The Bachelor of Arts in Theatre provides a solid foundation for not only strong theatre artists and articulate theatre educators, but also effective public leaders and visionaries in all professions. A degree in Theatre will allow students to participate in every aspect of theatre production, including acting, design, directing, stage management, and technical production.

For more information, contact:
Cleo House
at 610-396-6419 or CZH11@psu.edu

The Bachelor of Arts in Global Studies is designed for students interested in a liberal arts education with a concentration on global issues. Through interdisciplinary studies, a study abroad experience, and an internship, this degree will prepare students for a variety of positions in government, business, industry, and non-profit organizations dealing with global and humanitarian concerns.

For more information, contact:
Dr. Randall Fegley
at 610-396-6092 or RAF8@psu.edu
Dr. Kirk Shaffer
at 610-396-6258 or KRSH14@psu.edu

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**Message from the Chancellor**

D o you remember the phrase during a presidential campaign almost two decades ago?
Since September 13, 2008, we have been faced with economic challenges not seen since the Great Depression. The readily accessible media-driven information makes the reality of the economic problem impossible to ignore. The front page article of the February 6, 2009 issue of The Chronicle of Higher Education details that faculty at some institutions feel they are losing control over their institutions as administrators strive to keep the institutions afloat. Many of those institutions that are gasping for breath operate significantly off endowment funds. Each institution wants to have large endowments but The Pennsylvania State University is not an exception. What seems to be happening institutions are that managing these difficult financial times and those that are struggling significantly is how each chooses to use their endowments. At many Ivy League universities, 75% or more of their operating costs come from endowment. As the stock markets plummet, payroll bills become more and more challenging.

At Penn State, however, it is a much different story. Penn State Berks has a very modest endowment, which we are seriously working to grow. This endowment funds scholarships and student/faculty/staff involvement in research and community outreach. An extremely small portion of our endowment goes towards our general operations. We are almost exclusively operated by tuition dollars. At University Park, a greater percentage of the endowment goes toward operational funds, but the percentage is perhaps 10 percent at most. Penn State as a whole has been managed in a very frugal manner and thus we have been able to weather this economic downturn without compromising our academic programming or our employees.

The Governor of Pennsylvania recently announced that he would be rolling back our appropriation to less than what it was in 2000. The endowment goes toward operational funds, but the percentage is perhaps 10 percent at most. Penn State as a whole has been managed in a very frugal manner and thus we have been able to weather this economic downturn without compromising our academic programming or our employees.

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Society Texas Hold ’em Night
September 22, 2009
Society Meeting, 7:00 p.m., September 16, 2009
Annual Meeting, 7:00 p.m., Janssen Office
August 18, 2009
Society Meeting, 7:00 p.m., Janssen Office
September 16, 2009
Alumni Society Meeting, 7:00 p.m., Janssen Office Building
September 22, 2009
Alumni Society Texas Hold’em Night for students, 9:00 p.m., Perkins Student Center Multipurpose Room.
For information on joining the Alumni Society, please contact Ryan Szivos, 610-396-6057, rcs212@psu.edu or visit berks.psu.edu/alumni.

The Penn State Berks Alumni Society is currently accepting nominations for its board of directors. Nominations can be submitted online at www.berks.psu.edu/alumni. The deadline for all submissions is May 28, 2009.

The Alumni Society brings together alumni of the college through a variety of events and activities. Their mission is to enhance the interests and reputation of the college and to attract a closer fellowship between the alumni, students, faculty, staff, and the community. The society also encourages support for scholarships, faculty development, and students and alumni, and fosters a sense of pride and commitment to the college.

The Alumni Society will hold their annual meeting on June 30 at 7:00 p.m. in the Perkins Student Center Penn State Room, at which time a ballot will be conducted and the elected board of directors will be announced.

For more information contact Greg Young at gggyoung@psu alumni.com.

Kaag Overcomes Obstacles to Receive Alumni Achievement Award

—by Ryan C. Szivos

When Chris Kaag ’04 graduated from high school, he planned to have a career in the military, and for four-and-a-half years, he did just that. Kaag worked as a reservist for the United States Marine Corps, stationed in the U.S., Italy, and Bosnia.

Then in the fall of 1998, two weeks after his twenty-first birthday, Kaag began having trouble lifting his legs after running. He spent the next eight weeks in the hospital before he was diagnosed with adrenomyeloneuropathy, a degenerative nerve disorder. As a result, Kaag would eventually lose the ability to walk.

The revelation was jarring, and Kaag admits not knowing what to do. “I’d planned on being a Marine,” states Kaag. “Having no choice but to leave was a profound and drastic change—nothing you can plan for.”

Kaag decided to return to Pennsylvania, and a few months later he enrolled in classes at Penn State Berks.

“I decided to take up a Business degree at Penn State,” explains Kaag, who graduated with a B.S. in Business in 2004. “I decided to take a slow and steady approach to teaching alongside his education in business and the values he learned in the Marines–teamwork and the ability to push beyond your limits–that led him to start his own fitness center, Corps Fitness.

“Technically, Corps Fitness started in 2004,” Kaag explains. “I didn’t have any fixed location at the time for the classes, so it started in parks, local gyms, and wherever I could find the space to teach. I wanted to promote an active lifestyle and teaching students about the importance of hard work.”

So what does the future hold for Kaag? He states that he is currently working to bring his message into the classroom.

“I decided to take a slow and steady approach to teaching what I’ve learned,” explains Kaag. “I try to speak at schools to both able-bodied and disabled students. I want all the kids I meet to realize that regardless of who you are, you can stay active. I just really want people to believe in the physical and mental benefits of being healthy. I also want to raise the awareness in able-bodied kids of persons with disabilities so they are not surprised at what we’re able to do.”

Exremely grateful for the Alumni Achievement Award, Kaag sees this as one step in bringing him closer to the University and teaching students about the importance of hard work.

“For me, receiving this award was a huge surprise and very humbling that people thought enough of what I’ve accomplished that I would deserve the award,” says Kaag. “This award symbolizes for me that the successes I’ve had in my life are the result of doing things that I love, and I hope that others who are just starting out can take that philosophy and incorporate it into their own success.”

“My first job was working in avionics for the United States Marine Corps, stationed in the U.S., Italy, and Bosnia. Then in the fall of 1998, two weeks after his twenty-first birthday, Kaag began having trouble lifting his legs after running. He spent the next eight weeks in the hospital before he was diagnosed with adrenomyeloneuropathy, a degenerative nerve disorder. As a result, Kaag would eventually lose the ability to walk.

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For more information contact Greg Young at gggyoung@psu alumni.com.
For the culinary enthusiast, or anyone who spends time in the kitchen, Penn State crocks are a must-have for the Penn State alumnus.

The crocks are handmade, Stoneware pots produced by Bujno pottery in Adamstown, Pennsylvania. These half-gallon crocks measure 7 x 7” and are decorated with the Penn State logo and Nittany Lion imprint. Bujno crocks are high fired, making them oven, microwave, freezer, and dishwasher safe.

Steve Bujno, owner of Bujno pottery, began creating art as a child. After earning an art degree in college, he started his own business.

“I’ve been creating art my whole life,” explains Bujno. “I decided to open Bujno Pottery to make pottery and custom work that is both functional and decorative, and it’s something that I love doing. I live in the area, and I’m happy to be able to help the Penn State Berks Alumni Society Scholarship. Not supporting Penn State would be like living in Philadelphia and not liking the Eagles—if you live here, you love Penn State.”

Bujno’s enthusiasm for Penn State runs in the family; his daughter is planning to attend Penn State Berks in the fall.

The Alumni Society Scholarship provides recognition and financial assistance to Penn State Berks students who have a proven need for funds to meet their college expenses and are in good academic standing.

**Show off your Penn State Pride and support the Penn State Berks Alumni Society Scholarship with Penn State Alumni Markers and Crocks.**

For more information, contact Greg Young at 610-413-3980 or gregyoung@psalumni.com.

**Technique Degree Prepares Students for a Variety of Professions**

Students who want to learn to think precisely in the moment, to speak confidently, to write with clarity and intelligence, and to work productively with others will benefit from the new bachelor of arts degree in Theatre at Penn State Berks. This degree provides students with crucial life skills that can be used in a wide range of professions, from theatre artists and articulate theatre educators, to effective public leaders and visionaries in all professions including in business, government, journalism, literature, the fine arts, and related disciplines.

The bachelor of arts in Theatre at Penn State Berks is the same degree program offered by Penn State University Park. Students at Berks will benefit from the small class sizes and frequency of productions, allowing them to gain hands-on experience, to focus in their area of emphasis while completing the major requirements, to participate in multiple productions, and to experience leadership opportunities.

**Cohens Establish First Theatre Scholarship**

For nearly a decade, Irv ’50 and Lois ’49 Cohen have been involved with the Theatre program at University Park, and for the past year they have served on the Advisory Board for the Musical Theatre Program. So when Penn State Berks announced its new B.A. in Theatre degree program, they were excited for the opportunity to combine their passion for the college and theatre by establishing the first Theatre scholarship.

This $10,000 scholarship will provide financial assistance to undergraduate students who are enrolled or planning to enroll in the Theatre major and have demonstrated a need for funds to supplement their college expenses.

Irv Cohen served in the Army’s Armored Field Artillery during World War II, and he went on to earn a bachelor’s degree in Arts and Letters from University Park. Shortly after graduation, he founded Construction Fasteners, Inc., located in Wyomissing, Pa. Lois Cohen graduated from University Park with a bachelor’s degree in Home Economics.

They both served on the Berks Campus Advisory Board for many years. In addition, the Cohens have previously created the Irvin and Lois Cohen Theatre Scholarship at Penn State Berks to assist students with their financial needs.

“We are thrilled Berks is getting this program,” says Lois Cohen. “We want to find ways to encourage students looking to enter the major. Hopefully, this scholarship will be able to provide those students some support.”

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**Show Your Penn State Pride while Benefitting Alumni Society Scholarship**

—by Matt N. Kowalkyan

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**ACADEMIC NEWS**

**Students majoring in Theatre at Penn State Berks will participate in every aspect of theatre production, including acting, design, directing, stage management, and technical production. Whether on the stage, behind the scenes, in the box office, or working with the public, there are many opportunities for students to engage in real-world situations.

In the classroom, coursework provides a solid foundation in theatre history, theory, aesthetics, and technique. Students can expect to engage three complementary processes: the individual creative process, the collaborative process, and the critical/analytical process. All three processes receive equal attention. The course of study culminates in the senior project, which demonstrates students’ knowledge of theatre, integrates formerly compartmentalized areas of study, and poses new questions and challenges.

The Penn State Berks Theatre program provides a solid foundation for those wishing to pursue graduate level work in theatre, professional theatre apprenticeships, or any environment where creative problem solving, collaboration, and research/analysis skills are valued. The program is enhanced by internships with professional theatre companies. Depending on their area of emphasis, graduates may choose careers as actors, directors, producers, playwrights, drama coaches, critics, dramaturges, designers, educators, administrators, and managers. These careers can be pursued within universities, performing arts organizations, related nonprofit organizations, and the media.

For more information on the Penn State Berks Theatre degree program, contact Chip House, Program Coordinator and Assistant Professor of Theatre, at 610.396.6419 or via e-mail at chthouse@psu.edu.**
Global Studies Degree = DREAM JOB

—by Susan M. Hollingsworth ’07

When Susan Hollingsworth graduated from Penn State Berks with a bachelor’s degree in Science and a minor in Global Studies, she never dreamed of the opportunities that awaited her as an instructor for the World Class Kayak Academy, a traveling high school for kids who want to train and compete in whitewater kayaking. The following is an excerpt from her blog, “Love the Life You Live, Lead the Life You Love” (www.susansevolution.blogspot.com).

Typical day at work on China’s Yangze River

A larm clock sounds. I unzip my tent, bury my feet in the sand, and prepare for another day of work. My thirteen high school students emerge from their slumber underneath the stars here on the Great Bend of the Yangze River in China’s Yunnan Province. We sort into teams for the morning workout of a game of football, have a filling breakfast, and begin our classes for the day. My biology students conduct an interview; a Chinese river conservationist has accompanied our group for this ten-day leg of our tour and has interviewed my students about the flat calm of our next stretch of river. My thirteen high school students emerge from their slumber, and prepare for another day of work. While they have been interviewed for the Chinese media, they have also been ending their game of football, and preparing for school. My students have been interested in the flat calm of our next stretch of river, and have been interviewed for the Chinese media, they have also been interested in the flat calm of our next stretch of river.

Xidong, matrimonial dress, and family

We settle into a family’s guest house in the small village of Xidong, and in the passing week, we learn the generosity and kindness for which the Tibetans are known. Though we do not speak the same language, we develop friendships with the grandmother and young daughter over yak butter tea in the kitchen. They laugh at my ignorance and I smile; we pass the time together where blissful aromas swirl and foreign languages fill the air.

On our final evening in the guest house, the women of the family serve us a traditional Tibetan meal. We are served traditional Tibetan dishes during our stay with a family in Xidong.

Final destination, Nujiang River

Up and over another mountain range, we travel to our final river destination, the Nujiang, or Salween, River. Unlike the other valleys we have visited, a paved road runs alongside the banks of the river, connecting the towns and cities with the winding path of the canyon. Our time here is split between a larger city, Gongshan, and a smaller town further downstream. We spend an afternoon playing in the rapids, among the biggest I have ever seen, and trade whistles and shouts with the locals who stand along the riverbanks and bridges to watch our colorful antics.

For us, the river links our homes to its own, with raw power and the joy of motion, a heady mix that defines us as athletes and as people. But we are guests here. For millions of people living along its banks, in terraced farms or on city streets, the river is the center of life and the living history of their ancestors. Yet the days of these rivers are numbered. Soon massive hydropower projects will dam the canyon. Our time here is split between a larger city, Gongshan, and a smaller town further downstream. We spend an afternoon playing in the rapids, among the biggest I have ever seen, and trade whistles and shouts with the locals who stand along the riverbanks and bridges to watch our colorful antics.

Energy demands are high for China’s booming population; China will soon harness the mighty river as an energy resource. My students struggle to understand. They speak with the villagers who will be relocated when the valley floods, they walk past farms whose land will disappear, and they roam city streets that will be hundreds of feet underwater within a few short years. They try to comprehend the scale of imminent change for the people whose lives revolve around the river, this is a difficult concept to understand.

China’s rivers not only offer challenging whitewater and exposure to a culture unlike ours in America, but also a glimpse into the difficulties of a developing nation. Our trip itinerary was coordinated by Last Descents River Expeditions, western China’s first domestic multi-day rafting company. Last Descents began organizing expeditions like ours to demonstrate to the Chinese people alternative benefits this valuable resource can provide. By sharing the pure joy felt from riding a wave train, floating through painted canyon walls, and listening to the flow of the water and its creatures, Last Descents hopes to instill a reason for the river’s preservation.

Periodically, I must step outside my reality to believe it. Just two years ago, I was wearing a dark blue gown and thanking my professors on the lawn in front of the Perkins Student Center.

The combination of Penn State Berks’ Life Science major and Global Studies minor proved to be my ultimate ticket for the adventurous and inspiring life I lead today teaching at World Class Kayak Academy might just be my dream job. As I return to the school’s home base in Montana, I can’t help but wonder what is next. Perhaps I will go back to the other side of the world someday and experience China all over again.
Interview with John P. Weidenhammer, President, Weidenhammer Systems Corporation

—by Lisa R. Weidman

Ever since the first Penn State Berks Advisory Board formed in 1959, it has played a significant role in helping the college to achieve its goals through connections with the community. In this ongoing series of interviews with board members, John P. Weidenhammer, Vice Chairman of the Advisory Board and President of Weidenhammer Systems Corporation, discusses his reasons for joining the board.

During the college’s Capital Campaign in 1997, Weidenhammer chaired the design committee and was instrumental in the development of the Boscov-Lakin Information Commons, a learning and technology addition to the Thun Library that contains an electronic commons, a multimedia center, and a cyber cafe, providing students, faculty, staff, and community members access to teleconferencing, distance learning, multimedia production, the Internet, and a variety of University resources.

Weidenhammer’s ties to Penn State Berks date back to 1996, when he first joined the Berks Advisory Board, and served as chair from 2001-2002. After his six-year term, he took the required one-year hiatus and returned to the board in 2004. He will again chair the board in May 2010. He was also the keynote speaker at commencement in spring 2003.

“I believe strongly in what Penn State Berks does for students and the Berks County community,” comments Weidenhammer on why he decided to join the board. “I want to make sure reside in Reading. They have one adult child.

Weidenhammer graduated from Lehigh University with a bachelor’s degree in engineering. He and his wife, Nadine, reside in Reading. They have one adult child.

“I’m a big fan of Penn State,” Weidenhammer states. “It’s the best value in our community, providing all the resources of a Big Ten university in our backyard.”

Rodriguez-Mourelo named Division Head for Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences —by Lisa R. Weidman

Dr. Belen Rodriguez-Mourelo has recently been named Division Head for Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (HASS) at Penn State Berks. In this position, she will participate in program development and evaluation, oversee long-range planning and acquisition of external funding for the division, and act as an advocate for the faculty.

In 1999, Rodriguez-Mourelo joined Penn State Berks as Assistant Professor of Spanish and was named Associate Professor in 2005. Her primary research interest is Cuban writers in exile, and she published a book on this topic in 2006 titled Encuentros in alined with the needs of students and the community.”

In 1978, he founded Weidenhammer Systems Corporation, an information technology firm providing high value products and services to a diverse set of clients. With nearly 200 information technology professionals in seven locations, Weidenhammer specializes in working with organizations that want to use information technology as a strategic tool.

In addition to his involvement with Penn State Berks, Weidenhammer is president of the Wyoming Foundation and chairman of the boards of the Riverplace Development Corporation and Home Healthcare Management. He also serves on the Greater Reading Chamber of Commerce board, as well as many others.

Weidenhammer is president of the Wyomissing Foundation and chairman of the boards of the Riverplace Development Corporation and Home Healthcare Management. He also serves on the Greater Reading Chamber of Commerce board, as well as many others.

University. In her writing, the narrative was identified as the novel Exile, in which Rodriguez-Mourelo reviews the concepts of exile and diaspora, and analyzes the narratives of Cuban authors in exile who write from different locations (Mexico, Miami, New York, Spain, France, and Sweden) and what she identifies as “mechanisms of identity” in their writing that make them belong to a community.

Rodriguez-Mourelo holds a doctoral degree in modern languages from the Universidad Complutense in Madrid, Spain.

“I am thrilled to have the opportunity to serve my colleagues in this capacity,” comments Rodriguez-Mourelo. “This is the perfect place to make a difference and help faculty, staff, and students succeed. I am seeking to help the college to achieve its goals through connections with the community.”

Active Shooter Training Prepares College for Unimaginable —by Lisa R. Weidman

Sots rang out in the hallway, and soon the masked gunman was inside the classroom, followed by his accomplices. In a flurry of panic and confusion, students were huddled into one corner of the classroom as the gunman shouted orders at them. Fortunately, the police were not far behind and a few minutes later—which seemed like an eternity—the gunman and his accomplices were apprehended.

These staged events transpired during an Active Shooter Training held at Penn State Berks in the beginning of January, before the start of spring semester classes.

In recent years, similar events have actually occurred with devastating consequences at colleges and high schools across the country. No one will forget the massacre at Columbine High School or the more recent shooting at Virginia Tech. Penn State Berks held the Active Shooter Training in an attempt to prepare staff and administration in the event of an unimaginable tragedy.

The invitation of Penn State Berks Police Chief Robert Rehrer, the program was brought to the college by Sergeant Randy Hoover, Patrol Supervisor and Emergency Response Coordinator for the Mulhernberg Township Police Department. Hoover is a certified instructor by the National Tactical Officers Association.

Hoover was assisted by Sergeant Ronald Mohl, Patrol Supervisor and Emergency Response Coordinator for the Northern Berks Regional Police Department, and Craig Huntsinger, Jr., Assistant Medical Team Leader for the Berks County Emergency Response Team and a member of the Eastern Pennsylvania Emergency Medical Services Strike Team.

When asked why this training was brought to the college, Rehrer explained, “Unfortunately there is a sad new reality in our world today; reports of tragic and senseless acts of violence seem to fill our newspapers and television newscasts with an alarming frequency. These perverse and shocking acts have even been committed at churches, nursing homes, and schools. Recognizing that these incidents can happen anywhere, training our own staff and preparing for a rapid response and immediate intervention by our own police officers in conjunction with officers from the surrounding municipalities is essential. A rapid response means saving lives. That is the purpose of our training.”

The two-day program began with a presentation by Hoover to faculty and staff on the guidelines in the event of a crisis. “The goal of the training is to identify what immediate Deployment Rapid Intervention is and how police can immediately deploy to stop violence,” explains Hoover.

“Recognizing that these incidents can happen anywhere, Campus environments provide unique aspects in dealing with and planning for these situations due to their openness.”

After the presentation, the remainder of the training focused on law enforcement response. In addition to Penn State police officers, police from the surrounding community were invited to participate and there was an overwhelming response.

Scenarios were staged in the college’s Luerssen Building in which volunteer student resident assistants posed as unwitting students in the classroom and in the hallways. Faculty, staff, and administrators were invited to observe during the second day of exercises.

The Active Shooter Training is just one part of the college’s Emergency Response and Recovery Plan. In addition to continuing education in emergency response, staff from various administrative areas meet regularly to develop and update emergency response and crisis communication plans to ensure the safety of the students, faculty, and staff of the college.
I
n the fifty-year history of Penn State Berks, private philanthropy has played a crucial role in not only securing the present campus location, but in helping to expand both the physical plant and academic programs into what we have today—a sprawling 258 acre campus with thirty buildings, serving a diverse student population of nearly 3,000 students (800 of them resident students). The college offers eight associate and fourteen baccalaureate degrees, in addition to the first two years of more than 160 majors that can be completed at other Penn State campuses. We have come a long way in our half-century in Berks County, but not without the help of many generous donors and faithful volunteers through the years.

From the start, local philanthropy has been the driving force behind the growth and success of Penn State Berks. At certain times in our campus’ history, we have engaged in periods of more intensified and focused fundraising. The first of these “campaigns” came in the late 1960s, when the “Berks Center” of Penn State still met in the old Wyomissing Polytechnic Institute buildings on Hill Avenue. In this first campaign, a goal was set to raise $1 million for a new campus. In the end that goal was exceeded, due to a committed and talented group of volunteers, led by campaign co-chairs Louis Thun and James Stoudt. Since then, other campaigns have followed, which have helped expand our facilities and programs, thanks to the hard work of many dedicated volunteers.

Now the University has embarked on a new fundraising campaign—For the Future: The Campaign for Penn State Students. At its heart, this new effort is a campaign that is truly directed at Penn State students with the following six University-wide campaign objectives, through June 30, 2014:

• Increasing access to a Penn State educational experience through annual gifts, gifts-in-kind, and corporate engagement
• Promoting ongoing research opportunities for students and faculty
• Sustaining a Tradition of Quality—maintaining the quality of a Penn State educational experience through annual gifts, gifts-in-kind, and corporate engagement
• Fostering Discovery and Creativity—promoting ongoing research opportunities for students and faculty
• Developing Strong and Vibrant Faculty—giving students the chance to study with the finest teachers and researchers
• Building Faculty Strength and Capacity—giving students the chance to study with the finest teachers and researchers

As in the past, Penn State Berks will rely on a group of committed volunteers who will help the college achieve these goals and objectives. Currently that group includes:

Eugene R. Curry, President, Curry & Associates, co-chair
Steven M. Weidman, Senior Vice President, Relationship Manager, Sovereign Bank, co-chair
Dr. Harold W. Perkins, CEO Emeritus, Penn State Berks, honorary chair
Dr. Mohammad A. Ansari, Professor, Chair, Penn State Berks Faculty Senate
Thomas A. Beaver, CPA, Partner, Reinsel Kuntz Lesher
Richard S. Caputo, Esq., Attorney, Fox Rothschild
Merlin R. Dinkelberger, Finance Officer, Partner, Beard Miller Company
Glen T. May, Finance Officer, Penn State Berks
Glenn E. Moyer, President and CEO, National Penn Bank
Barrie A. Pease, President, B.A. Pease Associates, President, Animal Rescue League
Jon C. Scott, President and CEO, Berks Economic Partnership
Gregory G. Young, Assistant Vice President, M&T Bank

“We have strong leadership and support from this great group of volunteers.”

- Dave Delozier, Director of Development and Alumni Relations

As the campaign continues through the next five years, we will be looking to involve even more individuals in helping to lead the way, as so many have done in our history. We’ll be asking many of our alumni and friends to consider what they might do to help keep Penn State Berks strong and vibrant as we fulfill the mission we share with Penn State as a whole: teaching, research, and service. With that kind of philanthropic support, we can build upon our past and create new strength, for our students and For the Future."

It's no accident that the word Communication is similar to the words common and community, as each word stems from comunicare (meaning to impart, share, or make common) and munus (gifts or duties offered publicly). Thus, it shouldn't be surprising to learn that the Penn State Berks Communication Arts and Sciences (CAS) program encourages its students to give of themselves to the community.

The CAS program not only encourages service to the community as an ethical responsibility of citizenship, but it also sees community service as a means for students to engage in and with some of the key concepts discussed in classes such as organizational, intercultural, interpersonal, and health communication; persuasion; and political rhetoric.

Although Communication Arts and Sciences has only just finished its first full year as a major, the program has seen substantial growth to include somewhere between fifty and sixty students declaring CAS as their major. Some of this growth may be connected to the ways that the CAS faculty encourages the students to work together as a cohort in community service projects.

For example, students in the Contemporary American Political Rhetoric class held a World AIDS Day event on campus that brought campus and local media attention to this important issue. In addition, students in the Intercultural Communication course created a project based on the film Sicko, which included a discussion of U.S. health policy with local experts and activists, which was open to the general public.

Outside of the classroom, CAS students and faculty recently prepared and served a meal at Reading's Opportunity House shelter; a number of CAS students have dedicated their time in places like Rwanda and states in the South impacted by major disasters; and others actively participated as supporters and dancers representing Penn State Berks at this year's THON events. (See related article on p. 14.)

The Communication Arts and Sciences faculty is proud of the active role our students take in community service projects and will continue to encourage active engagement with important issues outside of the classroom. If you’d like to join the ranks of “Communication Nation” at Penn State Berks or would like more information on supporting our Communication Arts and Sciences students through scholarships or program endowments, please contact the Office of Development at 610-396-6056.

Berks Students Raise $24K for Pediatric Cancer through THON

by Lisa R. Weidman

Students at Penn State Berks put on their dancing shoes for a worthwhile cause and raised more than $24,000 to help conquer childhood cancer at Penn State Children’s Hospital through THON, the dance marathon to benefit the Four Diamonds Fund held at Penn State every year. This is the highest amount Penn State Berks has raised for THON to date. Penn State University raised more than $7.4 million total, a record-breaking total that exceeds the 2008 total by more than $800,000.

From February 20–22, Penn State students from every campus gathered at the Bryce Jordan Center on University Park campus for a forty-six hour, “no sitting, no sleeping” dance marathon. Representing Penn State Berks were juniors Megan Allwein and Brian Tran, and sophomores Joanne Carey and Catherine Claxton.

For Carey, a Secondary Education/Social Studies major from Springfield, Virginia, this was her second year as a THON dancer. “Every time I watch any of the THON videos on YouTube, I always get chills running down my spine. It’s hard not to when you realize exactly what we as an organization are capable of doing,” explains Carey.

Claxton, a Veterinary and Biomedical Science major from Womelsdorf, comments that she is motivated by her interactions with Natalie, Berks’ THON child. Natalie is just two years old and was diagnosed with leukemia. “She is so brave and strong; she looks for ways to make you smile starting with her adorable laugh. Nothing makes me more proud or happy than to dance for the children like her.”

Penn State Berks raised $24,787, which was counted toward the total of $7,490,133 raised University-wide, a record for Penn State. This year’s proceeds brought the total raised since its inception to more than $50 million for the Four Diamonds Fund.