

PSU quiet on Barnes and Noble issues

by Kim Burger and Corey Gesford
Daily Collegian Staff Writers

University administrators have not commented on the ethics of accepting paid trips from Barnes & Noble, despite reports of extravagant perks for officials at other schools.

During negotiations of a \$10 million contract with Texas A&M University, Barnes & Noble paid for at least four trips for school officials to New York to finalize the deal, including hotel stays at the Waldorf-Astoria and the New York Helmsley Hotel, limousines and Broadway show tickets.

Penn State signed a 10-year contract with Barnes & Noble in May to run the Penn State Bookstore on Campus and all commonwealth campus bookstores (including Behrend and Harrisburg).

While deciding whether to turn the bookstore management over to an outside company, Penn State staff members made trips paid for by Barnes & Noble, Director of Public Information Bill Mahon said in a news release. Associate Vice President for Business and Operations William McKinnon said in an earlier interview that

he and several other members of an operating committee, including Assistant Vice President for Business Services D. Lewis Mothersbaugh, visited the bookstores at Texas A&M and several other schools.

Mothersbaugh is currently on administrative leave while an investigation into funds misappropriated for personal use takes place in business services.

A president and vice president resigned from the University of Oklahoma earlier this year after an investigation into conflicts of interest arising from trips financed by Barnes & Noble, as well as other things. The two officials denied the investigation was the cause.

Mothersbaugh said he could not comment because of his situation and referred all questions to McKinnon, who he said headed the negotiations at that point. McKinnon and James Wagner, and assistant vice president for business and operations, would not comment on details of the trips taken because they said University officials agreed to communicate only through University Public Information.

Mahon said the staff members made the trips to review services and other schools.

"There was no cost to the University so we didn't think we had anything to lose," Mahon said.

Wagner said he was not concerned that there may be problems.

"Barnes & Noble is an excellent company and we're very pleased with the program at Penn State," Wagner said.

Bookstore operations were investigated in the business services inquiry, said University Police Director Tom Harmon.

"At this point in time, nothing has come to our attention of any criminal misconduct that involves the bookstore," Harmon said.

Editor's note: Reprinted with permission from the October 27, 1993 issue of The Daily Collegian.



Correction: In last week's issue in the "Students teaching Students" article, Kimberly Epps was misquoted. Her quote should have said, "It's equally beneficial to the tutors."



Craig Brown/Collegian Photographer

Faculty Profile: Dr. Clarence Bonnen reads some literature in preparation for one of his philosophy classes.

Faculty Profile of the Week

by Rob Moffett
Collegian Staff

Dr. Clarence Bonnen was born in East Lansing, Michigan, where he lived until 1981. He attended Michigan State University, majored in philosophy, and worked on horse farms with Arabian horses donated to the University by the Kellogg Corporation.

As a graduate student he taught at the University of Texas and Austin Community College.

He now teaches philosophy at Behrend and has been on the staff since the fall of 1990.

Bonnen's wife Susan works for the Public Defenders' Office. They have a two-year-old boy and a four-year-old girl. Bonnen is 35 years old.

When asked if he had any pet-peeves in his classroom, Bonnen said that he doesn't have any pet-peeves, but would like to have his students interrupt more often with questions and comments.

"It is only when one is active in playing with ideas that an understanding is gained," Bonnen said that this is not a pet-peeve, but is "an invitation to travel."

Bonnen continued, "When a student makes a connection that a teacher doesn't, it brings a fresh perspective to the topic. That is when the student teaches the professor."

He added that those situations are what keeps many professors going.

Bonnen said, "Teachers should be curious and disciplined enough to follow that curiosity and find the answers."

Bonnen doesn't like to present only the facts, but feels

"memorization is an important foundation in the learning process."

He continued, "One must memorize things in order to think critically about that topic. You have to know something before you can discuss it."

Concerning philosophy, Bonnen said, "We have come to an impasse in contemporary moral theory: what are the foundations and justifications for moral principals?"

Bonnen said that he considers there to be different types of philosophers.

He said those with a naturalistic foundation of ethics argue that there is a sociobiological reason for how we think. "Sociobiologists would say that your genes determine your sense of right and wrong."

Bonnen continued to say that naturalists include utilitarians who base everything on pleasure and pain, desire and emotions, and the satisfaction of desires.

"Non-naturalists, or super-naturalists, feel that there is a transcendent being whose commandments, laws, or thoughts determine our morality."

Bonnen includes himself with the intuitionist. He describes this philosophy as one based on a belief in intuition as to what our basic moral properties or facts may be.

Bonnen's interests include playing with his children, basketball and handball. He said that he likes to read fiction and non-fiction, and has recently developed an interest in biographies.



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