yes!

What a great feeling. For those of us that are graduating this coming Spring semester, this last registration process was probable for the first time, an enjoyable one. Some of us have been here for all four years (or more!) and after a lot of hard work and a lot of good times, we have earned the right to graduate from Penn State-Behrend.

Every time I think about graduation, I have to think about all of the things I've done here at Behrend and the people that I have met. I think back to my freshman year and remember with fondness all of the dorm parties, the snowball fights, Dr. Feel Goods, and trying desperately to find a ride to Stonehouse on Friday nights. Then came sophomore year; living in the apartments, Thursday Night Happy Hours at Heaven 'O Six, Fall Foliage/Spring Fling, Dunkel Quarters, and working at Dobbins. Junior year brought two new roommates, my twenty-first birthday, Brookside lunches (that usually turned into dinners too!), and sadly enough, the graduation of most of my closest friends that I had made here at Behrend. And now, in my senior year, even though I still have one more semester left, I have memories of Wednesday nights at the Village Pub, living off-campus for the first time, visiting my old apartment, and taking Anthropology as an elective!

Even though most of you can't relate to the personal memories that I have recalled, whether you're a freshmen or fifth year senior, you probably can think of your own memories of great times here at Behrend. The great times definitely outweigh the bad ones and I know that I will never forget them. I've spent four of the best years of my life here at Behrend and I know a lot

of you have too.

Of course, we've done our share of complaining about Behrend (who doesn't find things wrong with their own school?). We've criticized the insufficient parking spaces, the long lines in the finance office, Police and Safety, the lakes that form when it rains in front of Turnbull and the Reed Building, the incredible waiting lines for registration, our Spring Break that starts during ski season, the teachers and classes that we just can't seem to deal with, and, of course, the weather. But compared to all of the good things that we have or have done at Behrend, these seem trivial and insignificant. When it comes right down to it, we like Behrend; it has given us a lot and we feel a certain loyalty and bond to it. Whether we want to admit it or not, we do. So won't it be a great feeling to be sitting on the grass in front of our library in May at our graduation recalling, once again, the many happy memories that we have had here at Behrend? Since I have attended my first graduation here at Behrend three years ago, I have thought about the day that I would be graduating.

But now I have discovered that all of my daydreaming has been as far off from reality as a person can get. What does that mean? Well, I'll tell you: The graduating class of Spring 1990 will not be graduating from Behrend College. Instead, it has been decided by Dean Lilley and Associate Dean Burke that our class will graduate in The Warner Theater in downtown Erie. I know, I know, this building holds a lot of sentimental and emotional feelings for me too. I've spent a lot of time there; it's where I met most of my friends, and where I've taken some of my best classes. How about you?

A lot of us have relatives coming to see us graduate...at our school, that they have never seen. And they probably never will see, because if we have to drive into town, find a parking space, walk to Warner Theater, go through commencements, wait in traffic, try to figure out how to get to dinner, and then eat dinner, there won't be time for Aunt Millie, Uncle George, grandma, and grandpa to see where we've spent the last four years of our lives.

From what I understand, the decision to hold graduation in the Warner is because of construction that will be taking place in Erie Hall. What I don't understand is why the construction cannot wait to be started the day after graduation? It's been waiting since my sophomore year, what's another couple months? I'm sure that there is a way around this dilemma-it's just going to need some time and some plan changing. You remember that saying-where there's a will, there's a way. Well-I definitely have the will, along with a lot of other people that I've talked to about this, so now we have to find a way. Since we, the students, are the ones who are directly affected by this problem,

we should have a major impact on resolving it, right? Well, we weren't and I think that this is inexcusable.

So, since the administration obviously feels that our opinions shouldn't make a difference with this decision, we're going to have to show them that they do. There

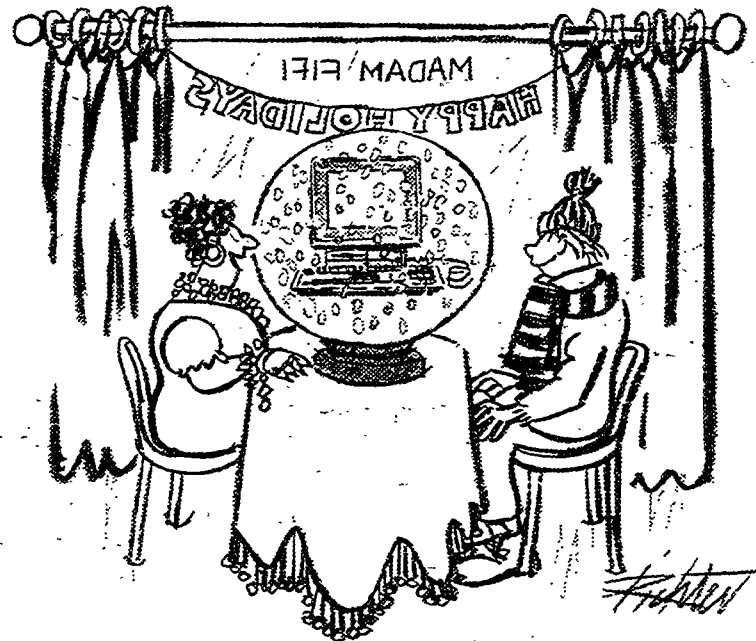
is going to be a petition started to protest the 1990 class graduation, the Warner Theater. I encourage anyone (especially graduating seniors, faculty members, and undergraduates) to sign this petition.

If you would like to help with the petition please call Randy at 898-6977 or myself at

453-4801.

Nan Quatchak
Editor's note: Dean of Student Services Chris Reber has pointed out that this will be the only year in which graduation will be held in the Warner Theater.

"Your future in school looks bright... very, very bright."

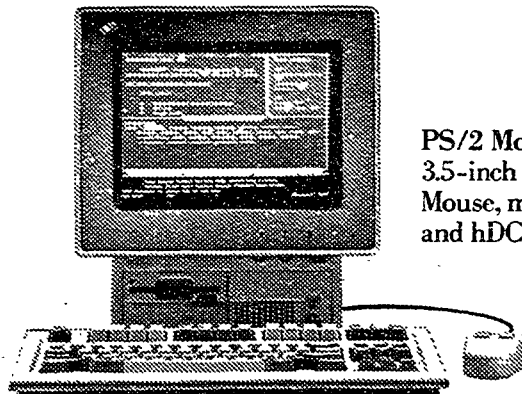


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