

OPINION

THE DAILY
Collegian

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Letters

We want to hear your comments on our coverage, editorial decisions and the Penn State community.

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■ **Postal mail/In person**
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Letters should be about 200 words. Student letters should include class year, major and campus. Letters from alumni should include year of graduation. All writers should provide their address and phone number for verification. Letters should be signed by no more than two people.

Members of organizations must include their titles if the topic they write about is connected with the aim of their groups. The Collegian reserves the right to edit letters. The Collegian cannot guarantee publication of all letters it receives. Letters chosen also run online at The Digital Collegian and may be selected for publication in The Weekly Collegian. All letters become property of Collegian Inc.

EDITORIAL

Drafty dorms

Students should not have to live in cold rooms

Housing officials have received complaints from students about cold dorm rooms. Students have been sleeping with multiple blankets and in sweatshirts and buying their own space heaters to stay warm through the night.

Housing officials say this is due to a natural build-up of iron oxide in the heating system pipes, which blocks heat flow from the individual radiators in students' rooms. Because this build-up occurs naturally, the Office of Physical Plant (OPP) should have been prepared to pre-empt any negative effect this blockage would cause. Isn't winter break supposed to be used to check items like the heating system to avoid these pit falls?

What's worse is that OPP has done work over the summer to improve these heating systems in the older dorms on campus like West and North Halls, though fewer complaints have come from these areas.

Students are already paying so much for a college education, so this is unacceptable. Having to pay for a space heater when students living in the dorms are paying already close to \$1,800 to live in a building that is supposed to be supplying them with effective heating is unfair and unnecessary. Not to mention that space heaters are on the black list of items not allowed in dorm rooms, so students have to

resort to breaking the rules to stay warm.

There's also the issue of energy. The heating system is still turned on, whether it is being effective or not, so the energy that goes unused in these cold dorm rooms is completely wasted. For a university that seems so dedicated to saving energy and remaining environmentally friendly, this is a grave problem. Students should take it upon themselves to be informed and read those pesky information sheets left under their doors or on top of their microwave or fridge when they return from winter break. Those pamphlets remind students to remove items from the area surrounding

the radiator to help the warm air circulate in the rooms better, so part of the problem is a lack of awareness.

The good news is that the OPP response to these problems has been timely, responding to student calls and e-mails within 24 hours. So as long as students do their part and inform the OPP of the problems they are experiencing, the problem will be resolved in a timely fashion. Keeping complaints about spending chilly nights in dorm rooms to yourself is foolish. If your room is uncomfortable, tell someone.

State College winter's can get bitterly cold, students should be able to find warmth in their rooms.

COLUMNIST

Practical life skills requirement would benefit all students

By Kristin Colella

IN JUST A FEW short months I'll be a college graduate, all done with my studies and ready to enter the "real world."

But while I could tell you about the great romantic poets and recite Piaget's stages of cognitive development, I don't have a clue how to file a tax return, and I'm still not sure how 401K works.

The purpose of college is to learn, but do we really learn enough practical skills to help us succeed in life?

Penn State requires students to fulfill a certain number of credits in areas such as arts, humanities, natural sciences and quantification. While these fields foster our critical-thinking and problem-solving skills, which are no doubt important, they tend not to teach



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us basic knowledge needed for life after college.

So, why not add a "life skills" requirement to the list?

I know what you're thinking — not another requirement! But what if we rearranged things so that the total number of required general education credits didn't change? If we lowered two of the pre-existing requirements by 3.0 credits each, then we could devote 6.0 credits to learning skills for life.

Which classes would fulfill this strange new requirement, you might ask?

To start, the university could include a class that helps students handle their money.

How about Finance 108 (Personal Finance), a class that teaches students how to manage their budgets, bank accounts and loans? Finance 108 does not currently fulfill any general education requirements, making it difficult for some students to fit it into their schedules. However, if the class was counted toward the "life skills" requirement, students from all different colleges and

majors could learn the very important art of money management.

Whether you're studying to become a writer, psychologist, scientist or businessperson, you probably want to know how to handle your dough and make it grow.

Another course that teaches an important life skill is Kinesiology 083 (Exercise for Stress Management). With heart disease the leading cause of death for Americans and an ever-growing number of people taking antidepressants, we must learn how to control our stress before it controls us.

Kinesiology 083 explores the physical and emotional tolls of stress and provides students with strategies to deal with life's stressors. College students are already under a tremendous amount of stress, and it will only increase as we begin to enter the workforce and take on more responsibilities.

While Kinesiology 083 currently counts toward the health and physical activity (GHA) requirement, cross-referencing it as "life skills" would give students another incentive to take the

THON LETTERS

Today's letters are written in response to Chris Mueller's column on Monday, titled "Some greeks distort meaning of Thon"

Four Diamond mother responds to columnist

As the mother of a Thon child, I can't believe I have to defend the organizations that have made me feel so welcome at Penn State. My son, Trent, 8, has been a Thon child for three years. Our adopt-a-family organization is greek and after reading Monday's column ("Some greeks distort meaning of Thon") I could not imagine who the writer was talking about. If these students are doing Thon purely for recognition, then why do they come visit us every summer, invite us into their homes to meet their families and spend their weekends watching my kids? The students in our organization have become our kids, and as a mom, my claws are out. We couldn't be prouder to wear the same T-shirts they wear, which bears our son's name as well as the other child they've adopted. In our years with Thon, we've met so many dedicated people both greek and non-greek - people who have been there for us on a personal level. You need to walk one day in the shoes of any family adopted by an organization of any kind and find out what they truly mean to our family before you start criticizing anyone. I can't thank Thon and all the students involved enough for all they've done for our family. As an outsider looking in, Chris has totally missed the big picture. Trent went into remission in July and guess who was at our home to celebrate this momentous occasion. Yep, the greeks of past and present. And, no one had a T-shirt or hoodie with Greek letters on it.

Tammy Golden
Four Diamonds mother

Stranded dancer shows meaning behind column

I agree with Chris Mueller's column "Some greeks distort real meaning of Thon" from Monday's Collegian. We appreciate the money raised, but the pride is too much, and the focus is lost. We announce the top money makers as a thank you, not to make it a competition. This column reminded me of a dancer I met an hour or more after Thon ended. As me and my fellow moralers waited to get our car jumped, a dancer joined us asking if we had seen a taxi pull up. After about 20 minutes he asked to use a phone to call another one, he explained that his "brothers" sent him a message saying they called him a taxi because they were too drunk to drive back. Really? Your "brother" just stood awake for 46 straight hours and you can't even give him a ride

home? Don't worry, the unaffiliated new friends took care of him.

Meghan Pituch
senior - drawing and painting

Thon pride irks reader

In reading the letters regarding Thon, I noticed a recurring theme among them — pride. In Laura McNally's response ("Fraternities and sororities should take pride in their work," Feb. 20) she managed to talk more about herself than Thon. True pride has to do with acknowledging and respecting who you are and what you can do, without any outside confirmation or approval. But members of Thon have managed to embody the other type of pride: self-righteousness. Their T-shirts, sweat-pants, away messages, e-mails, banners and balloons all say the same thing: "Look at me: I am charitable and fabulous for being so." Thon is Penn State's model for self-defecation, and it absolutely pains me to go to a school that prides itself on its pride.

Timothy Best
senior - biochemistry and molecular biology

Pride starting to distort real reason behind Thon

Mueller couldn't have said it better: I totally agree about how the greeks seem to think Thon revolves around their actions and what they did rather than the true meaning of Thon. Thon was founded so kids with cancer and their families could be supported and cared for. However, contrary to what many greeks think, it isn't about getting your name out there or about being the cool thing to do. It's almost as if they turned Thon into some distorted commercialization of their superiority all in the name of recognition. Would they really care about or have concerns for those who are suffering in the world if someone told them it wasn't the most popular thing to do? Next time you think about dancing, leave your pride at the door. FTG? I think not.

Melanie Habel
sophomore - art education

Thon should not focus on dancing and shirts

The irony to the column "Some greeks distort real meaning of Thon" is that I have been saying exactly the same things since I have been a student at Penn State. It is despicable that these fraternity boys and sorority girls think that they are doing it "For The Kids." All these students care about is having another excuse to have a lame party in a feeble attempt to hook up. Guess who doesn't go to the parties? The kids — remember them?

Do the fundraising without the self-

righteous accolades of a dance marathon or the T-shirts, hoodies or sweat pants that cry "Notice me! Look at what I did!"

If you really want to impress me, forget about partying and drinking for just one weekend a month and go spend time with the kids at their house or hospital room. I'm not talking about just one weekend leading up to Thon; I am talking about all year long.

I find it extremely offensive that you greeks think that "dancing" and staying awake for 48 hours comes anywhere close to feeling how those kids feel on a daily basis of being confined to a hospital or undergoing chemotherapy treatments. We are questioning the real motivations of the fraternities and sororities who hold Thon so dear. After all, greeks are pretty much the only people allowed to partake in the Thon event itself — just a bit self-serving isn't it?

Bill Soles
senior - turfgrass science

One opinion should not take away from Thon

This is dedicated to every greek who is mad about someone's opinion. Wait - one person's opinion. That's what writers do — they voice their opinions on matters. Families love every individual who participates in Thon because it affects them directly and they know how much Thon truly means. For you to attack a naive person because he has not witnessed the effect that we have on the families of Thon only makes you as bad as the person writing the column. If a family member wrote that, then you would have the right to be mad. Thon was awesome; do not take away from that because some writer published his own thoughts. And if you ask me, lashing out at people for writing words in a dumb newspaper is not for the kids.

I love Thon and I spent countless hours not only canning for the kids, but I was also on a morale committee this year. I had one of the most amazing weekends of my life and my lasting jubilation has carried over until now. Thon is supposed to be one of the best events here at Penn State. I do not know how you people are going to let one of the most fun and memorable events be ruined by a newspaper column. So if you plan on writing to the Collegian and telling them that they and Chris are wrong for publishing this column, go ahead. Tell them that they should never publish such an outlandish person's opinion the day after Thon. But while you're at it, if you're Christian, write to every atheist and tell her or she that they are absolutely repulsive for their beliefs. Tell Jews that the Messiah has come and gone, and Buddhists that they are wasting their time. The point is people have different opinions and that's what makes society. We are the greeks of Penn State and should be the first to accept the differences people have and

the different outlooks people possess.

Kenneth Ludlum
freshman - crime, law and justice

Thon members deserve to celebrate their cause

Your intentions are good by saying Thon is always FTK, but do not say that organizations should not take pride in themselves. This is coming from a non-greek student. Raising large sums of money is great and greek organizations deserve to take pride in that. They deserve to celebrate and party, and they do it because they know how many lives they are saving, not because they want to make themselves feel good. Each year AXO and Zeta fight for the top spot, and when AXO nearly beat Zeta a few years ago, Zeta was not sad their top spot was unstable — they were ecstatic that even more money was raised. Thon has become much more than just greek organizations. ATLAS House went nuts Sunday when they found out how much they raised. Morale teams make cheers, design gear and try to be better than any other team. But when we all come together, we definitely know it is all FTK. There is nothing wrong with the pride that filled the BJC this weekend. They are saving kids' lives and they deserve to celebrate it.

Ben Simmons
freshman - architecture

Research was necessary for recent Thon column

In response to Chris Mueller's column "Some greeks distort real meaning of Thon," Chris should ask any member of the 191 families supported by Thon how they feel about students expressing pride in the amount of money they raised on their clothing. Chris is absolutely right. Thon is about the children and the families, so it is their opinion that matters, not his. Independents and non-greek organizations should take the same pride in their contributions. Non-greeks deserve just as much credits as greeks.

They are smaller in number, but not in effort or devotion to the kids. Chris' friend Pete should be commended for trading a birthday celebration for the exhaustion and pain he felt on Saturday and that I felt this time last February. Pete made a great sacrifice, and I'm certain anyone who knew, greek and non-greek alike, let him know how truly special it was.

It's a shame Chris used Thon as a vehicle to express his anti-greek sentiment. His pen could have served a higher purpose if he had used it to make a sign, set his alarm clock for 4 a.m. and been there at the BJC to support Pete when he really needed him.

Louis Struble
senior - economics and psychology