

DAILY COLLEGIAN



Graphic by Ben McClary and Carson Schultz

Penn State community reacts to Milo Yiannopoulos visit

By Jeremiah Hassel  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

“Pray the Gay Away.”

These words, plastered on large posters above the face of British alt-right political commentator Milo Yiannopoulos, greeted visitors at Penn State’s HUB-Robeson Center on Oct. 25

Featured in prominent display cases in the HUB, tacked to poster boards, announcement forums and walls throughout campus buildings, and shared and reshared across students’ social media platforms, the posters advertise the Wednesday event by Uncensored America, one of Penn State’s student-run organizations.

When Penn State’s Queer and Trans People of Color Secretary Kyra Gines saw the posters for the first time, she said she thought the event was a performance or a satirical act with theatrically homophobic characters.

But Gines (junior-Spanish) said her attitude quickly changed when she verified the news and confirmed that Yiannopolous was scheduled to visit campus.

All at once, Gines said her tentative amusement was extinguished, replaced by concern for the safety of the QTPOC community amid “what’s going to inevitably be violence and discomfort across campus.”

Yiannopoulos rose to fame with statements in his presentations and writings attacking political correctness, feminism, LGBTQ rights, racial equality and social justice, according to the Anti-Defamation League.

Penn State QTPOC President Celeste Good shared Gines’ concerns and said she believes members of Uncensored America were fully aware of the potential consequences of inviting Yiannopoulos to campus.

“They knew that bringing him here would cause an uproar,” Good (senior-women’s studies) said. “Their intention with this event is to see chaos and to see violence and to have a big crowd.

They want a show, and they want this to get violent, and they want to see this turn into carnage.”

Good said her first action was to reach out to members of Penn State administration and the university’s Jeffrey A. Conrad Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity to see what actions her and her organization could take against the event with the ultimate goal of having it canceled.

However, the university told Good there was nothing it could do to stop the event, citing the U.S. Constitution’s First Amendment.

Penn State released a statement on Oct. 25 denouncing Yiannopoulos’ visit and citing the same reasoning it supplied Good for why the event cannot be canceled.

According to Penn State Vice President and General Counsel Steve Dunham, Vice President for Student Affairs Damon Sims, and Vice Provost for Educational Equity Marcus Whitehurst — the authors of the statement — the university “lacks the right” to take action against the event.

“As a public university, we are fundamentally and unalterably obligated under the U.S. Constitution’s First Amendment to protect various expressive rights, even for those whose viewpoints offend our basic institutional values,” Dunham, Sims and Whitehurst wrote. “To do so otherwise not only violates the Constitution but would undermine the basic freedom each of us shares to generally think and express ourselves as we wish.”

Gines said the university’s response was “disappointing,” but she’s “not surprised.”

“It’s exactly what I expect from this institution,” Gines said. “It’s not that Penn State is lacking people within the institution to tell it that this is wrong — it’s that the system, in this case, worked to allow the person to come to campus.”

And “the system,” Gines said, isn’t U.S. law but members of Penn State’s administration who

“took a very swift step back” when they began “hitting roadblocks” in their attempted mitigation of the outcries against Yiannopoulos. She said “they weren’t willing to push” and tried harder to find loopholes in the law, which would allow them to cancel the event.

For Gines, administration’s lack of willingness was indicative of the university’s seemingly indifferent attitude toward the QTPOC community, she said.

“I need the university to think really, really hard about how much [it] cares about us,” Gines said. “An institution as large and powerful as Penn State — I would just like to know that [it] would be willing to fight whatever precedent is in place that’s preventing [it] from protecting us.”

Penn State spokesperson Lisa Powers said in a statement the university’s “adherence to the law is in no way a reflection” of its “commitment to those who may be impacted by the event.”

“These incendiary speakers purposefully spew hate and hostility in an effort to divide communities and cause its members harm,” Powers said in the statement. “It is our hope that our community will show Milo Yiannopoulos that ‘love is louder,’ and that his vile form of attacking others is not welcome.”

An issue Good said she and other QTPOC students have with the university is its unwillingness to take accountability for events that occur under its administrative eye — events like the presentation by Yiannopoulos.

Good called the university’s inaction against Yiannopoulos “hypocrisy.”

“Penn State thrives on calling itself diverse and inclusive and caring about [its] students,” Good said, “but at the same time, [it’s] going to allow someone to say ‘pray the gay away’ and someone who’s known for endorsing pedophilia, someone who’s going to

open a conversion therapy camp in Florida, to this campus to talk.”

QTPOC Vice President Jahnna Marimon said Penn State allowing Yiannopoulos to speak on its campus “was a shock” given all the “groundwork” she said QTPOC individuals — including herself — have done to foster inclusive, comfortable and safe environments for people of color in the LGBTQ community — work she said university officials should have been doing themselves but haven’t.

“It’s very important to hold these spaces for people in an institution that doesn’t hold [them] for us,” Marimon (senior-communication arts and sciences) said.

By allowing Yiannopoulos to come to campus, Marimon said Penn State is indirectly expressing support for Yiannopoulos and his messages in the process.

Visit [collegian.psu.edu](http://collegian.psu.edu) to read the full story.



Jeremiah Hassel/Collegian

An LGBTQ Pride flag waves outside the State College Municipal Building in commemoration of pride month in State College, Pa. on Monday, June 7.

‘We are together:’ Love is Louder

By Catey Ackerman  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Love was loud from the HUB-Robeson Center’s Heritage Hall Wednesday night.



Alina Lebedeva/Collegian

Hil Malatino, assistant professor, speaks at the “Love is Louder” event at HUB-Robeson Center.

Penn State’s Jeffrey A. Conrad Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity hosted “Love is Louder” in response to Uncensored America’s Milo Yiannopoulos “Pray the Gay Away” event hosted in the

Thomas Building simultaneously.

Featuring guest speakers, music, food and activities, the event sought “to inspire love and community” at Penn State, CSGD’s Instagram post said.

Sarabeth Bowmaster, a student staff member at CSGD, helped organize and plan “Love is Louder,” and said the purpose of the event was to create an environment of support and community.

“We wanted a safe space where we could come together, collaborate, talk and be here for each other and really show community across campus for our faculty, staff, students and community members who needed that tonight,” Bowmaster (junior-women’s gender and sexuality studies and philosophy) said.

Toward the beginning of the event, the line to get into Heritage Hall wrapped around the second floor of the HUB twice, demonstrating Penn State support for “Love is Louder.”

Lauren Cifelli, Bowmaster’s

fellow student staff member at CSGD and planner of the event, said “Love is Louder” was needed within the Penn State community — especially since it served as a response to the Yiannopoulos event.

“I feel like this was the perfect response,” Cifelli (junior-advertising) said. “This is a message. It’s this big, grander message of solidarity — bigger than anything we could’ve gotten out of a protest or anything else, which I think is beautiful.”

Last week, Penn State’s University Park Undergraduate Association canceled its typical Wednesday night General Assembly meeting in advance to encourage members to “unite and showcase [its] support for the communities [UPUA is] sworn to represent” at “Love is Louder.”

Many UPUA members were in attendance, including Cade Miller and Emily Zimbler.

“We’ve been advocating in support of tonight’s event — not

only to be an ally but to also show support from the student government,” Miller (sophomore-broadcast journalism) said. “It shows that every student belongs here. We’re showing that community is one of our core values, and I think this is a really great way to do that and to make sure that people know they’re safe here.”

Zimbler (senior-public relations) reiterated UPUA’s decision to cancel its meeting to attend the “Love is Louder” event and said she was there to support the LGBTQ community.

“We all just came together, and we came out and supported because this is what we all believe in, and this is what we think should be happening,” Zimbler (senior-public relations) said. “Love is love — no one should be judged for who they love, and I think that having someone on campus with such evil rhetoric is actually disgusting.”

Visit [collegian.psu.edu](http://collegian.psu.edu) to read the full story.



# Students organize post-game clean up

By Magdalena Nygard  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

When fans leave Beaver Stadium following home football games, many student organizations arrive the next morning to clean up the plethora of food, pom poms and trash strewn around the stands.

Domenic Feola, president of Club Cross Country, cleaned up the stadium after the annual White Out against Auburn.

“We do this every year, so I kind of knew what to look forward to,” Feola (senior-advertising) said.

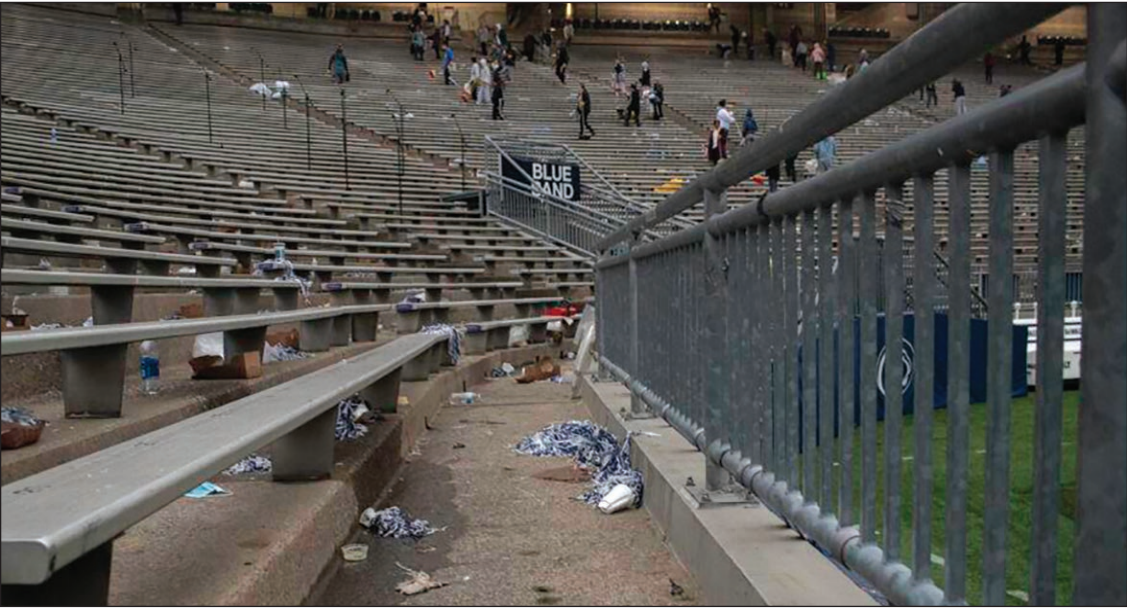
Feola said the club arrived at the stadium at 6:45 a.m. and didn’t finish until around 12:30 p.m., which he said was a “pretty average time” for the White Out.

Clubs participating in the cleanup get paid based on how many sections they clean. Club Cross Country, which has around 200 people, was assigned three-fourths of the stadium — everything except the student section.

“There were a few women who worked there who told us what to do and gave us our supplies like brooms and gloves,” Bradley Scanlon, a member of the club, said.

Scanlon (junior-biomedical engineering) said club members started by sweeping all of the trash in each row of seats to the aisles.

“The strategy basically is to sweep all the big stuff into the middle of the stands so it’s all piled up in the stairs — and then



Chloe Trieff/Collegian

Many student organizations send members to clean up Beaver Stadium after Penn State home games. “It was a tedious process, and took a very long time, but it was for a good cause,” Liam Wolson said.

come through and bag it all,” Feola said.

Liam Wolson helped clean up the student section after the Villanova game with the Club Track and Field team.

Wolson (freshman-division of undergraduate studies) said he was one of around 40 members of his club cleaning up.

“It was a tedious process, and it took a very long time, but it was for a good cause,” Wolson said.

Shoshana Levin cleaned up after both the White Out, as well as the Indiana game, and said the White Out cleanup process was “actually horrible.”

“There was trash literally everywhere,” Levin (freshman-psychology) said. “People are very messy.”

She said the worst part about the cleanup was how gross the process was. Levin said it was difficult to clean the spilled drinks and chicken that spectators left behind.

Veronica Matos joined Club Women’s Water Polo to clean up after the Illinois game, where she helped clean a section with 25 other people.

After the first sweep of trash gathering, Matos (freshman-international politics) said her

group had to complete a second sweep due to the standards of the cleanup supervisors.

“They’re pretty strict,” Matos said. “Someone comes in and checks [the section], and then you have to go over it again or not.”

When they first arrived at the stadium in the morning, a supervisor divided Matos and her club into groups of five and assigned each group a section.

Ellen Lippy, a member of the Student Nurses’ Association at Penn State, agreed with Matos’ observation of the supervisors’ strictness.

“She walked around with a bag, picking up the tiniest pieces of paper that we had missed,” Lippy (freshman-nursing) said.

Lippy also agreed a huge part of the cleanup was picking up food. Since the game was cold and rainy, hot chocolate souvenir mugs left behind made for a lot of spills.

“There was stuff spilled everywhere, so we were trying to broom up stuff, but it was getting [dragged] through spilled hot chocolate,” Lippy said.

Samantha Wayne, also a SNAPS member, said the worst thing to clean up was the food.

“You had to scrape the food off the ground,” Wayne (freshman nursing) said. “And it rained, so that didn’t help.”

Overall, Wayne said she thought “it was a good experience.”

Lorelei Tsumita is also a part of Club Women’s Water Polo and said she cleaned sections WE through WJ in the stadium.

“There was so much garbage — I couldn’t believe it,” Tsumita (junior-telecommunications and media industries) said.

Tsumita said if she had to do it again, she wishes cleanup would start later in the day as opposed to in the morning.

“I was absolutely shocked,” Tsumita said. “I thought there’d be a little bit of trash, but it was a lot.”

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# Club sports compete again

By Avi Bewtra  
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

After more than a year with no competitions, Penn State’s club sports began competing in person again this fall semester.

Like all other club sports, Women’s club soccer was not allowed to gather in person for the entirety of last year — including any practices, training or games.

“It’s just great to be back,” Natalia Reed, primary THON chair and coach for Women’s Club Soccer, said.

The women’s soccer team, after the completion of its regular season, won the National Intramural and Recreational Sports Association Region 1 Championship this weekend.

“We’ve had an almost undefeated season with one tie against Pitt,” Reed (senior-psychology and rehabilitation and human services) said. “I’m just excited as a senior to play my last season.”

Club roller hockey is getting ready for its season after a year of no practice as a team because there was no access to the Intramural Building last year amid the pandemic.

“It’s not like we can just go out and play since we needed the IM building, so we were all locked down,” Dylan Meza, a member of the team, said.

As part of the preseason, the team was “outside Pittsburgh this weekend and had a tournament — games and everything,” Meza (junior-computer science) said.

“Getting back out there and being able to play has been the

best part,” Meza said.

Club cross country recently completed its regular fall season and will compete in its final race next weekend — the National Intercollegiate Running Club Association Cross Country National Championship.

For a year, the club was unable to run together in person, so members would practice by running in groups outside of the official club.

“Groups of us would schedule unofficial runs together... completely separated from Club XC just to get together and, you know, run — since we’re all good friends,” Daniel Hader said.

Everything is back to normal “for the most part,” Hader (junior-biobehavioral health) said of this fall.

But a remaining obstacle for the team is the variance in coronavirus vaccination policies between different competitions, according to Hader.

“When we go to away meets at some of the other schools — like at Princeton... all members who were racing had to have proof of vaccination with them,” Hader said. “There have been certain competitions where those who are unvaccinated haven’t been able to compete.”

Despite this, the team is back to its typical schedule of running every day, Monday through Friday, and hosting pasta parties before its meets.

“Oh, it’s awesome being back,” Hader said.

Club quidditch is “gearing up to go” to its regional competition

this Friday, according to Catherine Callison, vice president of the club.

Quidditch is a sport originally from the fictional Harry Potter universe, according to the club’s OrgCentral website description.

“It’s a little bit of soccer, it’s a little bit of dodgeball, it’s a little bit of handball, it’s a little bit of rugby. It’s everything rolled into one,” Callison (senior-criminology) said.

During the lockdown, the team kept in touch over Zoom, holding virtual movie nights and birthday parties. This fall, after a year without meeting, practicing or competing in person, the team has been able to complete its regular fall season.

It’s about “making sure we are up to date with what’s going on,” Callison said.

According to Callison, club quidditch’s biggest obstacle has been remaining mindful of proper coronavirus precaution, documentation and regulation.

The club has to adhere to not only Penn State guidelines but the policies of U.S. Quidditch and each state it competes in.

“I’m ecstatic,” Callison said. “I missed this sport so badly.”

Club crew members told the same story — no practices, no training and no competitions until this fall. However, the club hosted its own home race on Oct. 9 titled the Nittany Lion Chase and is preparing to travel to another regatta in a week.

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Lindsey Shuey/Collegian file photo

Alex Berger, the owner of @randompeopleofpsu, accumulated over a million views and thousands of followers from his sixth floor window.

## @randompeopleofpsu talks TikTok

By James Engel  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

From his sixth floor window in Beaver Hall, Alex Berger crafted 20 brief storylines in the form of TikToks that would amass his account over 58,200 followers and 1,600,000 views over the course of the fall semester.

His account @randompeopleofpsu became somewhat of a phenomenon around campus, spawning similar accounts at other universities and turning heads toward his hall as students walked across McKean Road between South and Pollock Residence Halls.

Berger (freshman-political science) said he had the idea, created his new account and posted his first video on Sept. 2. It features two characters, Ricky and Jonathan, who walk

along the sidewalk discussing how to enter a Penn State fraternity.

“I kind of just posted it, then out of nowhere, it just went absolutely nuts,” Berger said.

After the success of his first post, which has been viewed nearly 200,000 times, Berger continued with his simple but effective strategy — find someone walking by, film them acting natural, craft a funny background story for them, throw “Jail” by Kanye West in the background and call it a day.

Though Berger said the captions can be somewhat “raunchy,” he also said he didn’t wish to offend anyone with the account’s humor. He said he tried to mix up his targets and vary the stories he told.

Visit [collegian.psu.edu](http://collegian.psu.edu) to read the full story.

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# Penn Staters react to THON 2022

By Danny Gotwals  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State THON's will return to an in-person format this Feb. 18-20 for its 50th anniversary. After it was held virtually this past spring due to the pandemic, some students are anticipating the event, despite some concerns.

The "Spark Endless Light"-themed weekend will take place in the Bryce Jordan Center, with specific coronavirus vaccination requirements and protocols after "careful consideration" from Penn State health experts, Penn State Health Children's Hospital and university leadership.

Becca Lefkowitz has participated in THON through The Singing Lions since her freshman year.

Lefkowitz (senior-psychology) said she spent 34 hours in the stands at THON her freshman year because she was "enamored" by it.

Her sophomore and junior years, Lefkowitz said she was the primary THON chair for The Singing Lions, which meant she was in charge of planning THON weekend 2021 for her organization when it "went virtual."

Lefkowitz said she is confident THON's executive committee will conduct a "safe and really exciting" THON.

"I think we'll be able to combine a lot of the virtual aspects they created last year into this one so that people at home or people across the country or the world can see what THON is," Lefkowitz said.

But, Lefkowitz expressed sadness at this being her last year of THON.

"It's such a special thing we get to do as Penn Staters, and we get to support these families," Lefkowitz said.

Ciara Decker said she anticipates going to THON in person for the first time this year — rather than watching the livestream. "It definitely seems like something that's fun and unites the whole university," Decker (sophomore-marketing) said.

Decker also said she's excited to become more involved in the organization moving forward.

As a freshman, Nathan Nguyen said THON "sounds interesting," but he said he doesn't think he would be able "to hold out for 46 hours of dancing."

Nguyen (freshman-mechanical engineering) said he's still planning to attend the event for some parts. He said he agrees with THON's vaccination requirement for dancers because it would be easier to spread the coronavirus otherwise.

Within the BJC, all Penn State students and staff, including all registered dancers, all THON directors, captains and committee members, all student and staff press, all student and staff performers, and all students and staff on a THON Weekend pass list will be required to provide proof of vaccination to access the floor or mezzanine of the event, THON said.

"If people weren't vaccinated, I wouldn't be dancing either," Nguyen said.

Nguyen said he also agrees with the lack of a vaccination requirement for attendees.

According to THON's release, families, spectators and Penn State students and staff — if not accessing the floor or mezzanine — are not required to be vaccinated but are required to wear masks, regardless of vaccination status.

Jane Womble said she supports THON's vaccination mandate for all those on the floor, as well as the mask mandate for all attendees, "especially if kids are there — who have cancer and are immunocompromised."

Womble (sophomore-division of undergraduate studies) said these children should have "an enjoyable experience without putting them at risk."

Olivia Rossa said she disagrees with the lack of a vaccination requirement for attendees because it doesn't "make that much sense."

"If you think about it, that's how football games are," Rossa (sophomore-microbiology) said. "You're in that giant crowd, there's no masks, you don't have to be vaccinated or anything — I guess that just seems to be the way they're doing things."

Unvaccinated individuals should have to watch the event virtually, Rossa said, and she said she hopes to get involved in THON in the future.

Ruth Carrillo said she will not attend THON and "finds it odd" that the vaccination mandate is only for people on the floor and mezzanine levels.



Lily LaRegina/Collegian

**A member of Phi Kappa Psi** raises up the Four Diamonds sign from the stands of the Bryce Jordan Center during Penn State THON.

Carrillo (sophomore-biology) said she believes students spread the "PSU Flu" at football games, which would be similar to what could happen at THON.

"Why would you expect that to not happen?" Carrillo said.

However, Carrillo also said she's glad the event is happening overall.

But, Brittany Loken said THON's coronavirus restrictions for the BJC floor are "respectable."

"Those who choose to not get vaccinated have to understand that there are restrictions — and it's for the best," Loken (freshman-architectural engineering) said.

Yet, Loken said she is looking forward to attending THON because she has not experienced the event before.

After the announcement was made that the event will be held in person, Hannah Hogan, said she is excited for THON 2022.

"I look forward to the opportunity to be able to hold it in person," Hogan (junior-mechanical engineering) said. "I know that it's a big part of Penn State, and I look forward to the opportunity to see it."

Hogan said she would "most likely" attend THON — schedule permitting.

THON's new coronavirus

mitigation protocols provide "a hopeful look" for the dance marathon to remain in person, Hogan said.

Hogan said she trusts the university to protect THON participants from the coronavirus, and she said the organization should continue to "monitor what infection rates are on campus."

THON said more comprehensive safety plans for THON Weekend will be announced this January, and it is prepared to "pivot to an online only event should conditions require a change" — while continuously monitoring and consulting with university leadership and PSHCH professionals.

Irewamiri Odewade, who has not had a chance to attend THON after transferring from a commonwealth campus, said THON seems "overwhelming but in a good way" from videos she's watched.

"The fact that they have so many organizations, and that it's solely student-run, is actually mind-blowing," Odewade (junior-philosophy) said.

Odewade said she would not dance in THON because she "couldn't imagine" how students do that. It "takes dedication," she said.

She will "strive to attend all the days," though, during THON in February.

"I really don't want to miss a day," Odewade said. "It's too great to not miss a day."

Additionally, Odewade said she believes the high vaccination rates on campus — combined with masking requirements for those in attendance at THON — is enough to contain the spread of the coronavirus.

As of Tuesday, 88.7% of students and 83.2% of employees at Penn State's University Park campus are fully vaccinated.

Odewade said getting as many people vaccinated as possible is the "first step" to having a safer THON.

"If people want to make this happen, people have to go through steps to actually make it successful," Odewade said.

Brett Dosssee said he hopes to attend THON because of how everyone talks about it.

Dosssee (freshman-kinesiology) said he agrees with THON's coronavirus policies, and he said he believes those who are not on the floor don't need to be vaccinated.

"Anybody in the stands — I guess it's up to them," Dosssee said. "They know nobody is being forced to be vaccinated."

Tommy Doughty said he's excited for THON this year because "it's a great cause."

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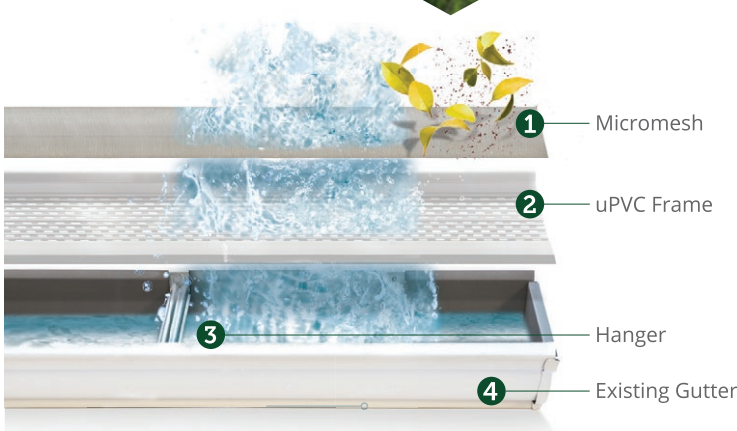
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# Alert system needs change

After receiving an alert of a dangerous person near 152 N. Atherton St. — the Fulington bus station — via University Park Alert on Sunday, State College was washed over with a wave of anxiety.

The initial alert came at 3:09 p.m. and stated “Seek shelter. Secure doors. Be Silent. Be Still. Authorities responding.” The next message came at 3:58 p.m., saying there was an armed robbery suspect who was still at large and advised students to avoid the aforementioned street.

The final alert came at 5:28 p.m. when the “all-clear” was given, and there was no threat to the university community at that point.

However, tensions around State College were still high as rumors spread via text of more robberies and break-ins occurring throughout the rest of the day. There was also misinformation spread regarding gunfire located at the HUB-Robeson Center.

Later in the day, the State College Police Department Tweeted a press release regarding the details of the armed robbery and said the rumors going around were “not accurate.”

The handling of this situation in regard to the PSUAlert system was poor as somehow it

## OUR VIEW

### Penn State must be more transparent with messages, alerts caused more harm than good

managed to use strong verbiage while also remaining vague and murky. The minute the words “dangerous person” were read by countless students, the sense of fear built in. Lt. Chad Hamilton said the SCPD believes the nature of the initial alert caused a sense of “mass hysteria.”

While these alerts are essential, Penn State must be more definite with its information. It doesn’t need to offer paragraphs but simply referring to the issue as a “dangerous person” will lead to people thinking the worst.

With active shooter drills becoming a staple of high school education in the 21st century, a “dangerous person” is viewed as a possible threat to the livelihood of many students.

The panic on campus instilled a sense of paranoia where people most likely heard or saw things that are relatively normal and began to assume the worst. This eventually led to an influx of calls

to the SCPD from students and parents alike.

It’s understandable as students shouldn’t be blamed for spreading rumors when the only information present was so alarming, yet so imprecise, leading to a game of telephone.

To make sure the university is providing ample and consistent information, it would be in its best interest to create a stronger collaboration with the SCPD. Just because the threat was no longer affecting university property, it doesn’t change the fact that campus is well within walking distance to downtown, an area that houses a large portion of students.

In hindsight, it was right to send the all-clear message. However, anytime a message of that magnitude is sent, the alert must be transparent and open as to why it is all-clear. The community had no whereabouts on the suspect. They could’ve still been

on campus as the alert was sent.

At the very least, if rumors are beginning to spread that aren’t true, Penn State should send an alert addressing them and provide the facts. There was a plethora of conflicting information coming out that no one knew what to believe. It takes a short amount of time to send an alert, so why not let the students know no one was harmed?

It’s impossible to read between the lines of a formulaic text message alert, and if SCPD is putting out more information than Penn State via its press releases, then make sure students are aware of where they can find it. By working together, both parties could’ve prevented the mass panic.

Penn State’s official Twitter said the alert was sent out because the armed robbery occurred “adjacent to campus.” If the crime happened a few streets down, no one would’ve ever known until the report from the

police came out.

After the stress students and families went through, the least Penn State could do is address the handling of this situation. It’s understandable it may not be perfect but with the initial threat level unknown, it should’ve pulled out all of the stops to keep the public informed.

This is something that went on for hours despite an “all-clear.” The police scanner still received thousands of listeners well into the night with people tuning in for updates.

Keeping the community safe has been stressed heavily by the university, but it seems as though the community often has to question how strong that message is, especially after what felt like fear mongering.

Perhaps Penn State was fortunate enough to experience an event such as this on a weekend. Imagine what would’ve happened on a day of regular classes with students bustling everywhere on campus and downtown. The chaos would’ve increased tenfold.

Moving forward, Penn State should view this as a teaching point to build a stronger relationship with the SCPD, because the way it alerted the masses did more harm than necessary to students and families.



Comics by Davis Huth

MY VIEW | James Langan

# Mullets are coming back and everyone better be ready

There are things in this world that never die. Benjamin Franklin once said, “in this world, nothing is certain except death and taxes.”

Little did old Benny know he was leaving out one other constant — mullets.

The mullet originated in the 1970s when a French fashion influencer Henri Mollet displayed it. Perhaps preserved by living horcrux Billy Ray Cyrus, the mullet has seen a resurgence as of late. It has never died, rather, just lurked in the shadows for many years.

The mullet signifies confidence and a dual personality of both serious and boisterous. The popular saying “business in the front, party in the back” holds as true today as it did in the days of

the rare Jheri curl mullet mix.

College is the perfect time to adorn the mullet, as it personifies the “business in the front, party in the back,” lifestyle.

The stigma surrounding mullets doesn’t escape those donning the luscious locks in the rear. At its worst, a mullet is a barber’s biggest failure, but at its best, it’s a masterpiece to be revered and a conversation starter like no other.

There are people who will never give in to the mullet’s superiority. To those balding or straight-haired gloom-bringers, mullet heads everywhere can stop, turn around, shake their head and walk away with the knowledge that the only

people who insult the mullet are jealous they cannot grow a good one.

Penn State’s campus is littered with mullets, and the numbers are only growing as those in fear are coming out of the shadows. Every time two mullet heads pass, they share a heartfelt look of solidarity knowing they aren’t fighting alone. It’s important to question why this resurgence is happening. The coronavirus pandemic might be the biggest contributor, as people couldn’t get haircuts for months, and their hair continued to grow larger and longer. With still being trapped inside most days, people had a safe space to practice the hairstyles

James Langan

they never dared to wear before.

There also might be a familial connection. Many mullet heads today are the children of former mullet heads who proudly wore the flow back in the glory days of the 1980s. It’s in their genes, and they cannot deny it.

The mullet wants to come out, as it has been fighting and people are finally giving in.

This is a call to action to support your mullet-wearing friends or strangers you encounter.

They’re fighting the good fight, and with every compliment they get, every smile and every hair flip, they grow stronger and prouder.

It’s more than a haircut — it’s a lifestyle.

**James Langan** is a junior majoring in broadcast journalism and is a columnist for The Daily Collegian. Email him at [jpl6143@psu.edu](mailto:jpl6143@psu.edu) or follow him on Twitter at [@jameslangann](https://twitter.com/jameslangann).



**DAILY COLLEGIAN**

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# 'IT'S A PUNK MOVE'

*Maryland's 2014 handshake refusal continues to fuel rivalry with Penn State football*

By Seth Engle  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

The blood had boiled long before the six captains met at mid-field for the coin toss, enough to keep the confines of Beaver Stadium warm in the brisk, November air.

## FOOTBALL

From left to right stood C.J. Olanyian, Jesse Della Valle and Christian Hackenberg, with backs facing the Penn State sideline.

Across from them stood P.J. Gallo, Sean Davis and Stefon Diggs.

Olanyian, Della Valle and Hackenberg, a part of a program on the tail end of NCAA sanctions caused by the Jerry Sandusky child sex abuse case, were no strangers to heated atmospheres wherever they traveled.

"We couldn't go to a bowl game, but I can tell you teams couldn't wait to knock off Penn State," Della Valle told The Daily Collegian. "They wanted to kick Penn State when Penn State was down a little bit."

On Nov. 1, 2014, Gallo, Davis and Diggs stood in their own uncharted territory, preparing to face off against a new in-conference opponent, Penn State, for the first time as a member of the Big Ten.

First, there was pregame trash-talk, then there was a standoff at midfield and then a brawl.

But before that, there was a potential rivalry years in the making.

"[Maryland] was trying to make a name for themselves and really start up a rivalry with Penn State given the amount of Maryland guys we had on the team," Della Valle said. "It's kind of a recruiting hotbed for Penn State."

With recruiting aside, the Terrapins — coming off of a 52-7 loss at Wisconsin — had an opportunity to regain momentum with an away win at one of college football's premier locations in Beaver Stadium.

Former Maryland safety William Likely remembered the energy leading up to his team's trip to Happy Valley that weekend.

"There's nothing like beating a team at home and shutting the fans down," Likely told the Collegian. "But that game, there was a little bit more to it."

Likely said getting a win at Penn State "is something you



Courtesy of Justin Thind

**The Nittany Lions extend** a handshake to the Maryland Terrapins during the coin at a game at Beaver Stadium on Nov. 1, 2014. The Terps snubbing Penn State's football team has lived in infamy.

remember," which contributed to the mentality the Terrapins took leading up to kickoff.

"I was just laser focused... ball hawk mode," Likely said. "Anyone that had a blue jersey on was a target for me."

As pregame warmups continued, the disgruntled attitudes from both sides began to show publicly, with both sides exchanging words.

"There was a lot of talking pregame," Likely said. "Once you do all that talking, there isn't that much more to say. We were just ready to play."

Once both teams got a chance to warm up, each side entered their locker room, and that was the last time Beaver Stadium radiated any sense of calm energy that day.

When the players returned from the locker rooms, the six captains — three from each team — met at the 50-yard line.

"When the teams first ran out of the locker rooms, you got the inkling that this was going to be a chippy game," Della Valle said.

Face to face with Davis, Maryland's star safety at the time, Della Valle extended his right hand.

Nothing.

To his right and left, Olanyian, across from Gallo, and Hackenberg, across from Diggs, extended their right hands.

Nothing.

"It was jarring," Della Valle said. "It's not the kind of thing that you see coming."

Within moments, both sidelines cleared. Former Penn State wide-out Geno Lewis, now a member of the Montreal Alouettes of the CFL, was near the center of the scuffle.

Lewis said he'd never seen a handshake refusal before in a game.

"Once they didn't shake our hands, it turned the game up to a whole other level," Lewis told the Collegian. "It brought some hate... like y'all think you're the s---? Y'all think you're the big dogs?"

Following the commotion, the referees issued an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty on the Terrapins, which pushed the ball back 15 yards on their opening kickoff.

With what seemed like a whole game already played that day, the four quarters lived up to the hype instilled prior to kickoff.

"When we got on the field, that was the time we could play between the whistles," Lewis said. "Now I can try to hit somebody as hard as I can. They're gonna try to hit me as hard as they can."

In classic Big Ten fashion, the first half ended in single-digit scoring totals from both Penn State and Maryland.

Contributing to the Nittany Lions' slow start offensively, Likely

came away with a first-quarter interception off of Hackenberg, who was looking for the hands of DaeSean Hamilton.

As the back-and-forth contest continued through all four quarters, Penn State found itself up by two points with just 56 seconds remaining.

Maryland trotted kicker Brad Craddock onto the field, and he hit a 43-yard field goal to put the Terrapins on top 20-19.

Hackenberg and the blue and white couldn't find an answer offensively in the final 50 seconds.

"You shouldn't lose at home," Lewis said. "Unfortunately they got the better of us that day."

In a game with so much emotion, Likely remembered how the nearly dead atmosphere of Beaver Stadium felt to him after the Terrapins were crowned victorious.

"At the end of the game, just seeing the fans all starting to cry, how it was so quiet at the end," Likely said. "That was the best feeling of it all."

The postgame feeling wasn't so sweet for Della Valle, who left the stadium that Saturday as a loser of four straight and the victim of a snubbed handshake.

"I don't have any sort of respect for the guys doing that," Della Valle said. "I think it's a punk move to do something like that. There's enough time to be nasty

and to be brutal between the lines when the whistle blows."

Lewis said 2014's loss made Penn State look at Maryland "differently."

"They shouldn't be coming here, not shaking our hand and then beating us," Lewis said. "That definitely started a foundation of the animosity between the two schools."

Since that season, Maryland and Penn State have each gone very separate ways as programs.

The Nittany Lions ended up going to three New Year's Six bowl games in four years. Meanwhile, the Terrapins have yet to win seven games in a season since 2014.

While much has changed in the last seven and a half years, one thing remains consistent: Della Valle's loathing for the University of Maryland and its football team.

"I've had to avoid drafting Stefon Diggs onto my fantasy team the last couple of years," Della Valle said.

With the exception of 2020's contest, Della Valle has enjoyed watching the blue and white "beat up" on the Terrapins every year since his final college season.

"Any chance I get to see Penn State whoopin' up on Maryland, especially after the handshake debacle, I'm all for it," Della Valle said. "It's in the back of your mind."

In regard to the Nittany Lions' 59-0 victory over Maryland in 2019, Della Valle said he "[wishes] they put up 50 more on them."

While Della Valle certainly hasn't forgotten the lasting impact of Nov. 1, 2014, Likely remembers the game in high spirits.

"At the end of the day, we came out with a win," Likely said. "That's all that matters."

Does he have any remorse having been on the other side of the handshake?

"Hell nah," Likely said.

While the 2014 matchup will live in infamy, the history books speak for themselves.

Penn State has lost only three times against Maryland in 44 meetings.

"[Maryland is] trying to get on the level of Penn State. They're trying to get up here, but they haven't really had the success," Lewis said. "I've realized there are levels to everything, and Penn State is on a different level." "They're like a little brother."

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## Big Ten's Kevin Warren talks diversity

By Joel Neuschwander  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

College sports have long struggled with racial equity in the coaching ranks, and the Big Ten is no exception to this.

Big Ten Commissioner Kevin Warren addressed this topic over Zoom Monday afternoon with student journalists from around the conference.

"I recognize that it's important for me to make sure that I do everything I can to perform at the highest level to provide opportunities for women and people of color in these positions," Warren said.

Nationwide, nearly 80% of Division I head coaches are white — despite the fact that 44% of student-athletes at the level are not.

The disparity extends to sports with a higher percentage of student-athletes of color.

In 2020, 48.5% of FBS football players were Black, but just 14 of

130 head coaches were.

Men's basketball has seen similar issues — Black head coaches made up only 22.7% of all Division I coaches during the 2019-20 season, while Black student-athletes accounted for 53.2% of all players.

Of the 14 current Big Ten football head coaches, only three are Black, and in 2020, 308 of the conference's 358 head coaches across all sports were white.

While the Big Ten lacks diversity on the gridiron, its issues are even more prominent on the hardwood.

From 2006 to 2021, the Big Ten didn't have more than one Black men's basketball head coach in any season — including a three-year period from 2016 to 2019 where it didn't have any.

This offseason, each of the conference's three men's basketball head coaching openings were filled by Black head coaches — Indiana's Mike Woodson, Penn State's Micah Shrewsberry and

Minnesota's Ben Johnson.

"We've got to make sure that we hire the best coaches, but I am pleased, during this last off-season hiring cycle, at the number of [Black] coaches that were hired from a men's standpoint," Warren said.

Warren also cited increased diversity among leadership of Big Ten universities' themselves.

"We have multiple people of color, we have multiple women, who are chancellors or presidents," he said.

Warren, himself, is the Big Ten's first Black commissioner.

"Five individuals since 1895 have held this position. I'm the sixth one, and none of them have looked like me."

Warren also fielded a question addressing whether the lack of diversity in Big Ten coaching has impacted student-athletes' decisions to play in the conference and Power Five conferences as a whole.

Recently, several highly touted recruits have chosen to attend Historically Black Colleges and Universities — including 2020 5-star high school basketball prospect Makur Maker, who elected to play at Howard over UCLA, Kentucky and Kansas.

While HBCUs often have more diverse coaching staffs than schools in other conferences, Warren maintained his stance that the Big Ten has "strong diversity" in its coaching ranks, although he said there is work to be done.

"We all can do better, and we're focused on doing better, which we will," he said.

Visit [collegian.psu.edu](http://collegian.psu.edu) to read the full story.



Caleb Craig/Collegian

**Offensive Coordinator Mike Yurcich** talks to QB Sean Clifford during practice. Yurcich replaced Kirk Ciarrocca after one season.

## Mike Yurcich figures it out

By Max Ralph  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

New Penn State offensive coordinator Mike Yurcich was supposed to be the savior for the Nittany Lions' offense.

## FOOTBALL

After the one-year Kirk Ciarrocca experiment was a failure, Yurcich was brought in with an extensive resume under his belt. However, the 2021 Penn State offense currently sits at 26.5 points per game, while the 2020 group finished the season at 29.78 points per game.

As James Franklin always says, there's a "number of factors" that have gone into the offense's performance this season.

Perhaps chiefly among them, the Nittany Lions haven't really had any cupcake games on their schedule outside of Ball State and Villanova, who are each

top teams in their respective conferences.

In 2019, when Penn State averaged 35.77 points per game, its early season schedule was filled with 79- and 45-point outbursts against Idaho and Buffalo, respectively.

"When you look at analytics and you look at data, you have to be looking at it holistically, and that's part of it as well," Franklin said. "If you played three unranked opponents to open the season — nonconference [games] — and scored 60 points a game on those opponents, those numbers are going to skew your numbers the rest of the year in a positive way."

"So I think you gotta look at it all."

That was far from the case this year, as Franklin's group faced off against three ranked opponents in the first half of the season.

Visit [collegian.psu.edu](http://collegian.psu.edu) to read the full story.



Doug McShooler/AP

**Big Ten Commissioner Kevin Warren** spoke about diversity among coaches in the conference at virtual event Monday.



# ‘WHY NOT ALL CAMPUSES?’

*Employee vaccination mandate fuels discussion across the commonwealth*

By Megan Swift  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State’s fall semester was largely riddled with protests, rallies, open letters and commentary in response to the university’s lack of a coronavirus vaccination mandate — with no policy changes enacted by the institution as a result.

During a virtual town hall meeting on Aug. 3, President Eric Barron announced the university would not mandate vaccinations, though Penn State “is not impartial to them.”

But President Joe Biden’s Sept. 9 executive order requiring vaccinations for all federal employees, contractors and others resulted in eventual compliance.

On Oct. 13, Penn State announced a vaccination requirement for all University Park employees — regardless of if they work under federal contract — by Dec. 8. Employees must provide proof of vaccination unless they have a medical exemption, disability or religious belief accommodation, according to the release.

Penn State employees will face consequences for refusing to get vaccinated, which could be up to and including termination, university spokesperson Wyatt Dubois said Oct. 13.

The decision was “a step in the right direction,” Raymond Najjar, professor of oceanography in the department of meteorology and atmospheric science at Penn State, said, but he was “a bit surprised,” considering Penn State has been “really stubborn” in its pandemic approach.

Najjar, who is a Penn State College of Earth and Mineral Sciences representative for the Penn State University Faculty Senate, said the senate initially voted to approve a coronavirus vaccination mandate for students, faculty and staff prior to the fall semester return during its special meeting May 12.

While the senate supported the position to mandate vaccinations, this decision did not create official university legislation or any other specific policies.

“My feeling is if that approach had been adopted by the university, if we were leaders... in a sense that we know a lot, maybe people would [have been] inclined to follow us,” Najjar said.

What’s more, Najjar said it was “insufficient” and “terrible” commonwealth campuses weren’t included in the Oct. 13 announcement.

“There’s already inequity between University Park and the commonwealth campuses,” Najjar said. “I was not pleased at all with exempting the commonwealth campuses because it’s only going to make the disparities even greater.”

Initially, Dubois said the university was “reviewing how the executive order impacts other campuses and Penn State locations.”

“The executive order is complex, and the university has multiple teams looking at it, taking the time to study what areas of the university are affected,” Dubois said in a statement.

On Oct. 19, Penn State extended the employee vaccine requirement to six of its commonwealth campuses — Altoona, Behrend, Brandywine, DuBois, Fayette

and Harrisburg — after further considering Biden’s executive order.

Then on Monday, the university expanded the requirement even further to include the commonwealth campuses of Berks and Schuylkill.

Though Najjar said he’s pleased to see the requirement extended, “it’s still too little too late.”

“Why not all campuses?” Najjar said via email. “Why split hairs about what exactly determines substantial federal funding? It’s just the right thing to do to require the COVID vaccine for all at Penn State who are not prohibited from... getting it for medical reasons.”

“At University Park alone, Penn State has about 1,000 federal contracts, including those in the Applied Research Laboratory, several different colleges, administrative units and research institutes,” Dubois said in a statement. “Thus, after reviewing the executive order, the university concluded that University Park would be covered by the mandate, so an announcement was made.”

Dubois said Biden’s executive order requires “the entire campus’s employees to be covered unless Penn State can affirmatively determine that no covered contractor employees will come into contact with any other employees” in lobbies, elevators, stairwells, meeting rooms, dining areas and parking garages.

As an assistant professor of chemistry at Penn State Fayette, Julio Palma’s commonwealth campus was one of those added to the employee vaccination requirement.

“If you’re a Penn State University faculty in the main campus, you can have classrooms that are fully vaccinated,” Palma said. “In the commonwealth campuses, you can be a faculty teaching 10, 12 hours a week, and you have almost no chance to have a classroom that is fully vaccinated.”

Penn State Shenango and Penn State DuBois are commonwealth campuses that have two of the lowest vaccination rates, with 55.4% of students and 71.4% of employees fully vaccinated and 57.1% of students and 77.2% of employees fully vaccinated, respectively, as of Tuesday.

Palma, who is one of Penn State Fayette’s two representatives in the Faculty Senate, said he believes the pandemic “exposed” and “sometimes increased” inequities between University Park and Penn State’s commonwealth campuses.

“[The] decision-making process [is] very centered on University Park campus,” Palma said. “We must acknowledge that the policies are not consistent.”

Palma said there’s been a “constant theme” in the Faculty Senate’s requests — the involvement of faculty in Penn State decision-making and overall transparency.

“We are told by the administration that the faculty are part of ‘shared governance,’ but it hardly exists here at Penn State,” Najjar said via email. “Sure, [Penn State lets] us know what [it is] doing occasionally — but after decisions have been made.”

This translated to institutional coronavirus policy, Najjar and Palma alleged. On Aug. 13, the Faculty Senate voted “no



Megan Swift/Collegian

**Professor Raymond Najjar** holds a sign addressed to Penn State President Eric Barron during the Coalition for a Just University’s rally to demand a vaccination mandate on Aug. 27.

confidence” regarding the university’s coronavirus mitigation plans for this fall and encouraged it to reconsider them.

“We hear all the time in many meetings, in many town halls — we hear the phrase ‘Our health and safety of the community is our priority,’” Palma said. “Is it really?”

Najjar said he believes Biden’s executive order intends to make employees, as well as individuals employees interact with, vaccinated so the environment is safer.

“We’re interacting very heavily with students, so it seems that the requirement should extend to them as well,” Najjar said.

The university’s decision applies to graduate and undergraduate students who work on a wage payroll at the university, as well as students supported by graduate assistantships at University Park.

As an already vaccinated student employee at Penn State, Santiago Lopez said he personally “didn’t feel as affected” by the requirement, but he knows “a lot” of individuals oppose coronavirus vaccinations based on personal beliefs.

“I think that this is a problem because for many [employees], the job that they have here at the university is probably one of the few ways in which they can sustain their families,” Lopez (senior-biomedical engineering) said. “They have to find this balance between respecting what they believe... and also balance the fact that they need to work here.”

Lopez, who works as a teaching assistant, said he feels safe on campus due to the university’s indoor mask mandate for students, faculty, staff and visitors — regardless of vaccination status — and even if everyone was unvaccinated and wearing a mask, he said he would still be comfortable.

At the same time, though, Lopez said attempting to make public health decisions at an institution is complicated while “trying to respect people’s autonomy.”

He said he believes students weren’t included in the requirement because those refusing to comply would just drop out.

“For employees, it’s more of a necessity to be here — [a] main source of income — whereas

for the students, it’s more of a decision. They have more room to choose to... leave if they wanted to,” Lopez said. “Not a lot of employees are [going to] stop working because of the vaccine mandate.”

Recently, Penn State facilities have experienced staffing shortages, an issue that’s reflected across the United States as well. The national unemployment rate declined sharply in September from 5.2% to 4.8%, which was the previous data recorded in August 2021, according to a U.S. Department of Labor release.

Though student Jenna Paritee said Penn State’s implementation of the vaccination requirement for employees was advantageous, she said she believes it should be extended to students.

However, Paritee (senior-human development and family studies) said she believes the extension won’t be made due to Barron’s statement regarding university funding.

In an open letter sent to the Penn State community Aug. 12 following backlash aimed toward coronavirus protocol, Barron said the university’s mitigation efforts cover “vaccines, masking and testing” in a way that incites “as little polarization as possible,” as there are widely differing opinions across the nation.

“Regulations across the country clearly reflect state-level political realities,” Barron said in the letter.

“State funding of our university requires a two-thirds vote of the Pennsylvania legislature, meaning that our funding relies on strong bipartisan support.”

Paritee said she personally feels safe on campus because she’s vaccinated, but she said she believes personal choices have been “clouding” safety measures — for example, when people decide to attend class with coughs.

“I think [Penn State’s] getting as close as [it] can without angering the people whose opinions [it] truly [values],” Paritee said of the decision.

Alexander Papandrikos said in his opinion, Penn State still has time to enact a vaccination requirement for students, and “it’s better late than never.”

“I think it’s definitely a step

in the right direction — a huge step, actually,” Papandrikos (sophomore-science) said of the vaccination requirement for employees. “I feel that it’s just the first step in a long step of mandates that are soon to be implemented, so I’m sure at some point they’re [going to] change that mandate to include students as well.”

Papandrikos, of New Jersey, said he went home after two weeks at the beginning of his freshman year and stayed there for the rest of last fall and spring, so it’s been a “weight off [his] chest” to be able to go out and participate in activities on campus this fall.

“Last year was definitely tough... that really put a damper on my freshman year,” Papandrikos said. “Especially now that I’m vaccinated, [it’s] so nice... not having to worry constantly.”

He said the higher vaccination rate among students compared to employees “might be why” Penn State hasn’t yet added students to the requirement.

As of Tuesday, 88.7% of students and 83.2% of employees are fully vaccinated at Penn State’s University Park campus, according to the university’s COVID-19 Dashboard.

“Especially seeing how many other schools are doing it, I think it’s only a matter of time until [Penn State follows] suit,” Papandrikos said.

On Aug. 24, Ohio State became the ninth Big Ten school to mandate vaccinations, following Indiana, Rutgers, Northwestern, Maryland, Illinois, Michigan, Michigan State and Minnesota. However, some of the aforementioned institutions allow individuals to remain unvaccinated if they are tested weekly.

Furthermore, Indiana’s decision to require vaccinations for on-campus students, which was upheld by a federal judge on June 19, was also allowed by the U.S. Supreme Court on Aug. 12.

Student Andrew Devitt said he was “initially surprised” by Penn State’s decision to require employees to be inoculated and said he thought the weekly testing protocol for unvaccinated individuals would be upheld.

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# Penn State furry community speaks up

By Fernanda Lopez  
FOR THE COLLEGIAN



Courtesy of Raivo Breslin

**A furry** stands in the woods. The furry community at Penn State explained its subculture and presence on campus.

community: a fandom where members create an animal character for themselves.

The furry community has an online presence and is known for its interest in anthropomorphic animals.

Art, friendship and inclusivity are the elements that have allowed this subculture to expand.

Despite the popularity and growing furry community on campus, a furry named Cameron said furies maintain their identities and keep their community hidden to protect themselves from potential backlash from other students.

“I believe the furry subculture is misunderstood due to stereotypes and preconceived notions brought on by outdated media,” Cameron (senior-security and risk analysis) said. “Furries in 2021 come from a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences and are a group of awesome people. If people got to know that, I believe it would open people up to the idea of accepting furries.”

The success of this club can be attributed to its secrecy, Cameron said, as the furry fandom tries to keep its community as hate-free as possible.

“Hate is certainly a factor of why the community is secret. Not everyone is open to the idea of furries, and the risk of losing future prospects because of which can be off-putting,” Cameron said. “I believe the anonymity of the furry community is a factor in why it is thriving at Penn State.”

Jack is another member of Penn State’s own furry community. As a furry, Jack (junior-engineering) said he has heard incorrect assumptions about this community.

“The best way to describe the community is a friendly get-together of people who are very commonly interested in one thing, which is anthropomorphic animals,” Jack said. “The best way to describe it is to compare it with anime. There’s usually a hangout of people who just like anime. It’s kind of the same thing, but instead of anime, it’s furries.”

Each furry has a different story of how they found out about the community, but the strong interest toward anthropomorphic animals from a young age is something many Penn State furries said they have in common.

One student, Ezu, said she always drew animals and any sort of non-human creatures.

“Growing up, I read many books that were focused around animals, like ‘Warrior Cats.’ It’s just been an instinct of attachment,” Ezu (sophomore-digital arts) said.

I never really identified as a furry or felt connected to the

term, but I would always draw anthropomorphic animals.”

Ezu said a signature element of the community is the choice of the animal characters. She said in the furry community, this is known as a “fursona,” the anthropomorphic animal of one’s choosing with certain characteristics.

“It’s like whenever you relate to a fictional character, and then you kind of wonder why and then you realize that there’s a lot of things that you and this character share in terms of gifts and flaws,” Ezu said. “It’s an exact replica of yourself in addition [to] the thing you want to be or rather be.”

This subculture has roots that go back for years, as community members mentioned that they have strong bonds with past and present furries at Penn State.

Tazu, a freshman member of the furry community, said alumni of the community on campus still keep in touch.

“We have one [alum who] graduated in the ‘90s — furries started in the ‘70s and ‘80s,” Tazu (freshman-aerospace engineering) said.

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