

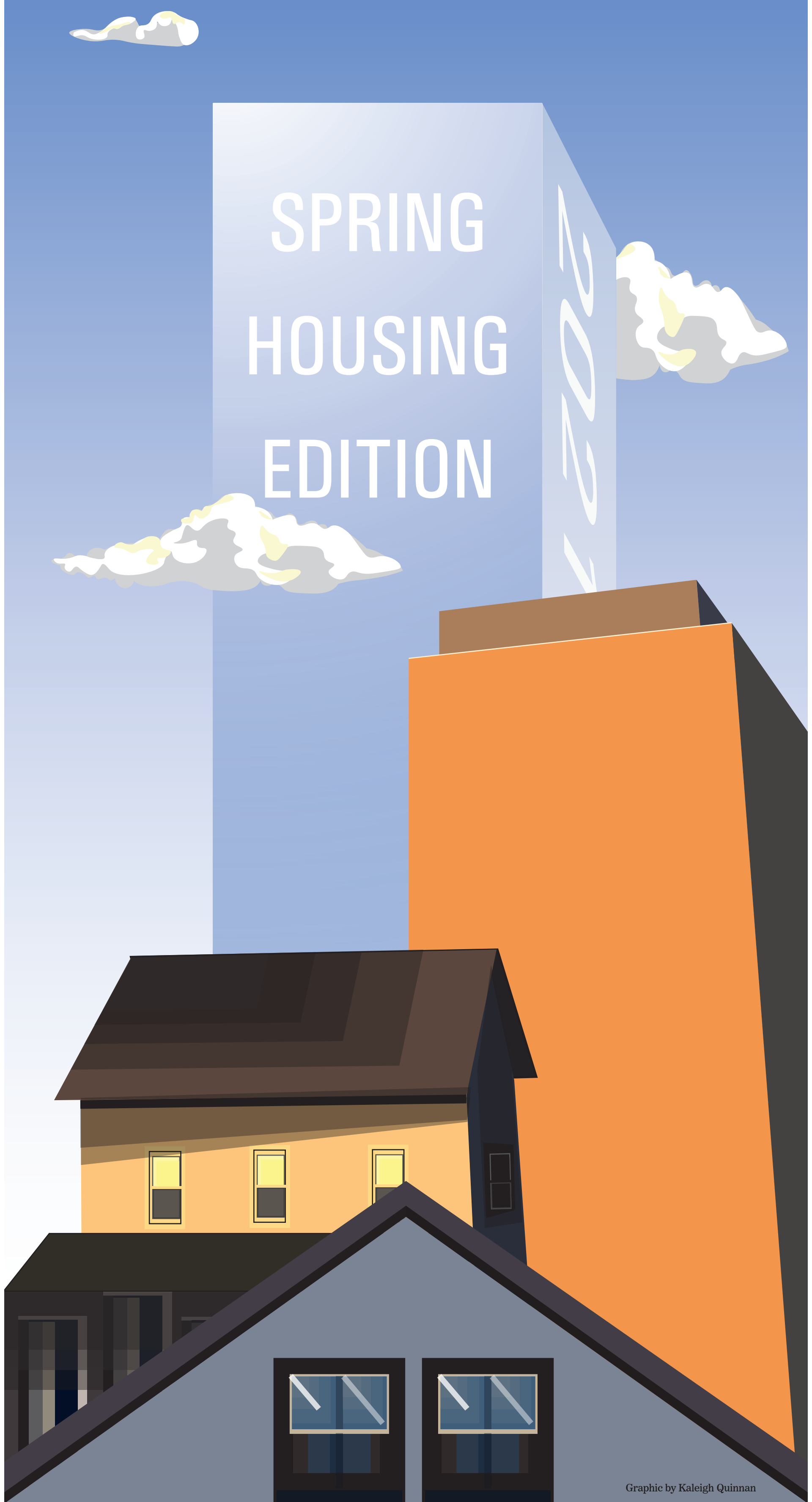
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Graphic by Kaleigh Quinnan

Nittany Lion Inn continues as dorm

By Paul Sabini
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State’s historic Nittany Lion Inn, which has housed alumni, visitors and students alike since 1931, will continue to serve as a residence hall for a second academic year, disappointing prospective visitors.

With the coronavirus pandemic limiting travel, the Nittany Lion Inn restructured its operations, serving as a residence hall and classroom space during the 2020-21 academic year. It will continue to serve the same purpose for the 2021-22 academic year.

Director of Housing Operations at Penn State Conal Carr said the hotel was able to give students a good place to be during an unusual year.

“The Inn provided an opportunity to provide students with an amazing residence hall experience,” Carr said.

Current and future residents of the Nittany Lion Inn experience the same hotel that former first lady Eleanor Roosevelt, former President Dwight D. Eisenhower and famed actor Danny Devito all stayed in during the hotel’s 90 years of existence.

All rooms at the Nittany Lion Inn are single occupancy — featuring full beds, individual bathrooms and cable television, in addition to the other amenities that regular residence halls provide.

Furthermore, according to Carr, the Inn has proved suitable for holding classes in its ballrooms, which are large enough to enforce social distancing measures.

Originally, the rooms at the Nittany Lion Inn were going to be used as quarantine locations. However, Carr said they discovered students would be displaced, so they chose to use the hotel as



Josie Chen/Collegian file photo

The Nittany Lion Inn has been a staple of Penn State’s campus for almost 100 years.

a residence hall. Quarantine for students is located in Eastview Terrace residence halls.

For the next academic year, the move to continue using the Nittany Lion Inn as a residence hall was dictated by feedback from the residents themselves.

“People have really enjoyed the space — it’s a great location, a lot of classes are there,” Carr said.

So, at least for the next year, the Nittany Lion Inn will host 208 upper-class students, according to Penn State’s housing website.

But even if it’s just for a year, many visitors said they will miss the experience that came with staying in the Nittany Lion Inn.

Teresa Keller, parent of a student in the class of 2024, recounted the only time she stayed in the Inn.

“It lived up to what [I had heard so much about], and it felt like home,” she said.

Despite living close to Penn State, she said she made the journey with her son, Dean, and enjoyed the amenities the Inn will now only provide to students for the next year.

To Keller, the “location of the Nittany Lion Inn can’t be beat.” Keller said while there are other hotels in nearby areas, such as the Days Inn by Wyndham Penn State or The Penn Stater Hotel, the Nittany Lion Inn is close to everything one could need around the Penn State campus.

Keller’s experience is not unique — many other parents and students come to enjoy the Inn for its history, comfort and service, which can make people feel as if they’re a member of the Penn State community.

Joyce Yin, a student at Penn State, said she had never stayed in the Nittany Lion Inn, but she will for the first time in the fall.

Yin (sophomore-chemical engineering) is doing a co-op next spring semester, and living on campus in the Inn presents “an easier housing contract to cancel, rather than an off campus apartment.” She will live in the Inn during next fall semester and bow out of her contract for the spring.

“The environment is something I am looking forward to,” Yin said. “[The Nittany Lion Inn is] very well taken care of, compared to the run-down residence halls.”

As the Nittany Lion Inn prepares to welcome students back for the spring semester, much thought has been given to the logistics of converting a space from a hotel to a dorm — and whether each room will undergo a transformation, according to Thomas Neely, general manager of the Nittany Lion Inn.

Neely said continuing to use

How do students afford rent?

By: Olivia Estright
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

As college students on budgets, many Penn State students attempt to find off-campus living options that will not break their bank accounts.

State College provides a variety of apartment complexes intended for students. Depending on the location, amenities and number of people living together, the rent varies by each complex.

Figuring out how to afford rent may be a new experience for some students, but Olivia Dunshee said she advises her peers not to hesitate in asking questions from those with more experience.

“Don’t be afraid to ask people. Trying to figure it all out by yourself can get scary and confusing sometimes,” Dunshee (sophomore-veterinary and biomedical science) said. “The minute I spoke up and asked about certain things, I was like ‘Oh, OK, that makes sense.’”

Dunshee lives off campus in The Loft Apartments with two other roommates. She said she pays for rent with a combination of student loans and her own money.

“I work at the [Penn State] Bookstore in the HUB, and when I’m home, I pretty much work all the time,” Dunshee said. “It’s just so I can have that extra money to pay off my loan when needed, and so I can have spending money to pay for food.”

Dunshee said it’s the little things about having an apartment that make it worth it.

“The first time I took a shower without having to go in a commu-

nal bathroom made a world of a difference,” Dunshee said.

Ashley Buch lives off campus in the RISE at State College. Like Dunshee, she said she took out a student loan to pay for her rent, and she has a job in State College.

“There’s definitely different options for rent. I personally chose to live here because I knew I could take out a loan and afford it,” Buch (senior-communications) said. “There are more affordable places to live downtown.”

Buch said the rent increases with each additional roommate at the RISE.

“It just depends on your financial circumstances and how much you’re willing to work to be able to live where you want depending on the price,” Buch said.

Some students’ parents offer to pay for their rent. After his dad refused to let him pay, Nick Hagan said he “cut a deal” with his dad.

“My dad said he would pay, because he didn’t want me working so I could focus on classes,” Hagan (junior-economics) said. “The deal was I focus on my schoolwork [while] he pays the rent.”

However, Hagan said he works in the summer and recommends other students do the same in order to afford rent and amenities during the school year.

“Try to work as much as you can during the summertime so that you have a safety net when fall comes around,” Hagan said. “Summer jobs will definitely be the best way to rack up money quickly.”

Izzy Gayoso is funding her rent with scholarships. Although she is currently studying in Califor-

nia, she will be living in The Legacy at State College next year.

Gayoso (sophomore-mechanical and aerospace engineering) said she’s living with three others next year, which helped lower the cost.

“There’s a lot of different options downtown, so if you have a roommate, it will make it a lot cheaper,” Gayoso said. “Also, look for scholarships, especially ones from your hometown. A lot of times, people don’t know about them, and you can get thousands of dollars from them.”

Michael Assouline said he thinks rent is “overpriced” in downtown State College.

“The real estate just doesn’t go for the location and what there is to offer,” Assouline (sophomore-kinesiology) said. “It’s just the realtors taking advantage of students.”

Assouline said he has two sources of income, including a job at Panera and an investment project he started in high school. However, he said he’s trying to focus on his school work first for right now.

Assouline said he pays for his own rent, but his parents are willing to help. He said he found that a lot of apartment complexes drop their unit prices to be much cheaper later in the school year.

“Don’t be pressured into everyone saying you have to sign your leases in the beginning of October,” Assouline said. “There will always be more apartments. They won’t magically disappear. Be patient with it.”

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Josie Chen/Collegian file photo

After moving in a month later than planned, some freshmen are worried about being sent home before the end of the semester due to increases in coronavirus cases.

Freshmen make early departure predictions

By Oliver Ferguson
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

While on-campus students have waited for the chance to come back to Penn State, some wonder if there is the possibility of being sent home should coronavirus cases rise in the area.

Penn State began the on-campus move-in process for the spring semester on Feb. 9 for the start of in-person classes on Feb. 15.

From Aug. 7 to Dec. 18, there were a total of 5,052 positive coronavirus tests in the fall semester at University Park, according to Penn State’s coronavirus dashboard. However, Penn State never suspended in-person classes or sent all on-campus students home in the fall.

Despite the possibility of being sent home early, several students are still living on campus this spring. One of these students is Maggie Whalen.

Whalen (freshman-actuarial science) said she wanted to live on campus this semester to get the “college experience” even if it isn’t a typical year.

“I still wanted to at least try to have that experience,” Whalen said. “My parents are paying for it, so why not?”

Whalen doesn’t think the university would send students home early, especially after Penn State decided to bring students back to campus late. In December 2020, the university postponed the start of in-person classes and on-campus move-in until Feb. 15.

If any issues with the coronavirus were to arise, Whalen said she believes only students who were disobeying the safety regulations would be sent home.

Whalen said, however, she thought all on-campus students would be sent home if the quarantine space in Eastview Terrace filled up.

Andrew Waldman, another Penn State student living on-campus this semester, said he also believes on-campus

the hotel as a residence hall seemed to be a sensible decision given the uncertainty of the pandemic and its ramifications.

As far as pricing goes, living in the Nittany Lion Inn is not as expensive as on-campus apartments, but is still priced higher than regular residential halls, Neely said.

This is mainly due to the lack of a food service, according to Neely. However, the location does provide added benefit, Neely said since many engineering buildings are on west campus near the Inn. Additionally, the Pattee and Paterno Library is a short walk away.

Each room that houses a student will remain quite similar to the layout of the old guestrooms, Neely said, leaving all of the existing furniture such as desks, closets and chairs.

“One of the nice things for the students residing here is the choices they have,” Neely said, specifically in the choice of room in the Nittany Lion Inn.

While the future of the Nittany Lion Inn functioning as a hotel or residence hall is yet to be decided, should the Nittany Lion Inn decide to opt with the former, Penn State alumni and businesses will have the option to return to State College for game days and corporate events, according to Neely.

After all, “The Nittany Lion Inn is the Penn State experience,” he said.

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Jonah Rosen/Collegian file photo

The HERE in downtown State College opened prior to the fall 2020 semester.

How to decorate on a budget

By Victoria Gough
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Your first college dorm room or apartment is likely the first chance you'll ever get to have a space that's entirely your own.

However, the cinder block walls, cement flooring and blocky wooden furniture of student housing often leave a lot to be desired. What makes decorating even more difficult is that Pinterest and Instagram users seem to have it easy, with a seemingly unlimited budget to spend on their college dorms.

Not all of us have money to burn on a dorm or apartment, sure — but not to fear. It's easy to create a Pinterest-worthy room without breaking the bank.

Freshen up your floors

One of my biggest regrets of my freshman dorm was neglecting to buy a rug for my dorm because I thought it would be too expensive.

Every morning in the winter, I was forced to step onto the cold, unforgiving flooring of an unrenovated dorm in East Halls while my roommate enjoyed a plush rug beneath her feet.

As someone shopping on a budget, you might also think rugs are

expensive, but you don't have to drop a couple hundred dollars on a rug. While Amazon and Target both offer classic rugs for affordable prices, I am partial to Society6, which features original artist-designed accent rugs for less than \$50.

In dorms or apartments with unsightly cement or vinyl flooring, the best thing you can do is buy a rug. This is one of the easiest ways to add a pop of color and some individuality to a room. And, more importantly, it's much nicer to step onto a fluffy rug on a cold winter morning.

Style your shelves

The way live plants brighten up a room is unbelievable. Personally, I am a fan of keeping flowers in my room.

Cheap bouquets of flowers from Trader Joe's might look plain next to their more expensive counterparts, but they can look absolutely beautiful in a mason jar on your desk.

If flowers aren't your thing, the weekly farmers market in State College has plenty of affordable live plants. During the winter months, the farmers market is open on Fridays in the State College Borough Municipal Building.

It also offers succulents, which



Courtesy of Ellie Dunleavy

Posters are a great way for students to personalize a wall and fill blank space. Students can find posters at Uncle Eli's on Beaver Avenue.

are a great choice for people who might not have a green thumb.

Succulents require little water and minimal care, meaning you can completely ignore them for weeks on end. As long as you have a sunny window, you can keep your windowsill full of happy succulents and cacti.

A bonus: Terra cotta pots are cheap and easy to paint yourself if you want to show off your DIY skills.

Books are another great way to liven up sad, empty shelves and make your apartment or dorm more cozy.

Webster's Bookstore Cafe on Beaver Avenue has thousands of new and used books for any aesthetic. The used books start at \$3.98, so it's possible to get a stack of books for less than \$20.

Personally, I'm a fan of the color-coded bookshelf trend. A row of books in your favorite hues and shades will easily add a pop of color to an otherwise boring shelf.

If you live in an apartment that allows them, candles are another wonderful way to transform the atmosphere of your living space.

If you're looking to splurge on

fragrance, Bath and Body Works has an array of beautiful-smelling candles. However, you can just as easily get a \$5 candle from Target that smells equally as lovely for less than half the cost.

Work your walls

Posters are a staple of college dorms and apartments for a reason: They're quite possibly the single easiest way to fill up large amounts of wall space while also showing off your personality.

Uncle Eli's on Beaver Avenue has a wide variety of posters for any budget. My favorites are the vintage-looking Cavallini brand posters, which run less than \$15 and feature art of anything you can imagine, including plants, animals and vintage maps.

If you think posters are too cliché, framing records and hanging them on the wall can fill up wall space while also showing off your music taste.

State College stores such as Music Underground (located inside Chronic Town) or Stax of Trax Records (inside Webster's) both offer vinyl records for even the most obscure music tastes.

Even better: Prices start at just a few dollars.

To display, place the record sleeve inside an 8-by-8 picture frame from the dollar store and hang it on the wall with a command hook.

You may roll your eyes at the suggestion of string lights, but there are more options out there than you could ever imagine.

String lights have the potential to fit any aesthetic and provide some lighting that's a little more relaxing and easy on the eyes than the fluorescent lights you'll find in unrenovated dorms.

You could always go for classic fairy lights or Christmas lights, but there are also string lights with a variety of bulbs and even some that look like vines, flowers or lanterns. String lights range from \$10 to \$20 on Amazon and can brighten up an entire wall.

Making your dorm beautiful on a budget might seem like a daunting task at first, but with a little creativity, you can create the room of your dreams!

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New roommates adjust during the coronavirus

By Imani Williams
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Living with someone who has a different lifestyle can be hard — but it can be even harder during the coronavirus pandemic.

Some Penn State students have made adjustments and set rules to making sharing a living space less stressful amid the coronavirus.

Natia Frisby, who lived in Ritner Hall during the fall 2020 semester, said she initially was not used to sharing space.

Frisby (freshman-public relations) said she and her former roommate had to set rules to ensure neither of them would contract the coronavirus.

"She tended to go out a lot more and to a lot more parties," Frisby said. "I didn't want to go to any parties because I didn't want to take any chances."

Frisby said her roommate's decisions made her uncomfortable, but she did not know how to deal with it.

"I never brought it up because I didn't want to make her feel like I'm imposing on her," Frisby said.

She said it was hard to adjust to her roommate's lifestyle. But, she decided to switch dorms and is looking forward to living with her new roommate.

"She's a lot more relaxed," Frisby said. "We have a lot more in common."

Serena Davanzo said throughout college, she has not had the best luck with roommates.

Davanzo (junior-theater studies and broadcast journalism) said her first roommate was messy and another one was quiet.

"I think we said a total of 100 words," Davanzo said.

For fall 2020, Davanzo was matched with a roommate she felt comfortable living with. She said they would occasionally go for bike rides together, and they were always on the same page.

Davanzo said they both hung out with their separate friend groups, but she didn't worry about her roommate doing anything

that could put them at risk.

"She never brought back COVID," Davanzo said. "She was always safe."

Furthermore, Shubh Javia said he and his two roommates have been friends since their freshman year.

Javia (junior-applied data sciences) said adjusting to living together was initially difficult because they were just getting to know each other's lifestyles during the coronavirus.

"There was a lot of wearing masks in the beginning," Javia said.

Eventually, he said he got comfortable with his roommates, and they started doing almost everything together. Now, Javia said college during the coronavirus is "a lot less lonely."

He said there are no major differences in how each of them spends their time outside of their apartment, so it was not hard to adjust. They also share the same friends.

Aamir Siddiqui said he and his roommate live in a studio downtown, so they are in each other's space most of the time.

Siddiqui (senior-biology neuroscience) said it is hard living so close to someone other than family, so this was a learning experience. He said his roommate is always home, so he tries to go to campus or take walks downtown so he can have some time to himself.

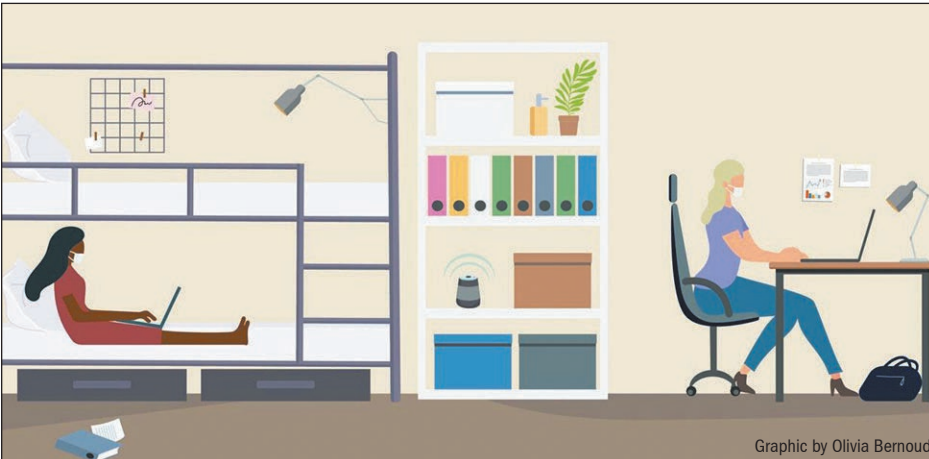
"With him always being home, it feels like I can't be there," Siddiqui said. "I kind of just take myself out of the situation."

Siddiqui said his roommate occasionally brings guests over without his permission. He said he would not mind if it were not during a pandemic.

Now, Siddiqui said the guests make him uncomfortable. He said he doesn't know if they have been exposed to the coronavirus.

However, after communicating and creating rules, Siddiqui said he and his roommate have found common grounds that made it easier for him to adjust.

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Graphic by Olivia Bernoudy

‘RAs are students first’

Penn State Residence Life holds mandatory RA training on first university-wide wellness day

By Megan Swift
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Editor’s note: The names of all individuals interviewed for this story have been changed in order to protect their identities. The Daily Collegian has verified through fact-checking that all the individuals interviewed for this story are RAs.

As of Tuesday morning, Residence Life did not respond for comment in this article.

Penn State Residence Life at University Park is holding mandatory resident assistant training during the first intended university-wide wellness day on Tuesday, Feb. 9, eliciting mixed reactions from RAs themselves.

Steve, an RA in Pollock Halls who wished to remain anonymous, said his training goes from 1-8 p.m. on Tuesday.

This training will follow a period of time on the schedule designated for engaging “in wellness activities” and relaxation from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., according to Pollock’s training schedule. The timing of RA training on Tuesday differs depending on housing area.

“I don’t think [Residence Life] should advertise themselves as a department prioritizing students first and then [take] away so much intentional time for students to take care of themselves,” Steve said. “RAs are students first, but taking away designated students’ time for wellbeing to do this training is going against that.”

On Oct. 29, Penn State announced that three university-wide wellness days on Feb. 9, March 11 and April 7 would be intended to replace spring break due to the coronavirus pandemic.

In a semester devoid of the coronavirus, Steve said RAs would come back five to seven days prior to students before the semester, and have “full training” each of those days.

Steve said he believes it would have been “smarter” to have RAs return Feb. 6 and hold training Feb. 7, because then Residence Life “wouldn’t be taking away time set aside for students to recover” on Tuesday’s wellness day.

“That day should be ours — it was ours to begin with,” Steve



James Riccardio/Collegian file photo

Penn State’s first university-wide wellness day occurred Feb. 9. The second and third wellness days will be held March 11 and April 7.

said. “I mean, they tried. Trying is always going to be better than nothing. It’s just kind of crappy.”

Zoey — who initially agreed to have her full name included

in this article but asked that her name be removed from the story after it was published out of fear for losing her job — has been an RA in East Halls for the past two years, and agreed that the training on Tuesday could have been moved or executed differently. Her training lasts from 12:45-8 p.m. on the wellness day.

“I think it’s pretty ironic that we’re learning and training about self-care on a day we were supposed to be taking [off for] self-care,” Zoey said. “It’s just really upsetting that this training had to be done. I believe the training could have easily been done in an email or another weekend date, but they chose to do it on the one day we had off — and it’s mandatory, so your job depends on it.”

Zoey said RAs will “probably” have to wake up early on Tuesday to experience any sort of self-care.

“Most of us... are going to sleep in [until 10 a.m. at the latest], giving you only three hours left to yourself to do what you need,” Zoey said. “We aren’t

having a spring break, and Penn State allotted three days [for wellness]. Spring break is kind of like a reset, [and Penn State] didn’t even give seven wellness days.

Emma, another RA at Penn State who wished to remain anonymous, works in North Halls and is “not that personally bothered” by the training on Tuesday’s wellness day.

Her training takes place from 9 a.m. to noon on Tuesday, and she and other RAs in her “supergroup” raised concerns to their coordinator.

“I recognize that training is something that needs to happen; I don’t feel like my whole day is taken up by it,” Emma said. “Even though we are sacrificing some of our day off — it can be frustrating — this year is so different, so I think we all kind of have to be flexible.”

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Samantha Wilson/Collegian file photo

Penn State’s Housing and Residence Life office is located in Johnston Commons in East Halls. RAs in East Halls had training on the university’s first wellness day from 12:45-8 p.m.



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BROTHERHOOD

Photos by Natalie Runnerstrom and Cameron Hart/Collegian file photos
Graphic by Carson Schultz

Penn State leans on tradition, history in pursuit of national championship

By Seth Engle
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

The term “brotherhood” is often thrown around like a lacrosse ball is thrown around the perimeter.

While many sports programs and franchises throughout history have been able to create a true brotherhood, many others have failed.

For Penn State men’s lacrosse, creating a family atmosphere for a group of competitors who hold themselves and their teammates accountable at all times — what former Penn State All-American defenseman Chris Sabia calls a brotherhood — took nearly 100 years.

Before Jeff Tambroni was hired as head coach, before winning a Big Ten Championship and before becoming a national powerhouse in college lacrosse, Penn State men’s lacrosse was one of the smallest programs the university had — one that didn’t qualify for the NCAA Tournament in the first 32 years of the event.

Understanding where Penn State men’s lacrosse began is essential to fully comprehend its rise to prominence.

Originally a junior varsity sport at Penn State until it’s eighth season as a program in 1921, the Nittany Lions were listed as independent until joining the Eastern College Athletic Conference in 2000.

For years, the blue and white was barely recognized across the University Park campus, as football reigned supreme.

That is, until a group of five football players picked up some sticks in the 1970s.

With around two scholarships to give out among ten guys, Penn State’s lacrosse program struggled to bring in recruits.

However, with a few football players already on scholarship — team captain Buddy Tesner, future NFL linebacker Jim Rosecrans and offensive lineman Rich Caravella — then-head coach Dick Pencek was given a few significant consolation prizes without having to give up any scholarships.

When Rich Mauti, a wide receiver and midfielder from East Meadow, New York, joined Penn State’s football team in 1975, he heard of his teammates who played both football and lacrosse and sought permission to do the same.

“I loved lacrosse way more than football,” Mauti, who spent seven years in the NFL, told The Daily Collegian. “Lacrosse was much more fun.”

So, with Mauti granted permission to play both sports by Joe Paterno — along with a number of other football players — people started to pay attention to Penn State’s lacrosse team for the first time since its founding as a varsity sport 54 years prior.

“We were drawing 3,000 people to Jeffrey Field on Thursday nights,” Mauti said. “Part of it was the draw because four or five of us were playing football, but it really gave us the recognition that the lacrosse team had never had.”

While the increase in crowd numbers was one positive to having football players on the lacrosse team, the other came on the field.

The team was actually good.

“When you win, it can be the greatest thing since sliced bread,” Mauti said. “People wanted to be associated with winners, and we were winning.”

With linebackers, offensive linemen and wide receivers playing a game not meant to be nearly as physical as football, of course this new look Penn State lacrosse team was going to perform differently than other squads.

Naturally, this Nittany Lion team played a much rougher sport of lacrosse than the rest of its competition.

What made this team unique was that it could have a nearly 360-pound goalie in Rich Caravella, an All-American in lacrosse, run out of the goal and deck someone at mid-field.

“Those were the kind of rough and tough things we could take from the football

field and bring to the lacrosse field,” Mauti said. “They were things we could do back then, but [they] have since changed the rules.”

Of course having a number of football players on the lacrosse team was very unique for the Nittany Lions on the field. But the connections made off of the field were the biggest difference-maker of all — the first documented signs of true brotherhood in the Penn State men’s lacrosse program.

“In football, a team can have 120 guys, but in lacrosse there are groups of 10 to 15 people who just bond,” Mauti said. “We did everything together. We helped each other on and off the field, even academically.”

“That’s the number one key to success as a team,” Mauti said. “You’ve got to be on the same page, you’ve got to have the trust and faith in your teammates that they’re going to be there for you and you’re going to be there for them.”

But when these football/lacrosse players graduated, the program’s popularity quickly faded and wouldn’t pick back up until nearly 40 years later.

By 2011, Jeff Tambroni was one of the best coaches in the sport. In 10 years at Cornell, Tambroni had turned the Big Red into a legitimate powerhouse.

Under Tambroni, Cornell won eight straight Ivy League

regular season championships and made the NCAA Tournament Final Four in three of his last four seasons with the program (2007, 2009 and 2010), even advancing it to the National Championship in 2009.

So, it came as much of a surprise to the lacrosse world when Tambroni decided to pack his bags and head to Happy Valley, where the Nittany Lions were coming off their worst season in program history.

One thing that didn’t come as a surprise was Penn State’s immediate improvement under Tambroni’s reign.

Only three years after a disastrous inaugural season in the CAA when the Nittany Lions went 2-11, Tambroni led the blue and white to its second conference championship win in program history and only its third NCAA Tournament berth.

Immediately after the end of the 2013 season, Penn State announced it would be playing one final season in the CAA before joining the newly established Big Ten conference for the 2015 season.

After the death of their son, Connor, who was a goalkeeper at Penn State until his fatal car accident in 2015, Bill and Penny Darcey were most worried about keeping his legacy alive for years to come.

Connor was a one-year starter in net for Tambroni’s program and earned an All-Big Ten Tournament Team nod in the 2015 season.

But his legacy goes much beyond the crease.

“I think when you lose someone so young like Connor, your biggest worry is that you know he didn’t finish his life and that people won’t know him,” Penny said.

So when Tambroni made it his priority to implement Connor’s No. 16 into the program as much as he could, obviously Connor’s parents were thrilled.

“To end every workout, we did 16 push-ups,” Sabia said. “We would do 16 chants at the end of practice.”

But what has been the most long standing No. 16 tradition of all is one that Sabia — along with Matt Sexton, Ryan Keenan and Nick Cardile — have all been honored to participate in: the wearing of the No. 16 jersey, which is passed down to one senior every season.

If the No. 16 jersey tradition does anything, it has kept Connor’s legacy alive within the program and beyond.

“I always hear stories of little kids who wear No. 16,” Penny Darcey said. “A boy from Little Rock, Arkansas, wears No. 16 when he plays sports, and in his art class he made a coaster out of trivet with the No. 16, Connor and an American flag.”

With the No. 16 tradition having such an influential effect on younger generations, one can only imagine how it feels for the players, like Sabia, who are bestowed the number.

Sabia, who was given the honor

by Keenan prior to the 2019 season, believes wearing the number has completely changed his lifestyle off the field and his mentality on it.

“I can tell you as soon as I got that number and that jersey, a lot of things changed for me as a player and a person,” Sabia said. “It’s the coolest sports tradition that I’ve ever been a part of.”

Another tradition revolving around numbers — specifically the No. 16 — is one that takes place at the annual lacrosse banquet at the end of every season.

In this tradition, started by Tambroni a few years ago, every player is called on by number order and every alumnus who wore the number before stands with them.

When Tambroni gets to the No. 16, the crowd breaks into applause and emotions take over.

“It brings tears to my eyes every time,” Bill Darcey said. “It’s truly incredible.”

The season after Connor’s death, Penn State’s second in the Big Ten, the team immediately started to improve.

Much of this improvement can be attributed to the presence of attackman Grant Ament, who led the team in points in his first season in Happy Valley.

But while the team was winning more games than the season prior, Ament wasn’t necessarily satisfied with the culture and focus of his teammates.

“In terms of culture, we had a lot of guys who really seemed to care,” Ament told the Collegian. “But I don’t think we were all unified.”

The next season, the team was much better than any in distant memory.

With the additions of Mac O’Keefe, Colby Kneese and Nick Cardile, the 2017 squad was bound to make a huge jump.

“That year was a really big stepping stone for us because we knew we had the potential to be great,” Ament said. “We just didn’t know how to channel that energy.”

The next season, the blue and white hoped to continue its development.

But with an injured foot sidelining him for the entirety of the 2018 season, Ament would have to wait another year to take the Nittany Lions to the next level: winning a Big Ten Championship and making a run at a national title.

And that they did.

With a brand new Panzer Stadium, Ament, Sabia and O’Keefe — who led the NCAA in goals that season with 78, including a game winner in overtime of the Big Ten championship — would lead Penn State to a program best 16-2 record and a run at national championship that ended in heartbreaking fashion against No. 5-ranked Yale in the semifinal.

“Obviously I would have loved to win a national championship,” Ament said. “But you have to realize, it’s really hard to get the Final Four, and we did that for the first time in 107 years.”

If 2019 meant anything to Penn State, it was the first year things really fell into place for the program.

“That year we realized we could really be great,” Ament said. “But it wasn’t going to happen unless we were locked in everyday on a consistent basis.”

At the end of the day, a national championship was not won, and it was time for Ament and the rest of the team to get back to work.

“We were the team of firsts in a lot of ways in State College,” Ament said. “We wanted to make sure that we left our stamp in State College, but truthfully my mentality was always to take the next step.”

But for a 2020 squad looking to take the next step, the Nittany Lions only got in seven games before the season was cut short by the coronavirus pandemic.

And just like that, Ament’s college career was over.

“We gave everything we had,” Ament said. “And I was okay with that. I was okay with hanging up the helmet.”

Through big wins, injuries and disappointing finishes, Ament embodied Nittany Lion lacrosse.

By the end of his college career, he was a three-time All-American, sixth in career assists in NCAA history and first in points in Big Ten and program history.

“Comparing our freshman year to our senior year — the way practice was, the way the weight room was, the way we conducted ourselves on campus — it was just so different,” Ament said. “There’s a saying in the locker room, ‘leave it better than you found it,’ and that’s something I think we all took personally.”

While his playing career may be over, Ament is surely not finished with Penn State lacrosse — as with anyone who goes through the program.

“What I think is the coolest part of being a lacrosse member is once you hang up the jersey, your time is not over,” Ament said. “Being a part of the Penn State program is for life.”

The program, the coaches and the teammates are family for Ament and always will be.

“I’d be willing to go to bat for just about anybody on that team, I need to stay involved with the team because it is one large family, and I can still make an impact as an alumnus.”

Grant Ament
Former attackman

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The historic impact of Alpha Phi Alpha

By Nick Stonesifer
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

“First of all, Servants of all, We shall transcend all.”

This motto is meant to convey the commitment to the community for members of Penn State’s Alpha Phi Alpha — the first of the Divine Nine fraternities and sororities founded in the United States.

The Divine Nine consists of nine fraternities and sororities that make up the National Pan-Hellenic Council, a group of historically African American greek life organizations, founded in the 20th century.

Formed in 1906 at Cornell University, seven Black men — or the fraternity’s “jewels” — came together and formed a study group to help minorities escape segregation at the university.

The study group eventually blossomed into the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity, which aims to “promote brotherhood and academic excellence, while providing service and advocacy for [its] communities,” according to its website.

Since its conception, civil rights icons such as W.E.B. Du Bois, Thurgood Marshall and Martin Luther King Jr. have passed through the organization and left their mark on society — leaving big shoes to fill for current members.

Penn State student Jaylen Carr, fundraising chair of Alpha Phi Alpha, said to follow in those footsteps is an “honor.”

“It’s an honor and it’s motivational,” Carr (junior-civil engineering) said. “You have fellow brothers who have done so much to shift the lives of not only African Americans, but the culture in America.

“Just seeing the impact that they’re able to have, you can only hope that you can have an impact close to what they’ve had.”

Carr said he believes the example former members have set leaves no room for excuses as to why he can’t serve the Penn State community through Alpha Phi Alpha.

“If they could have done it when times were even insurmountably harder than what they are now,” Carr said, “there’s no excuse for me not to be able to give back to my community.”

One way Alpha Phi Alpha is giving back is through its program, “Brother’s Keeper,” which strives to improve the lives of former members and their families, whether it be assisting in upkeep of a member’s home or providing companionship.

Zack Alexis, historian of Alpha Phi Alpha, believes that to make an impact within the community, one needs to take small steps.

“You have to take a step back



Courtesy of Daniel Gizaza

Members of Penn State’s Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity believe following in the footsteps of figures like W.E.B. Dubois and Martin Luther King Jr. is “an honor and motivational.”

and just look at the smaller picture at times and just do your part in the local community — with the hopes that it can snowball into something bigger,” Alexis (sophomore-mechanical engineering) said. “I always say, ‘Don’t try to be great’ because you don’t actually have to be great within your four years in college... it’s a lifetime commitment.”

Daniel Gizaza, president of Alpha Phi Alpha, said he believes the fraternity has made a positive impact on the Black community at Penn State.

“I feel as though it has made a really big impact, especially for [the] Black community, and it’s given us a network and people to look up to,” Gizaza (senior-marketing) said. “It’s a lot of people that decided to join the organization because they wanted to do better for themselves and for their community.”

TaiRe Daniel, a member of Alpha Phi Alpha, said he went into the fraternity believing it was only something he would be a part of during his college years, but later learned it reaches beyond college. He said he believes

no matter how far members get from college, they’ll be a member of the fraternity.

“I think what sets Alpha apart is that you’re always an Alpha, which is something that prior to [my] joining, I didn’t really get the concept. I always heard people say that they were in a fraternity while they were in college,” Daniel (junior-mechanical engineering) said, “but if you ask any Alpha today, no matter how old they are... they will still say they are Alphas.”

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Lindsey Toomer/Collegian

Throughout Penn State’s history, the Nittany Lion has adjusted to the changing times since its beginning. In challenging times at the university, the mascot has served as an image of light and hope.

The Nittany Lion’s changing role

By Courtney Benedetto
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Throughout Penn State’s history, the Nittany Lion has served as a beacon of school spirit, hope and optimism.

From becoming the spokesperson of social distancing to tweeting support for Penn State sports, the Nittany Lion mascot has kept busy even during the coronavirus pandemic.

In recognizing the potential hardships placed on this year’s mascot, a few former mascots shared their own obstacles as the Nittany Lion.

According to Nick Indeglio, mascot from 1996-1998, a difficult part about being the Nittany Lion is balancing schoolwork and the required appearances as the lion. Indeglio graduated in 1998 with a degree in elementary education.

“The other piece that over time became difficult was just keeping the energy level high,” Indeglio said. “Even though I was doing a lot of appearances, I still had to make time to work out for the cardiovascular piece of being the mascot, and I would frequently run out of hours in a day.”

Brad Cornali, the mascot from 1995-96, said his grades senior year definitely reflected the time commitment of being the Nittany Lion. Cornali graduated in 1996 with a degree in secondary education.

“I would do it forever if they let me because it was so fun, but I don’t know how guys do it for three years,” Cornali said.

He also said he ran into difficulties while traveling with the football team for away games. Once, Cornali said a group of former Purdue Pete mascots wanted to mess with the lion during Purdue’s homecoming game.

“They ended up jumping me from behind, and I ended up punching one of them just to try to survive,” Cornali said. “It ended up on ESPN.”

While Cornali faced some physical challenges during games, the mascot from 2011-2013, Rob Nellis, faced more challenges with preserving school spirit. Nellis graduated in 2013 with a degree in mechanical and nuclear engineering.

During Nellis’ first football season as the Nittany Lion, the Jerry Sandusky sex abuse case surfaced, and Joe Paterno was fired.

“It was a pretty rough time for most Penn Staters,” Nellis said. “I just wanted to make sure to come back to the roots and be like, ‘Alright, what is the lion’s role in this?’”

Nellis said he thought of the Nittany Lion as a symbol of “positivity, responsibility and respect,” so he made sure to attend every event he could to promote school spirit.

In the midst of the “collegiate scandal,” Nellis said he “wanted to shine some light on any and every student organization [and] community organization that was doing something positive.”

Bringing positivity to alumni also became a focus of Nellis’ work as the lion during the Sandusky case.

In the midst of the “collegiate scandal,” Nellis said he “wanted to shine some light on any and every student organization [and] community organization that was doing something positive.”

Bringing positivity to alumni also became a focus of Nellis’ work as the lion during the Sandusky case.

“[For the] people who didn’t have the benefit of being near campus or having a support system, I wanted to bring a little bit of joy into their lives as well,” Nellis said. “There are so many different reasons why people go to Penn State and so many reasons why people’s Penn State experience is so meaningful, and part of being the lion was honoring all of those and adding legitimacy to their experience.”

Nellis said he believes the current mascot knows to avoid the negativity and divisiveness.

“The lion is not a politician,” Nellis said. “It is a symbol of decency and respect.”

Indeglio reflected on the mascot’s role this year and also the lion’s past and future.

“I think the most important

thing about being the mascot was always that you are the representative of Penn State when you’re in the costume,” he said. “You literally are the university, and all of your actions have to reflect that.”

While this year’s lion has made less in-person appearances, Indeglio said he recognizes the extra work newer mascots do to promote school spirit on social media.

“I’ve noticed the Nittany Lion mascots really embracing social media and using Twitter to connect with the audience in ways that you couldn’t do before,” Indeglio said. “While there are not traditional types of appearances, at least there’s still an outlet to be an ambassador.”

Zach Sowa, who served as the lion from 2017-2020, said he was fortunate the pandemic did not interfere with his position, but he understands the difficulties the lion is facing this year. Sowa graduated in 2020 with a degree in cybersecurity, analytics and operations.

With his last performance as the lion being at THON 2020, Sowa said it was the best way to end his career.

However, the circumstances of the world today and the “tough period” following his graduation present unique challenges that new lions must face, according to Sowa.

“To go out of your way and think more creatively about how the lion can bring that energy now is going to be difficult,” Sowa said.

However, he thinks the lion will always continue to uplift the Penn State community.

“The Nittany Lion is part of me and will forever be in my heart,” Sowa said. “As the lion does, I’m sure it will come back bigger and better than ever.”

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Borough council preps for return of students

By Brendan Morgan
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

As Penn State students return to campus for the spring semester, the State College Borough Council has taken steps to prepare for a possible increase of coronavirus cases.

One of the main steps taken was to extend the masking and social distancing ordinance until May, which, according to the State College Borough Council President Jesse Barlow, was successful in keeping cases down.

“Until this first wave of students got back to town, Bellefonte was the epicenter of the coronavirus in Centre County,” Barlow said. “Centre County was actually doing better than every surrounding county, and a lot of that is because it’s not just the borough, but College Township and Ferguson — we’re all passing masking ordinances to help keep the spread down.”

According to borough council member Deanna M. Behring, there was an initial spike of cases at the beginning of the fall semester, but the cases were kept at a manageable number and hospitalizations were low.

Behring said she attributes the management of cases not only to the enforcement of the ordinance, but also to effective implementation of mitigation techniques.

Penn State has also taken steps to slow the spread of the virus, including testing students, enforcing a similar policy to the State College ordinance that promotes social distancing and mask-wearing on campus and pushing back the start of in-person classes.

Nick Jones, executive vice president and provost at Penn State, said during a borough council meeting Feb. 8 that pushing back start of in-person classes and on-campus move-in to was “the most prudent thing to do given our primary focus on the health and wellbeing of our community,” which includes both the student community at Penn State and the “broader” State College community.

“We were very concerned back in December based on all of the projections that we were seeing with the holidays impending that there would be big increases in case counts across the nation and certainly in Pennsylvania and Centre County,” Jones said.

Barlow said there were some complaints from students about the amount of testing Penn State was doing and that they should’ve been able to do more

in the fall semester. However, he said he hopes there will be an improvement this semester.

“I think it’s feasible now to do more testing of a higher volume of folks,” Barlow said. “This is something that they’ve got to do until vaccinations [are available] and students — unless they have significant health conditions — are likely to be among the last people vaccinated.”

Barlow said Penn State deserves credit overall for how it was able to contain the spread in the community and ensure infections didn’t get to more vulnerable populations.

“I’m encouraged by the fact that [Penn State] did do that well, and they seem to be tightening their precautions,” Barlow said.

Despite his encouragement, Barlow said he wishes Penn State had stayed remote for the semester rather than attempting to have in-person classes and students in dorms.

“Significantly, they still had one of the highest rates of any campus in the country in spite of our ordinance and everything that they supported,”

Deanna M Behring
State College Borough Council member

Barlow said.

Barlow said he also acknowledged that while Penn State and the borough can make policies to combat the spread of the coronavirus, a large part of keeping the numbers down is the personal responsibility of residents and students.

Behring said she believes people should still be careful despite some pandemic fatigue.

“People are getting really tired of this lifestyle that we’re leading with people’s dreams on hold and ways of doing things significantly changing,” Behring said. “The lack of human contact that we really depend on for our mental health — it’s really challenging — but it’s not the time to let our guard down.”

Some members of the council said they’re unsure about how great the spike of cases may be in the spring, but despite that, Behring said it’s important to stay strong and patient.

Behring said ‘how big will the increase of cases be’ is the “million-dollar question.”

“I’m very optimistic, and I’m really grateful to all of those students and community members who have complied with the ordinance,” Behring said. “My message is to stay strong — good things are around the corner. We have to stay strong and stay patient and then stay caring about one another.”

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Penn State must lead the charge in sustainability

This past January brought cheerful news to the Penn State community, with the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education extolling the university's efforts to create a more sustainable campus.

In fact, Penn State scored first out of all Big Ten universities in this ranking, receiving a score of 74.49 overall. While such an achievement should not be overlooked, it must also be placed into context.

And the context is that Penn State as a large institution could and should do better in fulfilling its commitments to the common good. Mediocrity has no home here and must be as swiftly expunged as hate.

While there's no great shame in a C, there's also very little honor. The university certainly does not encourage students to

OUR VIEW

Penn State should aim to increase the appeal and ease of sustainable living.

strive only for Cs, despite them being the bare minimum to earn degrees. Penn State expects higher of us than the bare minimum, and we should likewise expect higher of them.

On the 2017 version of the sustainability assessment, the university ended up with a score of 67.88. In other words, a timespan of three years brought with it an improved score of seven points.

Such blooming is absolutely radiant in a world as gloomy and climate-stricken as ours.

Still, Penn State is privy to all the power and reputa-

tion typically afforded to high-end research universities. It is not and never has been a rinky-dink operation, and it should put away rinky-dink ambitions. Rather, its solid foundation on sustainability must be expanded and improved upon.

And the student body has an equally important role in sustaining this culture of improvement. Students and faculty, presidents and provosts, trustees and trust-fund babies alike all have a duty to build upon the foundation. Nobody enrolled or employed at Penn State has a calling toward apathy or

inaction. Our collective calling is instead toward a brighter world de-smear.

Concerning what the university proper should strive for, it is nothing less than serving as the gold standard for sustainable practices worldwide. Through rigorous research, the university could innovate and introduce ideas that trickle down to both smaller institutions and individuals.

Every Penn State campus should collaborate evermore closely with their surrounding community and aim to increase the appeal and ease of sustainable living. An environment that

prioritizes sustainability ends up prioritizing humanity.

As for students, we should put in the extra effort to avoid waste on all fronts. Gone are the days of extravagant showers or throwing away that fifth slice of pizza whose final destination was never going to be your stomach. We should also take time and solve the puzzle of choosing the correct bin for your recycling/trash in the HUB.

Pope Paul VI once wrote: "Due to an ill-considered exploitation of nature, humanity runs the risk of destroying it and becoming in turn a victim of this degradation."

It's not too late to reverse this degradation. The Penn State community not only has an outsized role in leading such reversal, but also an outsized capacity to meet the challenge.



Cartoons by Kaleigh Quinnan

MY VIEW | Caitlyn Frolo

If you can, you should go to classes in person

Penn State has decided to return to in-person instruction this week after campaigning to ensure every student returning to campus to live and work has received a coronavirus test.

Today marks my first mixed-mode instruction class, meaning I will be attending the class in person today and then virtually on Thursdays.

While this will definitely take some adjusting and getting used to, I welcome the chance to return to the classroom, because I haven't really been on campus since before Thanksgiving break last fall.

As a senior, this year was definitely the furthest thing from normal I have ever experienced, and I feel as disrupted as the class of 2020 seniors felt in the spring.

However, with a chance

to finally return to two of my classes in person, I am excited to feel a little more normal for the remainder of the semester.

While one of my professors gave us the option to avoid the in-person class if we feel uncomfortable or are feeling sick (as it will be held on Zoom as well), I plan to disregard this notion as a way to break up the monotony of the day, which is largely spent at my desk.

This is why I am encouraging all students who are willing and able to return to their in-person instruction without a feeling of dread, but to embrace it as a chance to learn in a traditional classroom setting, which is something we have not done in months.

There are so many ways that attending a class in person can be largely beneficial, especially when we have been so accustomed to learning over video this past year.

For one thing, it is much easier to raise your hand in

"It is always so much easier to visualize concepts and understand terminology when you are not distracted by the other tabs open on your computer."

Caitlyn Frolo

class to ask a question and be recognized instantly, instead of using the little hand in the right corner of your video on Zoom.

It is always so much easier to visualize concepts and understand terminology when you are not distracted by the other tabs open on your computer.

This is also a great way to get some human interaction that isn't over a video stream. While breakout rooms and discussion boards are great for measuring understanding of concepts, there isn't often a

chance for students to just talk in a normal setting.

Another way I feel in-person learning can be helpful this semester is in avoiding Zoom fatigue.

I am also extremely excited to walk on campus again and across Old Main Lawn or even Pattee Mall to my classes.

The fresh air and, quite frankly, the campus scenery will be much appreciated after spending most of my time in my apartment this past month.

Returning to class feels like a great way to wrap up my time as a Penn State student, and I hope other students take the opportunity to get back in the classroom and learn from the professors who are so excited to stand in front of the class once again.

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200 WINS LATER

Cael Sanderson weighs in on importance of dual meets to bigger picture

By Jake Aferiat
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Eleven years ago, Cael Sanderson issued then-senior Dan Vallimont a challenge.

He wanted Vallimont, who by his own admission wasn't known for his prolific offensive output, to score six takedowns in one minute and 15 seconds.

It was Jan. 3, 2010, and Sanderson, Vallimont and the rest of the Penn State squad made the roughly 40-mile trip to take on in-state foe Lock Haven for a dual meet.

The blue and white was up 19-3 in the match by the time Vallimont took the mat, and then as it progressed, there was one moment where Vallimont and his opponent went out of bounds.

It was at that point when Sanderson issued his challenge.

"I was wrestling my match and I was winning by a good amount, and I was controlling my way through the match," Vallimont told The Daily Collegian. "There was about 1:15 left when we went out of bounds near our bench, and Cael looked me in the face and said 'I need you to get six more takedowns' — so I proceeded to wrestle the hardest 1:15 that I've ever wrestled."

In what would normally seem like a relatively routine bout in a relatively routine dual meet, it actually served as a much needed source of inspiration and motivation for Vallimont.

The Lake Hopatcong, New Jersey, native had failed to place at the NCAA Tournament the year before after finishing third and garnering All-American nods as a sophomore.

But after Sanderson issued



Eric Firestone/Collegian file photo

Cael Sanderson watches a bout during a match against Michigan at the Bryce Jordan Center on Friday, Feb. 1, 2019. Penn State won the match 25-11.

that challenge, it in part helped propel Vallimont to new heights, as he finished second in the country at 165 pounds as a senior and picked up his second All-American honor.

"Honestly, it was good. I needed it. He was pushing me out of my comfort zone and preparing me to get ready for the NCAA Tournament and for the Big Ten Tournament," Vallimont said. "He knew that I had the ability to push myself a little bit further, rather than just kind of coasting to a win and wanted me to maximize my ability and push myself out of my comfort zone."

Again, in the larger pantheon of Vallimont's and Sanderson's respective careers, it's a relatively insignificant and rather ordinary dual meet.

However, it's one of 200 where Sanderson has notched a victory, reaching the milestone with an 18-13 win over Michigan.

In reaching the mark, Sanderson joined former coach Bill Koll as the only two coaches to ever lead Penn State's program and amass 200 career victories.

Sanderson, whose coaching career started in 2006, went 44-10 in three seasons at Iowa State and has gone 156-16-2 in his 12 years since taking the reins at Penn State.

He's also the fourth active Big Ten coach — along with Iowa's Tom Brands, Nebraska's Mark Manning and Ohio State's Tom Ryan — to reach the double century mark.

Even so, Sanderson was quick to downplay the accomplishment.

"As far as the 200 dual meets, one of the wrestlers said 'Hey, congrats coach' after the match," the 15th-year head coach said. "And to me, that just means you've been coaching a long time, right, so anybody can do that if you coach long enough."

While the milestone allowed

Sanderson to reflect on the longevity of his coaching career, he readily admitted that he loves and sees the value in dual meets.

"Dual meets are really important. I mean, I love dual meets — it's just you're not winning the nationals in a dual meet," Sanderson said. "But that's where most of your alumni and fans are watching, at least in person. Plus it's head-to-head with your rival schools in the conference or around the country, so dual meets are really important."

It's a message and a sentiment Sanderson expressed while leading the Cyclones as well.

One of Sanderson's former wrestlers at Iowa State is current Wisconsin associate head coach and former Big 12 and NCAA champion Jon Reader, who said some of his favorite duals wrestling for Sanderson came when competing in "hostile environments."

"One of the most fun times was going into Stillwater, or even going into Norman back when Oklahoma was pretty tough," Reader told the Collegian. "Cael used to have us go down there, we would do a weekend out of it, and our teams were never outside of the top three, so we were bringing in really good teams."

"At the time, both of those teams were tough, so it was a really hostile environment and was just a fun trip for us to head down there, get a lot of team camaraderie and go in there and scrap."

Reader also thoroughly enjoyed the times when Iowa State would take on longtime fierce rival Iowa, with the dual alternating between Ames and Iowa City every year.

"We had 10,000-plus fans every single dual meet, that's for sure," Reader said. "It seemed like every year I was in college, it would go back and forth between we would host one year and the next year it would be in Iowa, and I felt like every single year, whatever location was hosting, they set the attendance record, and that's the kind of environment we were wrestling in."

Besides wrestling in that atmosphere and the allure and fanfare that came from the yearly tradition, Reader said it's also reinforced something now that he's a coach — the importance of dual meets.

"No doubt about it, fans, look forward to those big dual meets and have a lot of loyalty to their teams," Reader said.

"It's on us as coaches to make sure those moments happen and to put the best guys out there, and to really grow the sport since fans want to see those big-time matches."

Visit collegian.psu.edu to read the full story.



Courtesy of Michigan Athletics

Penn State redshirt freshman Carter Starocci (left) wrestles Michigan's Logan Massa during Penn State's dual meet against the Wolverines on Feb. 14 as Penn State won 18-13.

Starocci eager to cement himself among sport's best

By Ben Serfass
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State's Carter Starocci may have just defeated the No. 2 ranked wrestler in the nation at the 174 lb. weight class, but the red-shirt freshman isn't aiming for anything less than its top spot.

After defeating then-No. 2 ranked Logan Massa of Michigan, Starocci was named the Big Ten Wrestler of the Week and was ranked the No. 5 wrestler at 174 Tuesday.

Starocci's most recent win served as a coming out party to the college wrestling world for the underclassman, but Cael Sanderson was already more than aware of the talent that Starocci possesses and saw that translate into a win Sunday.

"Carter wrestled great," Sanderson said at his weekly media availability. "He wrestled one of the best kids in the country at not just the collegiate level, but the senior level as well."

According to Sanderson, though, that victory should not have come as a shock.

"I don't think anyone in our program was really surprised," Sanderson said. "We know just how good Carter is and how hard

he works, but you still have to go out there and do it."

Starocci currently boasts a record of 4-1 with his lone loss coming at the hands of Indiana's Donnell Washington in the first dual meet of his collegiate career.

The Erie, Pennsylvania, native has used that loss as a learning experience and has remained confident throughout the unusual season.

"I know I'm the best guy out there, so I have to go out there and prove it," Starocci said. "I have to do my thing and have fun with it."

In addition to his own hard work and confident mindset, Starocci has also since received advice from Mark Hall, a former teammate of his and one of the more successful wrestlers the blue and white has produced in recent years.

"He reached out to me and he let me know that it's all good," Starocci said. "It's one match and that doesn't define who we are as human beings."

Although the pair are no longer teammates, the younger Starocci has still leaned on the elder Hall for guidance as his season has progressed.

"I'm really close to Mark, we got better every single day last year together, and we still do even

though we're not on the same team anymore," Starocci said. "He's the guy that is always in my corner and I'm always in his corner."

"I feel like that's important to have."

Starocci, who is always eager to compete on the mat, has witnessed several scheduled meets get postponed this season. Still, he understands the situation at hand and has made the most of it.

From his point of view, the best alternative available is within his own team.

"I'm aware of the situation," Starocci said. "It's nothing new honestly, because we go out there to compete against other teams, but we have the best guys in our room. When I want to compete, I just go to practice and I compete there."

Regardless of winning or losing though, Starocci's focus lies entirely on perfecting his craft and cementing himself as the top wrestler in the 174 lb. weight class.

"I'm never satisfied," Starocci said. "I'm not going after anybody. Just line them up and I'll take them out."

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MY VIEW | ANDREW PORTERFIELD

Hogan's return huge for lacrosse

A little over four years ago, New England Patriots wideout Chris Hogan made history in a pivotal AFC Championship



Porterfield

matchup with the Pittsburgh Steelers. With 66,829 fans looking on within the confines of Gillette Stadium, the veteran receiver turned in a playoff franchise record 180 receiving yards to go along with two touchdown grabs.

His performance helped catapult Bill Belichick's club to another Super Bowl, and the Penn State alum won his first championship ring a couple of weeks after his historic outing against the Steelers.

Hogan officially reached the top of the sporting world by donning shoulder pads and sticky gloves.

But now he'll trade those out for a stick and a pair of elbow pads in a startup lacrosse league.

Hogan announced Saturday his intention to enter his name into the Premier Lacrosse League Entry Draft, a now 3-year-old league that is the only outdoor professional lacrosse league in North America.

Even before the move was made public, Hogan's foot already seemed halfway out of the door in the NFL.

In his injury-riddled 2020 campaign with the New York Jets, Hogan played in just five games and finished with just one performance of 50-plus receiving yards.

Instead of calling it quits altogether on athletic competition, the former Penn State men's lacrosse midfielder will now look to make a lasting impact in the upstart PLL.

A three-year starter for the blue and white's lacrosse program from 2007-2010, Hogan hasn't played organized, competitive lacrosse in over a decade.

But if we're being honest, that doesn't matter in the slightest.

For a young professional league that's competing with the likes of the NBA and NHL postseasons, it isn't always about bringing in the young

stars of the sport. Instead, it's about advertising names that casual sports fans are familiar with.

Go to a random sports bar in Philadelphia and ask anyone there "Hey, did you watch the PLL bubble last summer?"

"What's the PLL?"

But ask the same people about Chris Hogan, and they'll likely remember his days with the Patriots or — at the very least — recognize his name.

Hogan boasts around 406,000 followers on Instagram, already more than PLL founder and current Atlas LC midfielder Paul Rabil's 383,000 and the league's account itself with 236,000.

In other words, his following is larger than any other player in the league — and he hasn't even taken the field yet.

Having that presence isn't only important for the PLL, but also for Hogan himself.

Taking finances out of the picture, would you rather ride the pine for a struggling NFL team, or become one of the largest — if not the largest — name in an up-and-coming sport that continues to grow each season?

The answer is simple for me, and it seems as though it was also simple for the man who made that decision.

But let's not pretend Hogan is a savior for the PLL, because it doesn't need saving.

The league's viewership of the 2020 PLL Championship grew 23% from the same event just a year prior, and its marketing team continues to dominate social media on timelines of lacrosse fans and non-lacrosse fans alike.

Yet even if the league is in good shape without the former NFL wide receiver, it makes total sense for both parties to join together and give it a try.

Who knows if it'll actually work out, but being able to drastically widen your audience with the addition of one player has to be encouraging for Rabil's league as it continues to find its place in the realm of popular sports leagues.

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