

# Opinion

## Editorial

### PSU libraries need help

With Penn State entering the Big Ten Conference, much debate has been sparked concerning the ability of the athletic teams to compete within the power-packed conference.

But is that the real question Penn State should be concerned with? How does the University rate academically? Looking at Penn State's library system, it is not very encouraging. The entire library system of Penn State contains only 45 volumes per student. This places the University last in volumes per student in the entire Big Ten. In comparison, the University of Illinois has 203 volumes per student and Indiana University holds 120.

Behrend's library is lacking as well. The library here doesn't rate too favorably with the surrounding colleges. While Behrend contains 25 volumes per student, Gannon holds 48, Edinboro has 53 and Mercyhurst contains 60. That plants Behrend in the bottom position of the local college scene.

In addition to depriving students presently attending Behrend, a lacking library isn't very attractive to potential students and faculty members.

So where does the problem lie? For each of the last three years, the University has increased the library's acquisition fund by \$500,000. The state has rejected the University's bid to increase library funding by one million dollars three times now. As a matter of fact, the state hasn't added any money to match Penn State's efforts. Apparently, Penn State may not be at fault.

As part of a massive university, students may tend to feel powerless when it comes to such issues that seem so far out of their hands. There is something to be done though. By writing to their state legislators, all students and faculty who use the Penn State library system can make this an issue in Harrisburg as well as in the University.

Without the state's increased support, the future of Penn State's library system, including Behrend's new library, doesn't look very bright.

**Ed. note:** Source of University wide, Big Ten library numbers, and state funding is *The Daily Collegian*.

## The Collegian

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# Mike Royko

## Lean, trim policy covers a big, fat lie

by Mike Royko

If you are a pilot for American Airlines, you are permitted to have a protruding midsection.

Or as a spokesman for the Air Line Pilots Association put it: "A beer belly would be OK as long as the person's general health is good."

A pilot also can have an unsightly bulging bottom. Or embarrassingly fat thighs, sagging jowls and thick ankles.

In other words, the sort of bod that looks better in a loose-fitting uniform than a scantily clad on a California beach.

It doesn't matter how an American Airlines pilot's body looks, fully clothed or in the buff, so long as a physician says he is in good health. And one can be in good health and still have a paunch, a fat butt or ham-like thighs.

And that makes sense. You don't have to be built like Ryne Sandberg to fly an airplane. Your skills are what matters.

Ah, but those are the rules for the front of an American Airlines plane. There are different standards beyond the cabin door.

Flight attendants, male or female, must have that lean look that American Airlines assumes is pleasing to the eye.

Its rule book says that "a firm, trim silhouette, free of bulges, rolls or paunches, is necessary for an alert, efficient image."

Take note. The rule doesn't say that this firm, trim silhouette is necessary if one is to be alert and efficient. It says that you must be free of bulges, rolls, paunches so that you project an "image" of being alert and efficient.

So what we're talking about is not substance, but "image."

Anyone who has eaten in a restaurant knows that a stout, motherly waitress can be just as alert and efficient as some lithe young thing.

And the fastest bartender I know has a midsection that is of heroic proportions.

But the motherly waitress or my favorite bartender would not qualify to serve drinks, meals or plump a pillow on an American Airlines plane.

Which is why the federal government, in a rare display of good sense, has sued American. It says the airline's skinny-is-required policy discriminates against women.

Under American's rules, a woman who is 5-foot-5 cannot weigh more than 129 pounds. That is supposedly based on some sort of insurance industry tables that recommend how much men and women should weigh, depending on their height.

But I don't believe that is why America has that rule. I suspect there are two reasons it will not admit to:

First, the president of the airline, Robert L. Crandall, is a skinny guy himself. He is 6-foot-1, weighs 170 pounds and recently bragged to employees that he weighs less today, at age 53, than he did when he was in college. To remain



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skinny, he runs several miles a day.

As everybody knows, people who work at being skinny consider themselves superior to those who say to hell with it and grab another pork chop. So it isn't unreasonable to assume that because Crandall is skinny, he wants his flight attendants to be skinny.

Well, I don't want to get personal about this, but I have looked at several photographs of Mr. Crandall, and I think he looks kind of geeky. He would cut a much finer figure if he would run less and devour a family-size pizza.

The second reason is painful for me to discuss. But as a male person I have to admit that the majority of my fellow males are more likely to leer at the buttocks of a lean young thing than at the rump of a matronly type. Because I say that doesn't mean I approve. If anything, I'm ashamed of the shallowness of my fellow man.

So American Airlines should not try to kid us with this silliness about a "firm, trim silhouette" being "necessary for an alert, efficient image."

Why don't they come right out and say it: "We want our female flight attendants to have the kind of lean, firm bods that make men ogle, gawk, leer and give them dirty thoughts. There are more lechers out there than saints, so let's sell those tickets!"

Because I am a sensitive, caring male person, and sympathetic to all feminist issues, except when a mouthy broad wises off to me, I hope American Airlines is trounced in court.

And I vow to not fly on American Airlines planes until their rules are changed. Of course, I never fly anyway because I'm terrified of airplanes. But if I did, I would choose an airline that has plump attendants. When that rivet rattles, I'd want a motherly type to pat my head and say: "There, there, stop crying and drink your martini."

A final word of advice for the government lawyers. Get a fat judge.