

# Editorial

## Students should lend a helping hand to their own cause

Dr. Joab Thomas, Penn State's new president, visited Behrend yesterday for the first time since he took over the University's highest position at the end of August.

Thomas brings a great deal of experience to his new position, as well as a strong personal conviction to raise academic standards at Penn State.

Thomas finds himself in a challenging position, though. PSU has had its share of problems in the recent past and students are looking for a fresh start and some quick solutions.

Behrend students had a chance yesterday to meet with Thomas at a Coffee With the Provost and President and voice some of their concerns to the new university head.

Students' concerns included the annual tuition increase that has plagued PSU students for the past decade, the computer fee, lack of academic facilities, and prices for reselling books to the bookstore.

All of these problems stem from one root: underfunding for state schools from the Pennsylvania legislature. In fact, our state ranks 47th out of 50 in funding for public schools. This is simply inexcusable.

It is a step in the right direction for students to express their concerns to the president of the University, but there is a much more effective and direct way to fight this problem. Students' concerns must be voiced in Harrisburg.

The only way for that to happen is for students to vote for candidates who include increased state educational funding as a plank in their platforms.

The average student is from 18 to 22 years old. This age group has the worst voter turnout of any segment of the American populace. It's no wonder that students get little consideration when it comes to funding from the state.

If students focus their energies into putting the right people in Harrisburg, our new president will be able to help the students take care of their concerns more effectively.

After all, PSU helps those who help themselves.

# Opinion / Editorial

MIKE LUCKOVICH ATLANA CONSTITUTEN  
(Apologies to Matt Groening)



## Letters to the Editor

### More on Tucker

Among the Nine Members of the English Faculty who signed last week's Letter to the Editor, I'll probably find "long time friend[s]" and "valued colleagues." At writing moment, however, I'm glad I don't know their identities because the preachy content and condescending tone of their letter profoundly disturbed me.

First, in stating "'Huck Finn' is an acknowledged American classic," you fail to mention who so proclaimed it. I assume you all teach the virtue of using the active voice in your classes (I do). That "many" hail it "the great American novel" comes as no surprise. You should ask how "many" of America's minority members call it so.

Second, anyone who argues the merits of "Huckleberry Finn" without acknowledging its flawed ending must be more than "misguided." That the defense of the book comes from members of the English faculty, who should know better, shame us all.

In the concluding chapters, Twain portrays Jim not as a human being but as the stereotyped "nigger" of the literature of the time. This description makes anyone with modern sensibilities cringe and blush. Anyone who fails to mention, discuss, or disclaim Twain's failure to sustain a (modestly) realistic portrayal of a black American joins the Tom Sawyers of that time and this time.

Finally, the Nine Members' attempts to clarify Mr. Tucker's motives for him seems rude

beyond belief and reflects some white Americans' patronizing attitudes towards African-Americans. You are perpetuating the beliefs you claim to disown in your letter which makes your argument even more embarrassing. If you disagree with Mr. Tucker, do so without telling him or us "what Mr. Tucker wants."

P.S. O.K. You used "acknowledged" as an adjective in that quote. Sorry, I couldn't resist the temptation to sound condescending and preachy myself.

Monica Irwin  
Part-time member  
English Faculty

### Baffled student

I don't get it. I realize that operating costs of any institution like Penn State will go up every year, just from inflation alone. Not to mention the increase in costs of supplies for maintenance and salary raises, and food costs go up.

Suppliers raise their prices every year. So I can understand that. As long as that money goes to pay for necessary expenses incurred in the operation of the college.

I did not pay over \$2000 this semester to let the college administration buy half the plant life in Tahiti, and put it in the Reed Building. And why is it there? Because the President of Penn State is visiting. Now why spend money so frivolously for that.

Surely the President of the university would want the

students to know that the tuition increase this year was absolutely necessary for the operation of the university. Not so they could rent *The Jungle Book* when he came to visit the campus.

This does not show me that the college is really hurting for money. Not that they should be. I also paid, and so did you, a \$35 fee for a computer system I cannot get an account for. That's like paying your fifty cents at a pay toilet, and the door not opening. I don't like that at all!

That is what one may call fraud. Paying for a service, expecting to get to use it, and then being denied it. That's no way to instill trust in the students, Mr. President.

Then we get to everyone's favorite, parking fees. What a can of worms that is. No place in this democratic society have I seen such a sham in my life. We are told that the parking fees had to be increased to supply funds for new parking areas and improve old ones.

My question is: What was the other parking fee for?! Is that not what a parking fee is for? Maintaining and improving parking areas. Improving also to mean enlarging also? And where do you get off trying to stuff a 120 percent increase down our throats anyhow? Oh I know, because you didn't think we would stand still for the originally proposed \$8 per month. Let's just gouge them a little. Maybe they won't notice. We noticed.

You know, if the city of Erie had tried that with downtown parking, using the same lame logic of building new parking ramps, city council would have been shot. There would have been so much noise from downtown business, that they would never

(continued on page 5)

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