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VERSUS

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NEVADA (1-0)
WOLF PACK

(1-0) PENN STATE
NITTANY LIONS



THE BOYS ARE BACK IN BEAVER



GRAPHIC BY ISABELLA VITERI

PHOTOS BY SIENNA PINNEY, SAMANTHA OROPEZA

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QB No. 2 Decided

Franklin on the state of key position battles ahead of Week 1 vs. Nevada

By Lexie Linderman
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State will take the field Saturday for the first time since its crushing defeat in the Orange Bowl, and it's ready to turn the page to what could be a season for the history books.

James Franklin met with the media after practice Wednesday in anticipation of the team's return to Beaver Stadium. There, he addressed the winner of the backup quarterback battle and commented on other position battles.

Here's more of what Franklin had to say.

QB2

After being asked who will sit behind Drew Allar on Saturday, Franklin was very quick to say Ethan Grunkeymeyer.

The redshirt freshman served as the backup for the Nittany Lions' playoff run last season, throwing just two passes, one of which was intercepted. Franklin reiterated the staff's decision was tough, but Grunkeymeyer was just a tad more consistent.

"He just was a little bit more consistent from the beginning of the camp to the end. But same reason why I say for Week 1, because it was close, but for the beginning of camp to the end, just a little bit more consistent," Franklin said.

Franklin emphasized, however, that Grunkeymeyer has won the job for Week 1, not the season, and that the competition was very close.

"We're really kind of excited about both of those guys. Both of these guys have shown some flashes also, as you guys know, the Sunday practices where those guys play, that's going to be important to continue evaluating those guys as the season goes on," Franklin said.

Other position battles

There are a few other position battles across the board that haven't necessarily been squared away, the most open of which being the third running back spot.

Franklin said Corey Smith, Quinton Martin Jr. and Cam Wallace are all in contention. At practice Wednesday, Martin was with Nick Singleton and Kaytron Allen, while Wallace and Smith were with the scout team.

"We're still going to discuss that (position battle). We've had injuries, inconsistency, so I'm not sure how that'll play out," Franklin said. "This

week will play a big part in that, but if I had to guess you're going to see, if they have the opportunity, you're going to see probably all three of them."

Outside of the running back battle, the second defensive tackle spot also has an ongoing competition. Alonzo Ford Jr.'s the frontrunner due to his veteran experience, but he's coming off a long-term injury and redshirt freshman Xavier Gilliam has impressed this offseason.

With the offensive line and safety positions, Franklin said there will be a rotation at each with seven offensive linemen that could be starters and Dejuan Lane and King Mack set to see substantial time at safety.

True freshmen

On Monday, Franklin said defensive end Chaz Coleman and cornerback Daryus Dixson are the two true freshmen with the green light to burn their redshirts.

Franklin was asked about Coleman again on Wednesday, and said the Ohio native will see significant playing time against Nevada. He'll especially see more time, as Zuriah Fisher's absence at practice has his status in question.

"I think he'll play a lot," Franklin said. "I think it wouldn't surprise me if he plays 30 plays or so in this game. I hate to say numbers, because once I do, he's seen that. His mom sees that. And you guys have wrote about it, but that would not surprise me."

Another true freshman that was brought up was Randy Adirika, who has impressed at the defensive tackle spot in his early days with the program.

Franklin said he was planning to talk with the staff about his plans for developing players like Adirika in their next meeting, and that he could see the true freshman becoming a key rotational piece as Penn State gets deeper into the season.

"Randy's just very, very powerful. He's a very smart football player," Franklin said. "He's one of these guys that I could really see, you know, play a little bit in the first couple weeks, if we get the opportunity to, and then maybe you don't see him for a little bit, and then I could really see him being a guy that late in the season and postseason is a big part of the rotation."

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Joe Klein/Collegian
James Franklin speaks to the press on Wednesday, Aug. 27, 2025 at Holuba Hall in University Park, Pa.

All-America love

By Will Horstman
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

The Sporting News and Walter Camp.

More Nittany Lions have landed on a preseason All-America squad.

The Associated Press released its preseason All-America team Monday, which included running back Nick Singleton, left guard Vega Ioane and defensive tackle Zane Durant on the first team. Running back Kaytron Allen made the second team as the all-purpose player.

Durant, Ioane and Singleton were also recently named

preseason All-Americans by

honorable mention last year after accumulating 42 tackles, 11 tackles for loss and three sacks. The Bednarik Award, Lombardi Award, Nagurski Trophy and Outland Trophy have all included Durant on their preseason watch lists.

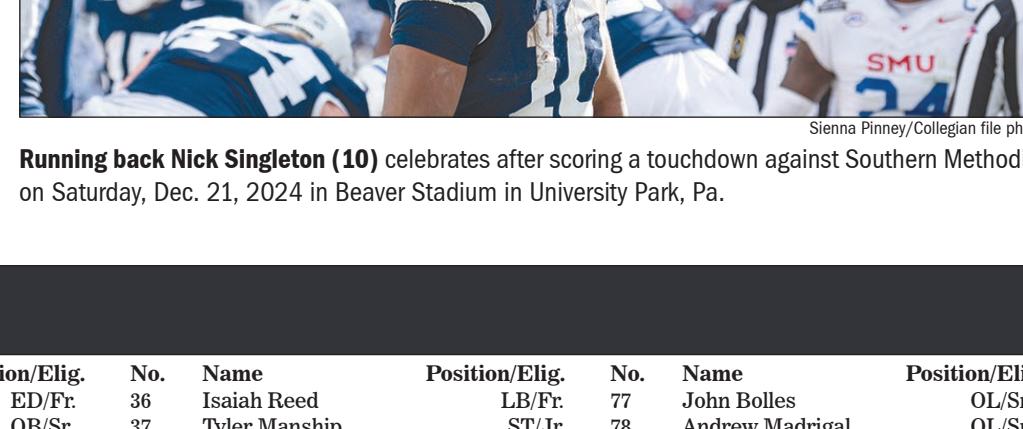
Singleton rushed for 1,099 yards last season, becoming an All-Big Ten honorable mention. He's been placed on preseason watch lists for the Doak Walker Award, Maxwell Award and Walter Camp Award.

Ioane started all 16 games at left guard in 2024, receiving All-Big Ten second-team honors. He's been tabbed to the Lombardi Award, Outland Trophy and Polynesian Player of the Year preseason watch lists as well.

Durant was an All-Big Ten

Allen had 1,261 scrimmage yards with 10 touchdowns last season, propelling him to an All-Big Ten honorable mention. He's also on the Doak Walker Award and Maxwell Award preseason watch lists.

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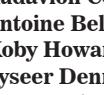


Sienna Pinney/Collegian file photo
Running back Nick Singleton (10) celebrates after scoring a touchdown against Southern Methodist on Saturday, Dec. 21, 2024 in Beaver Stadium in University Park, Pa.



NEVADA WOLF PACK

No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.
0	Nathaneal Floyd	WR/Sr.	13	Nehemiah Burleson	ED/Fr.	36	Isaiah Reed	LB/Fr.	77	John Bolles	OL/Sr.
0	Nakian Jackson	LB/Jr.	13	Chubba Purdy	QB/Sr.	37	Tyler Manship	ST/Jr.	78	Andrew Madrigal	OL/Sr.
1	Jordan Brown	WR/Sr.	14	Gerick Robinson	WR/Sr.	39	Bailey Ettridge	P/Fr.	79	Alaima Morton	OL/Fr.
1	AJ Odums	CB/Sr.	14	DJ Warnell	DB/Sr.	40	Cian Stack	LS/Fr.	80	Johnathan Correa	DL/So.
2	EJ Smith	LB/Jr.	15	Kola Babalola	WR/Jr.	42	Colson Kermode	LB/Fr.	80	Mack Kump	WR/Fr.
2	Herschel Turner	RB/So.	15	Bishop Turner	S/So.	43	Nelson Ropati	DL/Sr.	81	Trace Estes	WR/Fr.
3	Charles Brown	WR/So.	16	DJ Asiasi	TE/Fr.	44	Austin Harnetiaux	LB/Jr.	82	Jayden O'Rourke	TE/Jr.
3	Kameron Brown	DL/Fr.	17	Zaviern Abercrombie	CB/Br.	45	Chris Smalley	ED/Sr.	83	Carter Eck	TE/Fr.
4	Carter Jackson	LB/Sr.	18	Marcus Bellon	WR/Sr.	46	Colin Combs	LB/Br.	85	Jett Carpenter	TE/Sr.
4	Edward Rhambo	DB/Jr.	18	Aiden Walker	DB/Br.	47	Luke McEndoo	FB/Sr.	86	Zedekiah Anahu-Ambrosio	WR/Fr.
5	Murvin Kenion III	DB/Sr.	19	Sam Cook	LB/Sr.	50	Zaiden Wallace	DL/Fr.	88	Mason Johnson	WR/Fr.
5	Canaan Williams	DB/Sr.	19	Anthony Wolter	QB/Br.	52	Trenton Scott	OL/Sr.	88	Keegan Perea	ED/Fr.
5	Dakota Thomas	WR/Sr.	20	Caleb Ramseur	RB/Sr.	53	JoJo James	OL/Br.	89	Drew Deese	WR/Fr.
6	Carter Jones	QB/Fr.	22	Dominic Kelley	RB/Br.	54	Josh Grabowski	OL/Sr.	90	Jason Hemphill II	DL/Fr.
6	Cooper Wilson	CB/So.	22	Hayden McDonald	DB/Sr.	55	Jack Foster	OL/Jr.	92	Myles Williams	LB/Sr.
7	Marquis Ashley	WR/Sr.	23	Dorian Hoze	RB/Br.	56	Hadine Diaby	OL/Jr.	96	Tanner Vaughan	DL/Sr.
7	Nahiji Logan	LB/Sr.	23	Tajeon Stallworth	DB/Br.	56	Bryce Echols	DL/So.	97	Keaton Emmett	K/So.
8	Daijon Calimon	WR/Fr.	24	Justin Wyatt Jr.	DB/Br.	57	Andoni Fesenmaier	DL/Jr.	98	David Paine Jr.	DL/Fr.
8	Kasen Kinchen	DB/Sr.	25	Austin Ambush	DB/Sr.	57	Dylan Lopez	OL/Jr.	99	Thomas Witte	DT/Sr.
9	Marshawn Brown	WR/So.	25	Ky Woods	RB/Jr.	58	Ethan Lowell	OL/Br.			
9	Jonathan Maldonado	ED/Jr.	26	Ashton Hayes	WR/So.	64	Jackson Ramsey	OL/Br.			
9	Jack MacKinnon	LB/So.	26	Isaiah Jordan	DB/Br.	66	Henry Sellards	OL/Br.			
10	AJ Bianco	QB/Jr.	28	Joe Birnbaum	RB/Br.	67	RJ Esmom	DL/So.			
10	Logologo Va'a	DL/Jr.	28	Mykel Ford	DB/Br.	68	Mataio Aiono	OL/Br.			
11	Jackson Barton	DB/Br.	29	Chris Champion	ED/Fr.	70	Snoop Leota-Amaama	OL/Jr.			
11	Jace Henry	TE/Sr.	30	Jake Silverman	LB/Br.	72	Jakobus Seth	OL/Jr.			
12	Nate Burleson II	WR/So.	32	Dylan Labarbera	DL/Jr.	73	Tyler Miller	OL/Br.			
12	Bryson Snelling	DB/So.	33	Stone Combs	LB/Jr.	76	Zach Cochnauer	OL/Jr.			



PENN STATE NITTANY LIONS

No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.	No.	Name	Position/Elig.
0	Dominic DeLuca	LB/Sr.	17	Ethan Grunkeymeyer	QB/Br.	38	Jackson Pryts	LB/Jr.	71	Vega Ioane	OL/Jr.
1	Kyron Hudson	WR/Sr.	17	Kenny Woseley Jr.	CB/Br.	38	Winston Yates	LB/So.	72	Nolan Rucci	OL/Sr.
2	Liam Clifford	WR/Sr.	18	Joey Schlaffer	TE/So.	39	Ty Blanding	DT/So.	73	Caleb Brewer	OL/Fr.
2	Audavion Collins	CB/Jr.	18	Max Granville	DE/Br.	40	Jashawn Green	S/Jr.	74	J'ven Williams	OL/So.
3	Antoine Belgrave-Shorter	S/Br.	19	Josiah Brown	WR/Br.	40	Anthony Speca	LB/Br.	75	Matt Detisch	OL/Jr.
3	Koby Howard	WR/Fr.	19	Chaz Coleman	DE/Br.	42	Mason Robinson	DE/So.	76	Mason Carlan	OL/Sr.
4	Tyseer Denmark	WR/Fr.	19	Jack Lambert	QB/So.	43	Dayshaun Burnett	DE/Br.	77	Owen Aliciene	OL/Fr.
4	A.J. Harris	CB/Jr.	20	Mylachi Williams	DE/Br.	44	Jaylen Harvey	DE/Br.	78	Malachi Goodman	OL/Fr.
5	Daryus Dixson	CB/Br.	21	Vaboue Toure	S/Br.	44	Matt Henderson	TE/Br.	79	Donnie Harbour	OL/Fr.
5	Devonte Ross	WR/Sr.	21	Jabree Coleman	RB/Br.	45	Enai White	DT/Jr.	80	Jeff Exinor Jr.	WR/Fr.
6	Zakee Wheatley	S/Sr.	23	Tikey Hayes	RB/Br.	46	Cortez Harris	DE/Br.	81	Donte Nastasi	CB/So.
6	Matt Outten	WR/Fr.	23	Jahmir Joseph	CB/Br.	47	Aidan Probst	DE/Br.			

Drew Allar builds chemistry

By Lexie Linderman
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

When Drew Allar shoved West Virginia linebacker Josiah Trotter with a stiff arm during the Week 1 contest last season, it was evident there was more confidence and mobility exuding from Penn State's starter.

Although he was more of a threat with his legs in 2024, that doesn't mean Allar was physically at his peak. The senior spent the offseason slimming down and getting his body to a weight that'll help him improve every facet of his game.

"His body has changed," James Franklin said Monday. "He's more athletic, he's faster, he's more explosive. He's done that every single year since he's gotten here."

Allar has steadily improved each year he's been playing football, and Franklin's always quick to praise him for that. But now with expectations for the quarterback at a peak, there's no room left for Allar to have any weaknesses.

The senior said he really focused on improving areas he spotted room to grow during spring ball, and Allar feels like he succeeded. But he also gave cred-



Joe Klein/Collegian

Quarterback Drew Allar winds up to throw during Penn State football practice at Holuba Hall

it to the coaching and strength staffs for helping him along the way.

"I knew there were areas that I wanted to improve on, and I was very intentional on improving them," Allar said. "And I think the coaching staff, between the strength staff and our offensive coaches put us in positions to go out and make progress in those areas. So you know, it's not about talking about what I want to get better at. It's going out and doing

it physically and getting a lot of reps."

That same staff, including Franklin, has the utmost confidence that Allar truly has no glaring issues left in his game, but rather just needs to continue getting better in every area. Part of that ask was amplified by the need to build chemistry with new weapons and returners all over the field.

"So whether that is Khalil (Dinkins) and Luke (Reynolds) and

(Andrew Rappleyea), or whether that is the freshman wide outs that we just got on campus, or whether that's the Year 2 guys, or whether that is obviously the transfers at the wide receiver position that we brought in as well, building that chemistry," Franklin said. "All those things I think have been really important."

Allar has familiarity with the tight end room, as Dinkins, Reynolds and Rappleyea are all returners and have caught passes

from Allar before. It's the wide receiver room that has little to no experience being the target of Allar's throws.

Kyron Hudson, Devonte Ross and Trebor Peña all transferred in this offseason, and while they've been working to build chemistry from the second all three stepped on campus, catching passes in-game is much more difficult.

But as veterans, the three wideouts and Allar know that, so they took it upon themselves to prepare as much as possible before Saturday's matchup against Nevada.

"I think, really, the past month and a half, like a week and a half before fall camp, and then throughout fall camp, we've kind of been building into that game mode mindset," Allar said. "We're always talking to each other. They're always asking me questions on routes, what I'm seeing and how they want me to run routes and be with them as well, like what are they thinking on certain routes if they get a certain coverage, so I can anticipate it and throw them to a spot. And I think we've done a great job of that."

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Singleton wants to be 'complete'

By Lyle Alenstein
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Nick Singleton took a handoff from Sean Clifford, exploded through a hole on the right side of the line of scrimmage and didn't look back.

He was off to the races, turning on the jets on his way to a 54-yard touchdown run against Auburn in 2022 during his freshman year. In the 41-12 beatdown of the Tigers, Singleton put everybody on notice of his caliber, totaling 10 carries for 124 rushing yards with a pair of touchdowns.

Singleton took the college football world by storm because of how dynamic he was out of the backfield that day at Jordan-Hare Stadium. Since his electrifying freshman campaign, he's become a staple out of the backfield alongside Kaytron Allen — both are within reach of the program's all-time rushing record this season.

As he heads into his senior year, new running backs coach Stan Drayton wants him to continue being a playmaker with the ball in his hands, emphasizing the need for open-field creativity.

"We had stuff to work on throughout the offseason, so through training camp, spring ball, he's been working on simple drills, making them miss and all that," Singleton said on Zoom Wednesday. "I feel like it's translating to team reps and all that I can see during film. We've been talking about getting better. We just got to keep working on it."

Drayton has a proven track record as a running backs coach. He's developed NFL talents like Ezekiel Elliott, Bijan Robinson, Carlos Hyde and Brian Westbrook. It's a new face for Single-



Sienna Pinney/Collegian file photo

Running back Nick Singleton rushes the ball for a touchdown at the Fiesta Bowl.

ton as his position coach, as he was recruited to Penn State by Ja'Juan Seider and spent three years under his watchful eye.

Now Seider is off to Notre Dame, holding the same role, but Drayton hasn't missed a beat according to Singleton, getting him and the guys in his room prepared for the season ahead.

"I just feel like just being a whole complete back, especially with the make them miss stuff, working on the second level, pressing, working with the backs blocking, doing different blocking techniques and all that," Singleton said. "So coach Drayton has been good. He isn't just working on me. He's working with all running backs too. I feel like we just got better as a unit."

Singleton has been a guy who has been on the quieter side during his time in Happy Valley. He speaks in a low, monotone voice, but is efficient with his words and says it how it is. On the field he's the opposite, letting his game do the talking and frequently shout-

ing in triumph, letting opposing defensive players know he means business.

He's a player that leads by example and carries himself like a veteran, which was evident since he stepped foot on campus as a freshman. Now as a senior, he's taken the leadership up a notch, becoming more of a vocal presence in the room as an elder figure.

"I need to be more vocal with the running backs," Singleton said. "If it's not the standard, I'll talk to them, pull them aside, tell them, 'What's the standard? You need to work on this.' They've been really good. I ain't really have to tell them anything. They've always been locked in."

Singleton was distraught after the 27-24 semifinal loss to Notre Dame in the College Football Playoff. He had his head down when he headed into the locker room. He was visibly frustrated, slamming the door. He wanted to head back to the field before getting pulled back.

That's now in the past. It's full steam ahead for 2025. He is in his fourth year in the program and as a starter. He's got a record to chase, a team to help lead, and for him, hopefully a national championship to cap off his collegiate career.

"We're excited to get out there this Saturday to play a game," Singleton said. "Obviously been amped up ever since last year with the loss — mindset has been really different. We just been more motivated. Obviously it's game week. We're excited about it, so we can't wait for it."

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Previewing Penn State's running back room

By Will Horstman
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

It's straightforward who will lead Penn State's running backs room this season.

Nick Singleton and Kaytron Allen are both back for their senior years, and the Nittany Lions have a bunch of younger players at the position behind them. Throughout fall camp, the leadership of Singleton and Allen was noted by first-year running backs coach Stan Drayton.

Here's how the group will look in 2025.

The top duo

Singleton and Allen both enter Year 4 at Penn State and will see the majority of touches from the position. Both ran for over 1,000 yards last season, and they have a realistic shot to make history in 2025.

Evan Royster holds the Penn State all-time career rushing record with 3,932 yards, which he set in 2010. Singleton needs 1,021 yards to break that mark while Allen requires 1,056 yards.

The duo was given a bunch of preseason honors. Both are on the Doak Walker Award and Maxwell Award watch lists while Singleton is also a part of the watch list for the Walter Camp Award.

All of this recognition highlights the goal they have in place for this season.

"They want to be elite," Drayton said on Aug. 7. "If you're going to be elite, you're never satisfied with what you've done in the past."

You're always trying to take the next step forward, and it was just a matter of them showing them the film and showing them the standard of how they're going to be coached, and them receiving it the right way."

It's well known the type of play-style both backs have. Singleton is a home-run hitter with strength while Allen is a power back who can also break off bigger gains of his own.

Within those tendencies, Drayton mentioned the two always reacted at a "high" level, but now it's "time to anticipate" to reach their goal.

"In order to do that, you got to learn defense," Drayton said Aug. 7. "You got to understand how your formation is going to set a defense or how that defense is going to fit that formation ... It was a huge learning curve of just taking their learning to the next level to be elite."

Contenders for No. 3 spot

The exact depth chart behind Singleton and Allen isn't solidified, but there's a trio of younger backs in the mix for the No. 3 spot in Cam Wallace, Corey Smith and Quinton Martin Jr.

Wallace was the third running back at the beginning of last season, and he had 18 rushes for 63 yards and a score. However, during the Kent State game, Wallace went down with an injury that kept him out the rest of the year.

Now back in action during fall camp, he's shown flashes of his former self.

"He's totally ready to go, but it was a significant injury, so he's still working through some of those things," James Franklin said on Aug. 7. "He starts to look more and more like the Cam we remember every single day. And I'm proud of him. He's handling it all really well."

Smith helped replace Wallace, flashing with a 78-yard scamper against Washington. Martin also spent time as the No. 3 back after Wallace's injury, tallying 32 yards on 13 carries.

The competition has been in full swing in fall camp, and Franklin noted it's wide open for who can win the battle. Regardless of how the depth chart shakes out, this trio gives Penn State five running backs who could see meaningful touches.

The rest

This offseason, Penn State added 247Sports composite 4-stars Jabree Coleman and Tikey Hayes, who have both received praise since arriving on campus. Nonetheless, they're on track for a redshirt year.

Rounding out the group is redshirt seniors Amiel Davis and Tyler Holzworth. Holzworth saw some action on special teams, and Davis earned two developmental squad weekly honors in 2024.

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Andy Kotelnicki speaks at a press conference in Holuba Hall.

Entering Year 2 of Kotelnicki

By Lexie Linderman
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

There are plenty of reasons Penn State's a top contender for a national title this year and No. 2 in the AP Preseason Poll. The hire of Jim Knowles, the return of Drew Allar, Nick Singleton, Kaytron Allen and plenty of defensive guys — but Andy Kotelnicki being back isn't getting as much attention.

Kotelnicki was close to taking the West Virginia head coaching job that opened last winter, but he wanted to stay with the Nittany Lions throughout their playoff run and declined the offer.

Now, the offense is ready for Year 2 under Kotelnicki, which could take Penn State to new heights.

"I think the biggest thing is he knows our program. He knows how we operate. So there's a ton of value in that, less questions he has to ask," James Franklin said. "But then the other thing is, he knows our personnel better, like he knows our team better. He knows what our strengths are. He knows what our weaknesses are. We've come, we've gotten to a point now in camp, we got a pretty good idea of what our identity is going to be."

The biggest aspect potentially of another year under Kotelnicki is how much more comfortable Allar is under his offensive coordinator. Kotelnicki now knows Allar's strengths like the back of his hand, and the two have built a strong relationship.

Kotelnicki said he's been more collaborative with Allar this off-season by asking Penn State's gunslinger his opinions on different plays and what he wants to see implemented and practiced during camp.

"I said, okay, 'Hey Drew we got our last week of fall camp. What are some things that you want to rep again or reintroduce, or, 'Here's the list of things I haven't introduced yet,'" Kotelnicki said. "'Here's the list of things we've done. What do you want to go back and reemphasize? Which of these do you want to add?'"

As for in-game audibles, Kotelnicki trusts Allar, but there are parameters for what the quarterback can do at the line

of scrimmage. The offensive coordinator said Allar knows which plays are "good against everything," but also is aware which are not good against a certain look.

Allar's smarts at the line of scrimmage help Kotelnicki as a play caller as well. He said the senior's ability to audible makes going through the motions "a little bit more seamless," and results in the ball being snapped quicker.

"Yes, it does make it a little bit better, because, you know the expression the coach speaker who has the chalk last right is, is that's who is usually in the best position to help their guys execute," Kotelnicki said. "If your quarterback can be the guy who has the chalk last, that helps you a lot."

Allar and Kotelnicki's first task this season is in less than two weeks. Nevada isn't projected to give Penn State any trouble, but the process of preparation is still the same for players and staff. Franklin himself even emphasized the team's focus on Week 1's opponent.

Kotelnicki, however, is working to get his gameplan ready for the Wolf Pack, and he already has some of it down and ready to go.

"There's a decent amount," Kotelnicki said. "We're gonna be who we are. So we're going to showcase what we do well. And so knowing that and identifying that, and already in the whole year of 2025 we know what that is."

The year of 2025 is set to be a big one for the Nittany Lions if everything goes as expected.

They're a national championship contender, and everyone knows it.

But similarly to the rest of the Lasch Building, Kotelnicki is focused on doing his job every day so his team can hoist a trophy or two in January.

"Everyone knows that that's the pinnacle, right?" Kotelnicki said. "But the reality is, and I've said this before, I don't want to sell your broker, but if you're a process-oriented person, and you're a part of a process-oriented organization, you don't really give a s— about that, because you're just caring about what do I got to do today to help us get that goal."

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By Will Horstman
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

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'I HATE THEM'

Penn State, Notre Dame fans reflect on historic rivalry following Orange Bowl

By Lexie Linderman
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

With the ball in Penn State's hands and 37 seconds on the clock, Hard Rock Stadium was the rowdiest it'd been all night.

As Drew Allar stepped back to pass, Jim Zarnick, dressed in white, sat behind in the end zone. Matt McMahon observed in his blue and gold to the right of the play.

Zarnick watched the ball end up in the hands of Notre Dame cornerback Christian Gray, and the bubble of hope he'd been building all four quarters burst. McMahon simultaneously "went nuts."

"Based on where I saw it, I thought he caught it, but I wasn't sure," McMahon said. "And I just, I was blown away. I mean, my buddy and I, he's from South Bend, Indiana, we went to school together. We're best friends, you know? And we just, we went nuts. Like, holy cow."

Zarnick and McMahon are similar in many ways. They both grew up in Pennsylvania and they share a deep passion for sports, but their difference lies in the colors they donned during the Orange Bowl.

McMahon's a diehard Notre Dame fan. His father, his mother, three of his uncles and his brother attended the school. There was never a chance he'd root for the Nittany Lions growing up.

Zarnick, meanwhile, grew up a fan of the Fighting Irish because their starting quarterback was a graduate of his high school — that changed when he attended Penn State from 1977-81.

"There was definitely part of me that followed Notre Dame (when I got to school). I definitely went all in on Penn State, both in football and hockey, we were club at the time, and all other sports," Zarnick said. "When Notre Dame got that large TV contract with NBC Sports, it was easy not to be a fan anymore."

The Orange Bowl was the culmination of years of pent up tension between the two schools and

their fans. Pennsylvania's heavy catholic population leads to some natives leaning toward the Notre Dame fandom, while others pledge allegiance to the in-state school Penn State.

That divide within the state led to a major rivalry during the 1980s and early 1990s. The two schools faced each other on the gridiron nearly every year until the Nittany Lions joined the Big Ten in 1992 as the Fighting Irish remained independent.

McMahon grew up during the rivalry's peak, and he hated Penn State then because of it. The Upper St. Clair, Pennsylvania, native knew a few Nittany Lions fans in his neighborhood so tension often bubbled between the two alliances.

"There was a gentleman by the name of Al Pettit, and Al Pettit eventually became a state representative in Congress, and I remember when I was young, going into his basement ... mind you, I'm a Notre Dame fan, and so are my parents. And I go in there and it is like, just all blue and white," McMahon said. "It was just blue and white everywhere. I was like, 'Oh, my God, this is absurd.' So he was a big Penn State fan. I lived in a cul de sac, and so we were across the street as big Notre Dame fans, and so there was definitely some rivalry going on there."

While McMahon watched his team face its archrival on television, former Penn State offensive lineman Mike Malinowski played in those games. Malinowski who suited up from 1990-93, grew up in Pennsylvania and was a fan of the Nittany Lions as a child.

Malinowski said he too knew fans of the opposition then. A lot of his good friends rooted for Notre Dame growing up, and a few of them came up to him on the field after the Fighting Irish won the iconic "Snow Bowl" by one point on a game-winning two-point conversion in 1992.

"That was a tough one," Malinowski said. "I mean that game pops up on ESPN classics and stuff and people I even work with



Kate Hildebrand/Collegian file photo

Defenders attempt to tackle the ball carrier during the College Football Playoff semifinal game between Penn State and Notre Dame at the Orange Bowl on Thursday, Jan. 9, 2024 in Hard Rock Stadium.

or I know in my professional career now, I'll have people say 'I saw you on TV when Notre Dame beat you in '92.' I'm like, 'Oh great, thanks for telling me about it again.'"

Malinowski saw firsthand how deep the hatred ran between the two programs once he became a player within it — the Snow Bowl was just one example of that.

Another came in 1990 when Penn State pulled off an upset no one outside Happy Valley could've seen coming. Ranked No. 18 and sitting at 7-2, the Nittany Lions headed to South Bend, Indiana and beat No. 1 Notre Dame, 24-21.

"We got back to State College and basically Beaver Stadium was broken into, the goal posts were torn down. They were like I think on the HUB lawn," Malinowski said. "So it was an away game, but they stormed the stadium and tore the goal posts down."

Before Malinowski officially became a Nittany Lion, however, the fans hated Notre Dame just as much as they did when he played there. Dave Heltebran, who grew up in West Newton, Pennsylvania, and graduated from Penn State in 1987, attended the schools' bout in 1985, which the Nittany Lions won handily, 36-6.

His hatred for Notre Dame was clear.

"It was pouring rain and all my friends bailed, and I stayed there till the very end," Heltebran said. "I wanted to watch every single beatdown play on Notre Dame. In this sputtering rain, it was cold. It was miserable, but it was glorious."

But it isn't just the fans' reactions to every victory over Notre

Dame that encapsulates how much Penn State hated Notre Dame — it was also how Joe Paterno carried himself throughout game week.

"Notre Dame was one that we were always gonna be ready for, and Joe had us ready," Malinowski said. "I mean, Joe Paterno's one of those guys, he wasn't giving a lot of speeches, but for some reason when Notre Dame popped up, he gave a lot of rah-rah speeches. We never really heard Joe talk the way he did except for in those Notre Dame games."

By the end of the rivalry's glory days, Penn State and Notre Dame had a head-to-head of 9-9-1. The last time they had played was 2007 in the very first full-stadium White Out, and it seemed unlikely the rivals would meet again.

Over time, many fans turned their hatred for the other into respect. McMahon said he hated the Nittany Lions when he was 12, but now doesn't hold any animosity toward the school and even almost transferred there during his college days at Dayton.

Heltebran, however, represents the group of Penn State fans that will forever and always hate Notre Dame because of the football program's decision to remain independent and keep the rivalry buried.

"I hate them because they pick and choose what conference they wanna be in for what sport and then they stay on their own for football which drives me absolutely nuts," Heltebran said. "They're always overrated. 'Oh well they're ranked in the top 10.' Well, for what? They're always on TV, and Notre Dame fans are

just insufferable because half the Notre Dame fans you meet have never even been to South Bend, so I just disregard what they say."

But once the Orange Bowl came around, anyone who felt respect turned that right back to hatred. The tensions rose, which Notre Dame quarterback Riley Leonard noticed leading up to the game, and arguments ran rapidly on social media between the two fanbases. The renewal of the rivalry had finally arrived, and it didn't disappoint.

"I've been to a lot of professional and college sports. It was as intense as any game when there is equal participation from both sides," Zarnick said.

As the fourth quarter clock hit zero on Jan. 9, the Fighting Irish took a one-game lead in the head-to-head, and it might stay that way for another 23 years barring a playoff rematch or Penn State scheduling a nonconference opponent that could give them trouble.

McMahon, Heltebran, Zarnick and Malinowski all hate that fact.

The Penn State and Notre Dame rivalry is historic and, at its peak, was one of the best in college football. As fans, they want to see it return to its full potential, even though that likely isn't happening any time soon.

"I love it. Having Penn State be relevant and having Notre Dame relevant, I mean those are blue bloods," McMahon said. "I think it'd be awesome if they could figure out a way to reignite that rivalry."

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Notre Dame fans celebrate a touchdown at the College Football Playoff semifinal game between Penn State and Notre Dame at the Orange Bowl.

By Collegian football staff
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

There's a lot to anticipate for Penn State in 2025, but what about the unexpected?

The college football season is full of pleasant surprises and the Nittany Lions aren't exempt. In previous years, the mass amount of preseason accolades and national buzz would serve as the shocker for the year, but those are expected now.

Each of our football staff members picked something to watch out for in the upcoming campaign.

Lyle Alenstein: Dom DeLuca emerges as best linebacker

Since Amare Campbell's transfer commitment, there's been buzz about how Campbell and Rojas will be the featured pieces in the linebacker room. Campbell has proven it through two seasons, while Rojas is approaching Year 3 in the program where he's flashed at times, but is hoping to put it all together as both a leader and dominant force on the gridiron.

While Campbell and Rojas are bound to see plenty of snaps and contribute if all goes according to plan, there seems to be not enough talk about DeLuca. From leading Wyoming Area High School to a 3A championship in 2019 on a torn ACL as quarterback, to being put on scholarship from a walk-on, to now being a

captain for the third year in a row, he's had quite the journey from high school to Penn State.

His accomplishments to this point are a story in itself, but his growth from becoming a standout on special teams to becoming a meaningful contributor on defense seems to fly under the radar at times.

DeLuca is coming off of a 2024 season where he netted 40 total tackles and had a trio of interceptions, including two in first round of the College Football Playoff against SMU, returning one for a touchdown.

With his final year of eligibility right around the corner, there's a good chance DeLuca puts it all together and wraps up his career in the blue and white in dominant fashion.

Avery Hill: Three assistant coaches field head-coaching offers

With the "natty or bust" tag hanging over Penn State, there's already expected to be tons of turnover. It's a given many top players enter the NFL draft and offensive coordinator Andy Kotelnicki's a shoe-in to get more head-coaching opportunities after turning down the West Virginia job last season, but watch out for Penn State's assistants.

Outside of Kotelnicki, the obvious candidate is safeties coach Anthony Poindexter. Poindexter was the lead option for the head-coaching job at his alma mater

Virginia in 2021 before it lost traction — the Cavaliers went with Tony Elliott instead. He's also been in the bidding for Penn State's defensive coordinator opening year after year but has ultimately stayed put.

With Jaylen Reed and Kevin Winston Jr. off to the NFL and questions surrounding Poindexter's room's inexperience, it's a chance for him to prove himself as a premier player developer.

Defensive line coach Deion Barnes should also receive big-time buzz. Barnes has continuously shown an ability to attain and develop talent as a relatable coach. Zane Durant and Dani Dennis-Sutton will certainly join the aforementioned list of big-league players following this season, but defensive tackle Alonzo Ford Jr., defensive end Zuriah Fisher could earn conference honors and the handful of young talent behind them should have key moments.

The only thing holding Barnes from an opportunity is he's only been Penn State's defensive line coach since 2023. It likely delays Power Four interest for a year or two, but expect Group of Six squads to come calling after a big season.

Will Horstman: Kyron Hudson leads team in receiving yards

In recent years, Penn State had a wide receiver issue, but the team addressed those needs

through the transfer portal this offseason. The Nittany Lions added Syracuse's Trebor Peña, Troy's Devonte Ross and USC's Kyron Hudson.

Peña had an All-ACC second-team year and Ross went over 1,000 yards at their respective previous schools in 2024, leading both to appear on the Biletnikoff Award preseason watch list earlier this month. While Hudson wasn't included in that honor, he could still end up as Penn State's leading receiver.

Hudson caught 38 passes for 462 yards and three touchdowns last season, but he's flashed a playmaking ability, such as his one-handed grab against LSU, which James Franklin called it as "one of the catches of the year."

Hudson has stood out at fall camp with his jump-ball skills as Hagans noted how Hudson has an ability to consistently make plays. He hauled in a bunch of passes while the offense worked on red-zone plays at Tuesday's practice.

If he can stack enough of those types of catches during the season, he could rack up enough receiving yards to have the most on the team. With Hudson showcasing reliability in camp, he could become Drew Allar's favorite target, which would likely give him enough volume to reach that high yardage total.

Lexie Linderman: Penn State's offense finishes

top three in the country

Historically, Penn State has trusted its defense more than its offense. The Nittany Lions have had a top seven defense in back-to-back years, with the 2023 squad being the second best in the nation.

With the hire of Jim Knowles, who's arguably the top defensive coordinator in the country, that trend has little to no chance of abruptly changing. But although Knowles should take the defense to new heights and there are plenty of elite talents on that side of the rock, Penn State's offense might prove to be better.

A top-three finish isn't out of the picture. Drew Allar is arguably the most talented quarterback to ever play in Happy Valley, and he's entering his third year as a starter and second year running plays from Andy Kotelnicki. A step forward for Allar will take Penn State's offense to new heights.

But Allar isn't the only reason the Nittany Lions' offense will be elite. Nick Singleton and Kaytron Allen are widely-regarded as the best running back duo in college football, and Penn State finally seems to have some real talent at the wide receiver position following three transfer additions.

Factor in an offensive line that could very well win the Joe Moore Award this year, and the Nittany Lions are clearly going to have one of the best offenses in the country.

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WHAT
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SUMMER

'It'll be a place I'll definitely never forget'

7 Penn State campuses will close by spring 2027. Hear from impacted students

Page B3

Column | In the land of the free, but afraid to speak

Our Elbia Vidal discusses how free speech looks for international students today

Page B6

Trump's 'Saving College Sports' executive order

New financial restrictions and guidelines may change the college sports landscape

Page B7

Graphic by Isabella Viteri

Photo by Sienna Pinney

Board of Trustees votes to close 7 Commonwealth campuses

By Pragya Sinha
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

The Penn State Board of Trustees voted 25-8 to proceed with President Neeli Bendapudi's recommendation to close seven Commonwealth campuses during a public session May 22.

The recommendation report, which was released two weeks before following a media leak, proposed closing DuBois, Fayette, Mont Alto, New Kensington, Shenango, Wilkes-Barre and York, citing steep enrollment declines, aging infrastructure and financial strain.

These campuses are set to close at the end of the spring 2027 semester, allowing students starting this fall to complete their associate's degrees or transition to the University Park campus after their second year during their time at Penn State.

How it all went down.

Calling the proposed closures "a pivotal moment for Penn State," Bendapudi began the meeting by defending the recommendation as a data-driven response to declining enrollment and financial strain.

"We're not making a technical adjustment," she said. "We're charting a new course for the next century."

154 public comments were submitted to the board ahead of the meeting, according to BoT Chair David Kleppinger. Many highlighted the vital role of Commonwealth campuses in expanding access to first-generation and nontraditional students, especially in rural or underserved regions.

Commenters also emphasized Penn State's land-grant mission and urged trustees to maintain the university's presence in these communities.

Bendapudi said resources were already being deployed to support students and that affected faculty and staff would be eligible for a priority hiring process. She also said the university plans to begin "immediately" repurposing the campuses through partnerships with local and state leaders.

"That future may not involve Penn State directly, but we are committed to helping shape it," Bendapudi said.

Trustee Anthony Lubrano voiced concerns over transparency and community engagement, criticizing the university's process and the virtual format of the meeting.

"I don't believe we've given the communities themselves the



Jonah Richmond/Collegian

The city of DuBois' fire training ground sits near the Penn State DuBois campus.

opportunity to reimagine themselves," Lubrano said. "We've fallen short of the openness and transparency. It's disrespectful to these people."

He read a letter from the chancellor of Penn State New Kensington (PSNK), who said the campus had already started adapting to demographic and financial pressures.

"Our revitalization centered on innovation and partnership," the letter read. "We built a replicable, scalable model for the future of higher education."

The letter acknowledged that Penn State must evolve to survive but says PSNK already has.

Other trustees emphasized the need to trust university leadership and act decisively.

"We've been looking at this for a year now. The numbers are the numbers," Trustee Karen Quintos said. "We need to continue to set up Penn State for financial success."

While she understands community concerns, Quintos said she believes the leadership team's recommendation is grounded in both data and long-term sustainability.

Several trustees also raised concerns about the cost burden of keeping the campuses open. Trustee Mary Lee Schneider noted that Penn State has far more branch campuses than its Big Ten peers and suggested that the current closures may still not be enough.

"Being a land-grant campus does not mean you need to put a campus in every region," Schneider said.

She also pointed to low graduation rates as a troubling trend. According to the recommendation report, Penn State Shenango has a six-year graduation rate of 47.7% and Penn State New Kensington's stands at 52.2%.

In 2020, the national six-year graduation rate was 64%, according to the National Center for Education Statistics.

Trustee Brandon Short, who grew up near Penn State Greater Allegheny, acknowledged the difficulty of the decision while expressing support for the closures.

"I played on Greater Allegheny's basketball courts, got tutored by their students," he said. "Penn State is not a business. Our mission is to provide a world-class education."

Short said he supported the recommendation to close the seven campuses, calling it a difficult but necessary step.

Other trustees echoed his sentiment, emphasizing both the emotional weight of the decision and the financial realities the university faces.

"I've visited every campus and talked to students, faculty and staff," Trustee Kelley Lynch said. "There is no doubt the deep love they have for their campuses — rightfully so."

While Lynch recognized the unique value each campus holds, she said the current system is no longer sustainable.

Lynch pressed university leadership to ensure that unique academic programs offered at the closing campuses are preserved and moved to other locations.

She also asked Bendapudi to confirm that she

is correct in assuming that the repurposing of campuses will happen during the next phase.

"I want to assure you that your understanding is correct," Bendapudi responded.

Nick Sokolov mentioned that 21 of the 50 smallest land-grant college campuses in the U.S. are operated by Penn State.

"No other land-grant university created in 1862 operates as many branch campuses," Sokolov said.

"We all acknowledge a significant obligation to fulfill our land-grant mission, but our land-grant mission doesn't include having a campus in areas that can't support the services that we're trying to offer."

Some trustees raised deeper questions about Penn State's role in an evolving higher education system — challenging long-held assumptions about access, relevance and what a college degree means today.

"Many viable careers today don't even require a college degree," Trustee Robert Fenza said, referencing a recent news article that he read. "There are much bigger factors impacting enrollment than just the demographic cliff."

Fenza added that Penn State must evolve to stay relevant.

"I don't want us to be left behind — that's not who we are," he said.

Trustee Barry Fenchak expressed skepticism about the future benefits of the closures.

"If we've been doing everything we can to make the campuses as impactful as possible, what are the new investments we're going to make with these savings that

will better serve students?" he said.

University leadership said the goal is to reinvest in stronger regional campuses, but Fenchak said the plan lacked clarity on what those improvements will actually look like.

Others, like Trustee Nicholas Rowland, opposed the closures outright.

"I can't bring myself to believe that closing these campuses is the only option," Rowland said. "We've only just begun to ask the hard questions that these campuses have long deserved."

He warned that shutting them down now would "preempt the revitalization we say we want for the Commonwealth ecosystem." Instead, he said, the university should give these communities "a fair chance to adapt and find some way to thrive."

Trustee Jay Paterno also criticized the binary choice the board was presented with.

"We've invested nearly a billion dollars in football because we have faith that Penn Staters will respond because they always have," Paterno said. "We are given the option between a status quo or a retreat. The status quo is not an option that should have been presented. So, given an unrealistic option and a not-so-bad option, the not-so-bad option starts to look much better."

Paterno urged the board to postpone the vote and gather more information before proceeding.

"This is by far the most important decision we'll ever make," he said. "Why do we now believe we can't rally for the cause?...If we have lost that belief in our people, then perhaps we are not the board that this university deserves."

After hours of discussion, debate and public reflection, the board's vote capped several months of decision-making that will significantly reshape Penn State's Commonwealth footprint.

While supporters framed the closures as necessary for the university's long-term stability, others warned the move marked a profound shift away from Penn State's historic commitment to access, equity and community.

While administrators have promised support for affected students, faculty and staff, along with a two-year transition timeline, the closures leave many in the Penn State community uncertain and without a clear sense of direction.

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'THIS DECISION CRUSHES SPIRITS'

Penn State staff, faculty from Commonwealth campuses express concerns about closures

By Jocelyn Bilker
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

President Neeli Bendapudi said the decision to close 7 campuses is necessary for Penn State to "create a strong and sustainable Commonwealth campus ecosystem for the future."

However, the move has sparked backlash from faculty, staff and students, many of whom say it sacrifices Penn State's land-grant mission and leaves behind the rural and nontraditional students who most depend on these regional campuses.

"I regret deeply that some members of our community are learning about this recommendation through media coverage rather than direct communication from Penn State leadership," Bendapudi said in a university wide message.

Still, some faculty argue the closures disproportionately impact underserved regions in providing accessible education across Pennsylvania.

"This closure doesn't feel like a last resort," Joan Smeltzer said. "Other ideas weren't explored and data wasn't shared."

Smeltzer, an associate teaching professor of mathematics at Penn State York who comes from a family of many Penn State Commonwealth campus alumni, said getting to know students on a deeper level won't exist at a larger campus.

"That doesn't happen in a large lecture hall at University Park," Smeltzer said.

Angela Pettitt echoed Smeltzer's statement.

"These campuses were lifelines," Pettitt, an associate teaching professor at Penn State Shenango said.

Pettitt taught at Shenango for 15 years and learned in January

that her contract wouldn't be renewed. Months later, she was offered a position at Penn State DuBois — another campus now — slated for closure as a teaching professor.

"We're all in limbo," Pettitt said. "It's incredibly destabilizing for faculty, staff and students."

The campuses to be closed serve just 3.6% of Penn State's student population, according to a report authored by senior university administrators. Yet, keeping them open would require \$19 million annually in direct support, \$21 million in overhead and more than \$200 million in deferred facilities upgrades. The

closures are meant to consolidate resources and direct investment to Commonwealth campuses deemed "strategic" for long-term investments.

Katie Rook described a sense of loss that goes beyond dollars and percentages.

"The idea of Mont Alto closing has been looming over me my entire time teaching here," Rook, a part-time lecturer at Penn State Mont Alto, said. "I came in just as the talks were beginning."

Rook pointed to Mont Alto's specialized forestry program and its unique campus environment, which supports many commuter and first-generation students.

"You can't just move a forest," Rook said, in reference to the campus' critical role in Penn State's forestry education major. "It's not just faculty losing jobs. It's students losing a home and a chance to succeed in a setting designed for them."

Rook added that the community's involvement and history with Mont Alto were being brushed aside.

"This decision crushes spirits," Rook said. "It tells students their campus isn't worth saving."

Faculty and students alike have expressed concern that the decision undermines accessibility and equity, each of which are

core tenets of the university's land-grant mission.

"You can't replace what we had with Zoom classes or a bigger campus," Pettitt said.

Despite the vote, some at Mont Alto, Shenango and other campuses hold out hope that advocacy and appeals could reverse the closures.

"This isn't just about budgets," Rook said. "It's about communities, futures and what kind of university Penn State wants to be."

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The Nittany Lion statue sits on a bench in the middle of Penn State Mont Alto.

Alexandra Antoniou/Collegian

The numbers behind Penn State's campus closures

By Pragya Sinha
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Seven Commonwealth campuses are slated to close by spring 2027 following a 25-8 vote from Penn State's Board of Trustees. The closures, while controversial, reflect a broader set of data trends signaling deep structural challenges within the university's regional system.

The decision targets DuBois, Fayette, Mont Alto, New Kensington, Shenango, Wilkes-Barre and York — locations that face significant enrollment declines, mounting financial deficits and costly infrastructure demands, according to the 143-page internal recommendation report.

Meanwhile, five other campuses initially proposed to close — Beaver, Greater Allegheny, Hazleton, Schuylkill and Scranton — will remain open with increased support. The decision between staying open and closing came down to a combination of factors.

Enrollment decline and student outcomes

Across the 12 campuses under review, enrollment dropped 35% over the past decade. 7 of the 12 currently enroll fewer than 500 students.

Enrollment for the eight Commonwealth campuses that were initially marked safe — Abington, Altoona, Behrend, Berks, Brandywine, Harrisburg and Lehigh Valley and Great Valley — has dropped 22%.

At 10 of the campuses, more than 20% of classes have fewer than seven students enrolled, a figure that suggests unsustainable class sizes and poor economies of scale.

Graduation outcomes offer

another lens through which Penn State assessed the viability of its regional campuses. Penn State Shenango, for example, has the lowest graduation rates among the campuses that were under review, with only 25.7% of students completing their degree within four years and 47.7% within six. Other campuses recommended for closure also show low rates. Wilkes-Barre stands out with a 69.9% six-year rate, but still has 42% of students graduating in four.

While these numbers aren't the sole basis for closure, the report emphasizes the risk posed by high stop-out rates. At campuses like Fayette and DuBois, more than 30% of students leave without ever earning a degree. The disparity in student outcomes, particularly when paired with small enrollments and limited resources, raised serious concerns about whether these campuses could sustainably support students through graduation.

Demand vs. distribution

Though the closures affect only a small share of Penn State's total enrollment, the contrast with university-wide demand, for some trustees, is striking and deeply frustrating.

In summer and fall 2023, Penn State received 128,201 first-year applications across all campuses. Of those, 16,239 enrolled, including 9,040 at University Park. That same year, 15,735 international students applied, but just 1,180 enrolled — with 651 at University Park alone.

At the Board of Trustees meeting on May 12, members repeatedly pointed to this gap between interest and access. Trustee Ted Brown argued that while students are eager to attend Penn State, the university isn't successfully routing and

matching them to where there is space.

Meanwhile, the seven campuses now slated for closure collectively enroll just 3.6% of Penn State's student body, making them difficult to sustain in light of low demand and high overhead. According to the report, the campuses also employ 3.4% of Penn State faculty and 2.2% of its staff.

Demographic and regional decline

Most of the shuttered locations are situated in rural counties — regions already grappling with decades-long economic decline and now facing steep population losses. According to the report, 41 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties are projected to shrink by 2025, with rural counties expected to lose 5.8% of their total population.

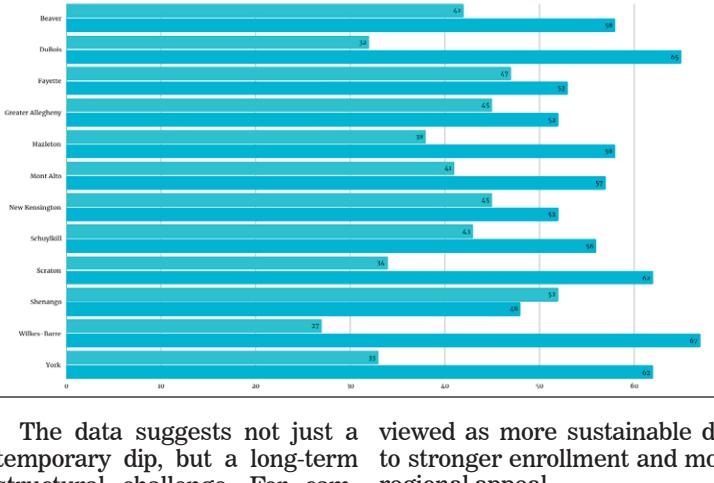
Equally critical to campus viability is the sharp decline in the college-aged population. The number of residents aged 19 and under is projected to fall by 6.8% statewide by 2050, with sharper drops in already-depopulated regions.

Since Penn State's Commonwealth campuses primarily serve local populations, demographic shifts translate almost immediately into enrollment losses. For example, at some campuses, up to 70% of students come from the home county, meaning even small declines in local high school graduates can significantly erode the applicant pool.

Some counties are facing extreme declines. Clearfield County, home to Penn State DuBois, is projected to lose nearly 10% of its youth population by 2050. Elk County, another key feeder region, is expected to see a 14.3% drop.

Commonwealth Campus 6-Year Cohort Outcomes

Graduation outcome data represents the 2018 cohort of first-time, full-time bachelor's degree seeking students that started their degree at any Commonwealth campus and ended at any Penn State campus.



The data suggests not just a temporary dip, but a long-term structural challenge. For campuses without on-campus housing or broader regional draw, like Shenango and DuBois, the impact of these demographic shifts is even more acute.

Some of the campuses slated for closure serve noteworthy proportions of Pell Grant recipients, underrepresented minorities and first-generation students.

Penn State Wilkes-Barre, for example, 39% of students receive Pell Grants, 18% identify as underrepresented minorities and 44% are first-generation college students.

Similar trends appear at other campuses recommended for closure — such as Fayette, Shenango and York — where 38% of the student body are first-generation and over 30% receive Pell support, raising concerns about equity and access.

The data suggests not just a temporary dip, but a long-term structural challenge. For campuses without on-campus housing or broader regional draw, like Shenango and DuBois, the impact of these demographic shifts is even more acute.

When evaluating which campuses to close, the workgroup also considered how many nearby colleges were competing for the same shrinking pool of students.

Shenango, for example, has eight institutions within a 30-mile radius and 20 within 50 miles. However, proximity wasn't the only factor. Penn State Schuylkill, which will remain open, actually has even more nearby competitors — nine within 30 miles and 24 within 50 — yet was

viewed as more sustainable due to stronger enrollment and more regional appeal.

Big costs, bigger changes

Ultimately, the closures reflect a broader shift in Pennsylvania's population map — one that increasingly favors urban and suburban regions over the rural communities that once sustained these local campuses.

The 12 campuses marked for closure account for \$29 million in annual losses, a figure that balloons to \$70 million when factoring in shared university overhead. The report also notes a combined \$333 million in deferred maintenance, like updating facilities, across those campuses — costs Penn State would eventually need to cover if the campuses remained open.

The closures, according to Bendarupi, are part of a broader strategy to reallocate limited resources toward strong, more sustainable regional hubs — campuses with the capacity, location and enrollment momentum to serve students more effectively over the long term.

It's a move she said was grounded in data, guided by institutional values, and shaped by months of public feedback and deliberation.

Still, the emotional weight of the decision was palpable. Ahead of the vote, the Board of Trustees received 154 public comments, many of which argued that closing campuses in rural or underserved areas would undermine Penn State's land-grant mission to provide accessible education statewide.

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Commonwealth Campus Demographics

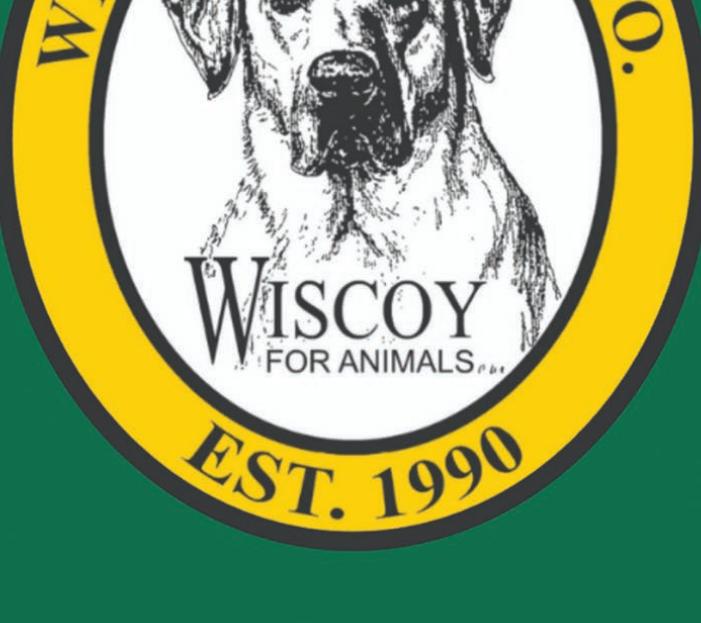
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TDC29AUG25



Community members stand in front of the Allen Street Gates during the No Kings protest.

Alexandra Antonino/Collegian

RAISING THEIR VOICES



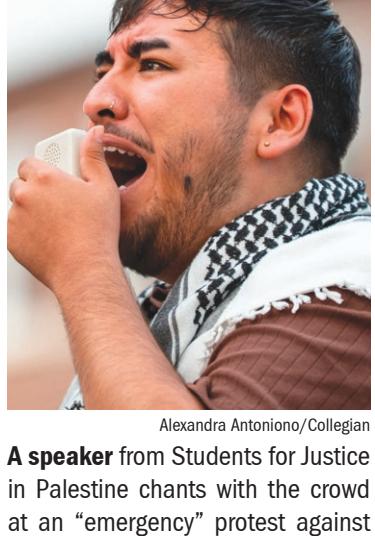
Alexandra Antonino/Collegian

A community member wears a mask and a crown during the No Kings protest.



An American flag is burned in an alley during an "emergency" protest against ICE.

Alexandra Antonino/Collegian



Alexandra Antonino/Collegian

A speaker from Students for Justice in Palestine chants with the crowd at an "emergency" protest against ICE outside the Allen Street Gates.



Alexandra Antonino/Collegian

Two community members yell chants during an "emergency" protest against ICE.



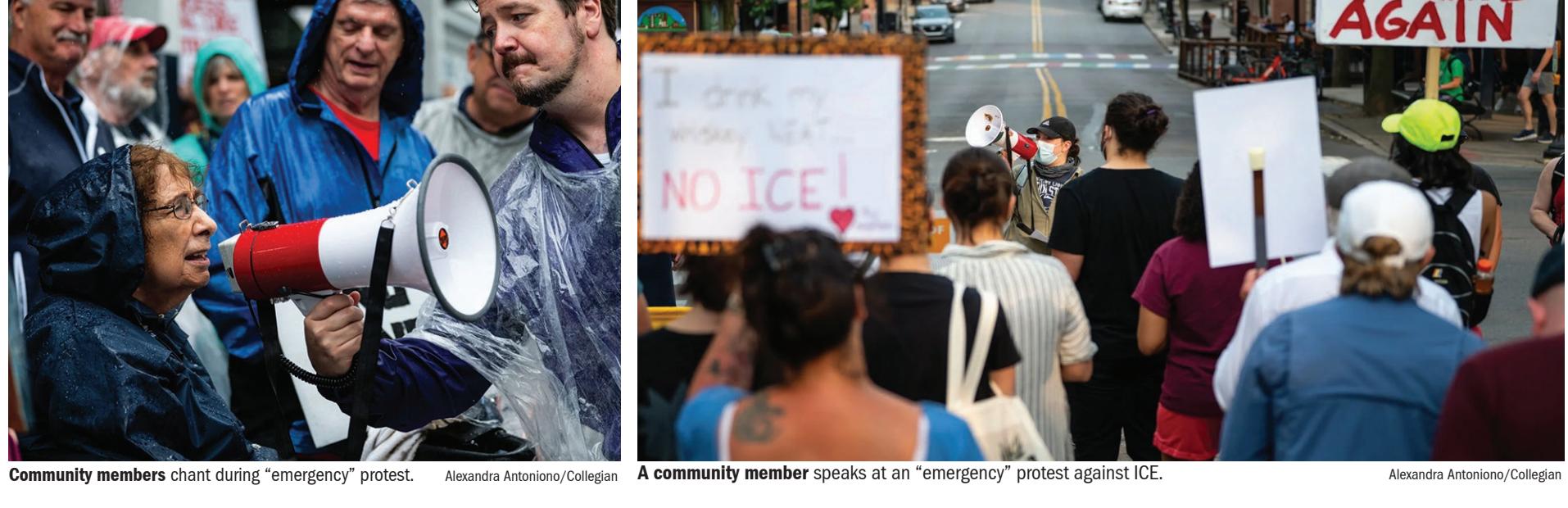
Alexandra Antonino/Collegian

A community member wears an outfit made of Target bags during the No Kings protest at the Allen Street Gates against ICE.



Alexandra Antonino/Collegian

A counter protester gives the crowd people protesting ICE the middle finger from across the street outside the Allen Street Gates.



Alexandra Antonino/Collegian

Community members chant during "emergency" protest.

Alexandra Antonino/Collegian

A community member speaks at an "emergency" protest against ICE.

Alexandra Antonino/Collegian

'It was anti-constitutional'

By Mia Debelevich
& Tyler Nolt
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

This summer, UPUA President Rasha Elwakil and former chief justices continued to question her April removal.

Her removal was approved by a three-fourths majority.

However, Fletcher Port presided over the proceedings while vice president. As per the UPUA constitution, any proceedings involving the removal of an executive branch member must be overseen by the highest-ranking member of the judicial board; and the judicial board is required to include a chief justice among its nine members.

"I don't believe my removal was within what was outlined in the UPUA's constitution," Elwakil said. "It was conducted through the vice president at the time, which obviously also has its wrong-doings with it being conducted by someone who would then move into the presidential position."

Elwakil said she believes she was not afforded full due process because of the absence of a judicial board's vote before the issue was brought to the floor. While she acknowledged not holding five strategic works meetings — in line with running the Internal Works Board and thus misaligning with the constitution — she claimed the other reasons for her removal were "personal grievances."

"It was all things that people had held against me for years or just couldn't empathize that I'm human and that I make mistakes," Elwakil said.

Elwakil has had some contact — both negative and positive — with members of UPUA who were involved in the trial, though she said she was never fully told the reasons behind her removal aside from what was shared at trial and in social media posts.

In an April 25 Instagram post, UPUA cited several reasons for her removal, including issues with "professionalism" and "executive overreach" issuing a statement on ICE presence on campus without due communication and despite the wishes of other leaders.

The post also said the assembly was following Robert's Rules of Order, which is only to be used when the UPUA constitution and bylaws "do not suffice." It stated: "When considering removals from office, the President shall preside over a meeting when the Chief Justice can not. However, because this matter pertained to the President



Rasha Elwakil answers a question at the Executive Town Hall for the 2025 UPUA Election on Tuesday, April 1, 2025 in University Park, Pa.

of the UPUA, Robert's Rules of Order mandates that the Vice President must preside over the meeting."

Elwakil said she had several "very negative experiences" during her vice presidential term. She said she feels this has always been common for vice presidents within UPUA, especially those of color.

"People of color, especially within the organization, are held to a much higher standard than our white counterparts," Elwakil said. "It just sucks that that has been the case for many years."

Elwakil said she believes the impeachment was "very rushed," calling it a "humiliation ritual."

Hayden D'Elena, chief justice of the 17th-18th assembly, said the trial "should've been tabled."

"There are two provisions in the UPUA constitution — not to mention just kind of general, moral and ethical code — that supplant what is a correct impeachment, and that is providing one week notice to the impeached party," D'Elena said.

Elwakil said she was not informed of the impeachment until the day of in the late afternoon. While she had previously asked about it within the organization, she said she was never given a straight answer.

Chief Justice of the 16th-17th Assembly Andrew Waldman was one of three former chief justices, including D'Elena, who sent a letter to the assembly before Elwakil's removal. The letter raised concerns about whether the process would comply with the UPUA Constitution and bylaws.

According to Waldman, Port was fronting efforts for Elwakil's trial, which he had a "clear

interest" in. He added that a three-fourths impeachment vote requires "concerted effort" and does not happen by accident.

"The fact that one of the people leading the charge on this was the one presiding over the meeting goes against literally every fiber of what the impeachment process is supposed to be," Waldman said. "I have heard from a number of people that are in the assembly that Fletcher was one of the people that was involved in calling (representatives) and talking to them about what's happening with the impeachment and getting them to essentially agree that Rasha needs to be impeached."

The letter stated the removal was unfolding as a result of "scheming behind the backs of other people."

"We have due process for a reason, and as it comes to me, this was a complete violation," D'Elena said. "It was not unconstitutional. It was anti-constitutional."

D'Elena said they had sent the letter to Port and ensured he read it.

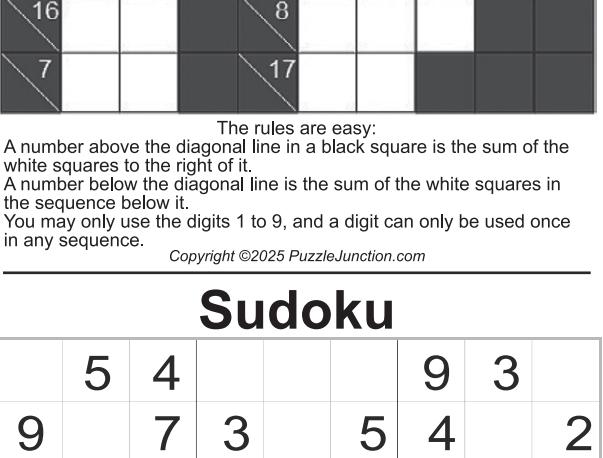
Port declined to comment on any alleged involvement with Elwakil's removal and the constitutionality of her removal.

The letter to the assembly scrutinized the 20th general assembly for its lack of empathy, as well as urging procedure to be followed.

"Impeaching a President on a rushed and sloppy process is closer to an organized coup than it is a fair endeavor," the letter read. "Impeach properly or do not impeach at all."

Email reporters at: mfd5887@psu.edu and tjn5430@psu.edu.

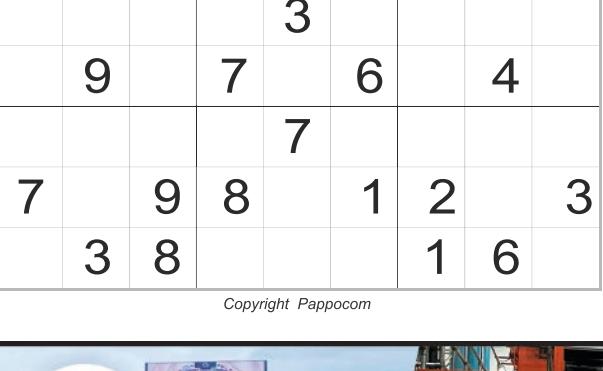
Kakuro



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Sudoku



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Crossword



Across
1 Playwright
5 Preschooler
8 City in Eastern Utah
12 Missile housing
13 Leave speechless
14 Met expectations?
16 Southern California sight
18 Lynley of film
19 Kegler pieces
20 Batman after Michael
21 Fiddle stick
23 Talking bird of poetry
26 Moose
27 Nui (Easter Island)
28 Seed covering
29 Like Jack Sprat's diet
31 Cavalry weapon
32 Like a Burnsian mouse
33 Impoverished
34 Figured out
35 Trembling trees
37 Thanksgiving dinner guests, probably
40 Woodpile item
41 Mutual fund fee
42 The Pointer Sisters' "So Shy"
44 German industrial

Down
1 Psychic's claim
2 River inlet
3 Down with the flu
4 Force
5 Mountain pool
6 Has a mortgage
7 Pipe joint
8 Cousin of a cockatoo
9 Kind of hygiene
10 Balloon filler
11 It has a fruit that has an edible pulp called monkey bread
15 Inclination
17 Malaysian export

city
47 Money maker
48 Chanel of fashion
49 Phi Kappa
50 Clunker
51 "Vacation" character
52 Slot machine symbol
53 Glass component
54 Jezebel's husband state flower
55 New Hampshire's state flower
56 Lawbreaker
57 Cathedral topper
58 Big galoot
59 Attire
60 Pampering places
61 Samurai's sash
62 Dance lesson

20 Sliding door site
22 Children's card game
23 Wet behind the ears
24 Kind of rug
25 Competes
26 Pickle container
27 Pro follower
29 Year
30 Dawn goddess
31 Auctioneer's shout
33 Lowly laborer
34 Pesky insect
36 Tell it to the judge
37 Charged particle
38 "next?"
39 Religious offshoot
41 Cover
43 Tofu base
44 Flown's partner
45 Elite group
46 Thin pieces of wood
47 Ornamental flower, for short
48 Ancient units of length
50 Cubes
51 Zodiac animal
53 ____ avis
54 Spirited horse
55 Old 45 player
57 Mouth piece
58 Bill's partner
59 "to worry"
60 Ripe
61 Race unit

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Elwakil reinstated

By Mia Debelevich
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Rasha Elwakil has been reinstated as president of the 20th assembly following a judicial review of her removal, according to documents provided by Chief Justice Hunter Steach.

The judicial board declared the proceedings of Elwakil's removal "null and void."

"As a result of the Judicial Board's decision to strike the April 23rd General Assembly removal vote, Rasha Elwakil is reinstated as President of the UPUA, and Fletcher Port is reinstated as Vice President of the UPUA, effective immediately," the judicial board's July 23 joint opinion said.

A resolution was passed July 9 that assigned the judicial board, now filled and led by Steach, to examine whether Elwakil's removal complied with the UPUA constitution and bylaws.

The decision by the UPUA judicial board determined the legislative branch's actions during her removal were noncompliant with the organization's constitution and bylaws. They cited §6.6 of the UPUA bylaws, as Elwakil did not receive a one week's notice for the vote to remove her.

When Elwakil was removed on April 23, all judicial board seats were vacant, including

the chief justice role. The board found that the absence of a chief justice "presiding over a removal proceeding of an Executive Branch member constitutes a clear violation of the UPUA Constitution."

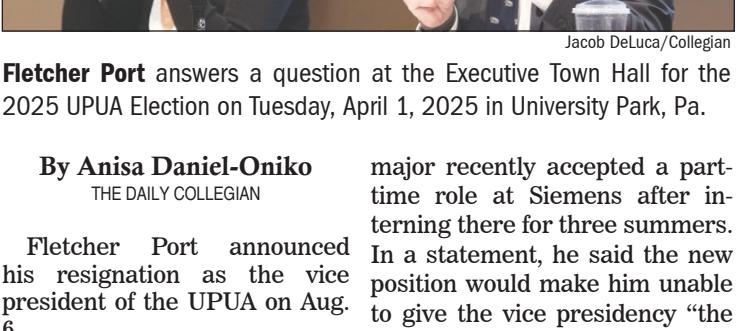
"It is the responsibility of the Executive Branch to ensure that Judicial Board positions are promptly filled to prevent such constitutional lapses," the opinion stated. "Proceedings that require the presence of a specific officer, as dictated by the Constitution, cannot constitutionally occur if that officer has not been duly nominated, confirmed, and sworn in."

The board also found that former-president Fletcher Port's role in presiding over the removal vote represented a conflict of interest.

"Evidence presented to the Judicial Board confirmed that during the removal proceeding against the President, the Vice President not only served as the presiding officer but also spoke briefly in discussion. This action, coupled with the unavoidable personal interest inherent in the Vice President's position...constitutes a direct and undeniable compromise of the impartiality required of the chair," the opinion stated.

To email reporter: mfd5887@psu.edu
Follow her on X @ [miadebelevich](https://twitter.com/miadebelevich).

PORT RESIGNS



Fletcher Port answers a question at the Executive Town Hall for the 2025 UPUA Election on Tuesday, April 1, 2025 in University Park, Pa.

By Anisa Daniel-Oniko
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Fletcher Port announced his resignation as the vice president of the UPUA on Aug. 6.

Port served as president of the 20th assembly for over three months following the April 2025 removal of Rasha Elwakil. After a judicial review reinstated Elwakil as president on July 23, Port resumed his position as vice president.

The mechanical engineering

major recently accepted a part-time role at Siemens after interning there for three summers. In a statement, he said the new position would make him unable to give the vice presidency "the energy and attention it deserves."

"This decision has been incredibly difficult," the statement read. "The UPUA has shaped me far greater than any other commitment."

To email reporter: aod5437@psu.edu
Follow her on X @ [anisathescribe](https://twitter.com/anisathescribe).

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Penn State campus closures undermine its land-grant mission

Penn State must remain true to its land-grant mission following the Board of Trustees' decision to close DuBois, Fayette, Mont Alto, New Kensington, Shenango, Wilkes-Barre and York after the 2026-27 academic year.

Penn State's land-grant status was established through federal legislation that allocated land to states to fund universities focused on teaching, research and public service. Its mission is strengthened by the presence of Commonwealth campuses across Pennsylvania, which expand access to higher education for students from diverse backgrounds.

More often than not, students at these campuses choose to enroll because of lower tuition and a smaller, more intimate campus feel. Now, they may have to move to a campus that is riddled with problems that continue to plague the students already enrolled. By sending students to other campuses, it's assumed they have the resources to be successful elsewhere. It's not feasible to

expect all students at the closing campuses to move, especially to a campus with a higher tuition bill and the inability to live at home.

One of the main attractions of Commonwealth campuses is the affordability and accessibility of housing, as students can choose to live at home or pay far less for housing than main campus rates.

With an out-of-control housing shortage in the dorms and downtown, there is no way to accommodate extra students at University Park without converting communal spaces into

"By creating open communication about the future, students will be able to make informed decisions regarding their time at Penn State"

makeshift rooms and charging outrageous rent prices.

The overpopulation of the main campus raises broader concerns about resources, capacity, infrastructure and student support. But even these challenges pale in comparison to the long-standing inequities at many Commonwealth campuses.

As the university continues to enroll more students than it can support, students across the Commonwealth are left competing for limited resources.

Penn State risks losing students who struggle to transition to campuses that lack the capacity to meet their needs.

It's imperative that the university address disparities at the remaining Commonwealth campuses — including limited resources, fewer academic offerings and a lack of specialized facilities — and be transparent about how it plans to reinvest in the 13 that will remain open.

By creating open communication about the future, students will be able to make

"The university has an obligation to fully protect and support all members of its community from the lasting consequences"

informed decisions regarding their time at Penn State.

Regardless of where a student enrolls, they must be supported in their journey to learn, earn a degree and grow — both professionally and personally — as they prepare for successful careers after graduation.

Although the school has outlined its plans for faculty and staff, the solution comes with problems of its own. Issues surrounding potential salary differences and the inconvenience of uprooting their lives seem to be an unintentional consequence of a seemingly thorough plan to offer tenured faculty need-driven reassignment at campuses remaining open.

Even though the university has stated that priority hiring will be used for non-tenure-line and staff employees, there is no guarantee that these individuals will be rehired at another campus, causing anxiety and uncertainty about their future employment.

Whether it be teaching highly popular courses or contributing their expertise to the campus they relocate to, the school has the potential to strategically place faculty in ways that will improve the student experience for Penn Staters across Pennsylvania.

The next two years will test the university's ability to balance the needs of its community while creating a sustainable commonwealth system.

The university has an obligation to fully protect and support all members of its community from the lasting consequences of closing seven Commonwealth campuses.



Cartoon by Nathan Campbell

MY VIEW | Elbia Vidal

In the land of the free, afraid to speak

I came to the United States carrying more than just suitcases and a student visa. I brought with me ideas, questions and a deep desire to learn — not only from textbooks, but from the very society that so often defines itself by freedom, democracy and expression.

As an international student at Penn State, I believed I was entering a space where dialogue was encouraged and perspectives were welcomed. I quickly learned that there's a fine, often invisible line between being part of the conversation and being allowed to truly speak.

Like many international students, I've sat in classrooms where topics like immigration, race, war and justice come up — issues that touch the lives of millions, including people from our home countries.

And yet, when my chest tightens with something to say, my mouth doesn't always follow. There's a hesitation, a quiet censorship that creeps in — not because I lack opinions, but because I know what's at stake if I say them out loud.

We're in the land of the First Amendment, but that protection doesn't extend the same way to those of us who rely on the fragile stamp of a visa.

We're told we're guests here and guests should be polite.

We learn early that being "too political," "too vocal" or "too critical" might cost us more than just awkward stares — it could cost us the right to stay.

For many, the fear is real: a tweet taken the wrong way, a comment in a discussion or even a peaceful protest could be misunderstood, misreported and used against us in ways we never anticipated.

So we tread carefully. We listen more than we speak. We nod even when we ache to challenge what's being said. We write our thoughts in private journals instead of op-eds. We are present — but muted.

But silence is not the same as consent and self-preservation should not mean invisibility. So the question becomes: how do we engage without putting ourselves at risk?

For me, the answer has been subtle resistance — quiet, yet intentional forms of protest.

At Penn State, events hosted by organizations like the Latino Caucus' Café con Leche or Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) Caucus' cultural forums provide open, respectful environments where students can share their thoughts on global politics, identity and justice without fear.

These student-led dialogues center on community, not confrontation and allow for nuanced conversation that values diverse perspectives.

We can also bring our voices into the classroom, not through heated debates, but by ask-

ing questions that expand the conversation.

Talking to professors, sharing our perspectives in writing assignments or suggesting global angles to class topics are subtle yet meaningful ways of making space for ourselves within the curriculum.

Some faculty are not just willing — but eager — to hear how their content connects to lives outside of the United States.

Attending lectures, forums and panels about global and social issues is another powerful way for international students to engage politically without stepping into risky territory.

These events, whether hosted by academic departments, cultural organizations or student caucuses, offer structured, respectful environments where complex topics like immigration, war, inequality or climate change can be explored thoughtfully.

Being political doesn't always mean being loud. Sometimes it means being intentional, strategic and present in places where change begins. Our activism may look different, but it is no less real.

We may not be able to vote and many of us stay away from front-line activism to protect our legal status, but that doesn't mean we are voiceless. Through writing, organizing, attending open forums and creating bridges across cultures, we find our own ways to speak.

We may not be able to vote or march loudly through the

streets, but we can still write. We can still witness. We can still exist — fully, bravely and thoughtfully — in a space that often forgets we're more than just the "diverse faces" in the brochure.

We are thinkers. We are dreamers. We are voices waiting for the moment when speaking no longer feels like a risk, but a right.

Elbia Vidal is a columnist and part of the newsletter team for The Daily Collegian. They are a fourth-year studying sociology and digital and print journalism. Email them at ekv5127@psu.edu or follow them on X at [@elbia_vidal](https://x.com/elbia_vidal).



Community members line the streets with signs and flags during the No Kings protest at the Allen Street Gates on Saturday, June 14, 2025 in State College, Pa.

and solicit advertising for them.

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Daily Collegian

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About the Collegian

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'Saving college sports'

What President Donald Trump's executive order mean for college athletics?

By Lexie Linderman
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

President Donald Trump signed an executive order Thursday, July 24, introducing new financial restrictions and guidelines for college athletics, further reshaping the landscape following the House v. NCAA settlement approved in June.

The executive order, titled "Saving College Sports," proclaims universities shouldn't allow any of its athletes to receive "third party, pay-for-play payments," and lays out guidelines for protecting athletic scholarships for non-revenue sports based on an athletic department's annual earnings.

The order said an antitrust ruling in 2021 that allowed athletes to receive payments off their name, image and likeness (NIL) and the elimination of transfer restrictions "has created an out-of-control, rudderless system in which competing university donors engage in bidding wars for the best players."

Trump cited that 65% of Team USA's athletes at the 2024 Olympic Games were current or former NCAA athletes, while 75% were collegiate athletes, as partial reasoning for the order.

Scholarship guidelines

Athletic departments that



Charlie Neiburg/Courtesy of the Associated Press

President Donald Trump speaks to supporters during a visit to the Iowa State Fair on Saturday, Aug. 12, 2023 in Des Moines, Iowa.

earned more than \$125 million in revenue during the 2024-25 athletic season should increase scholarship opportunities in non-revenue sports the following season and fill all roster spots permitted under collegiate athletic rules.

Meanwhile, athletic departments making more than \$50 million in revenue during that same time frame should provide "at least as many" scholarship opportunities in non-revenue sports as they did in 2024-25.

Finally, any athletic

departments making less than \$50 million in revenue or those without revenue-generating sports should not disproportionately scale back scholarships or roster spots based on revenue.

Penn State falls into the first category, with its athletic department generating \$220.7 million in revenue during the 2023-24 athletic year — a figure that could grow when the 2024-25 reports are released.

To comply with the order, Penn State must provide more

scholarship opportunities than it did last year in non-revenue sports, while also providing the greatest number of roster spots allowed in non-revenue sports under NCAA rules.

Non-revenue sports at Penn State include tennis, gymnastics, fencing and track and field.

Paying players

There have been rumors of third parties, such as booster collectives (donors, alumni and other interested parties) paying

student athletes, especially in football, large sums of money to attend certain universities.

Trump's executive order works to amend that trend.

While the executive order describes such payments as "improper," the ban doesn't apply to any money paid to athletes for the fair market value of services they provide to third parties, like brand endorsements.

The executive order states that any revenue-sharing between universities and athletes must be designed to preserve or increase scholarships and opportunities for women's and non-revenue sports.

"A national solution is urgently needed to prevent this situation from deteriorating beyond repair and to protect non-revenue sports, including many women's sports, that comprise the backbone of intercollegiate athletics, drive American superiority at the Olympics and other international competitions, and catalyze hundreds of thousands of student-athletes to fuel American success in myriad ways," Trump stated in the order.

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Follow her on X @lexieleigh28.

MacBean's last dance



Tyler Mantz/Collegian File Photo

Penn State forward Kaitlyn MacBean protects the ball during the women's soccer match against Princeton at Jeffrey Field on Sept. 7, 2023.

By Noah Aberegg
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State's Kaitlyn MacBean knew for as long as she can remember that she wanted to play in the Big Ten.

"When I came here and came on campus, I met the team and the coaches and just knew there was nowhere else I wanted to go," MacBean said. "I had a visit scheduled, after that my dad actually forced me to go because I already knew I wanted to go to (Penn State)."

Growing up in Excelsior, Minnesota, MacBean suited up for the Minnesota Thunder Academy ECNL, where she experienced early success as a bronze medalist at the 2018 national championship.

Not only did she star on the pitch, but MacBean was a high-performing track athlete, winning a state championship in the 4x100-meter relay at Breck High School.

While Happy Valley was always home for MacBean, few expected the high-scoring capabilities that she's produced over the years — she was the team's leading scorer for the past two seasons.

"Everytime you went to see her play she clearly had a very big upside to her game," coach Erica Dambach said. "We also knew she was going to need some time in our environment and she was going to need to be patient. Credit to her, that's exactly what she did."

MacBean faced season-ending injuries her freshman and sophomore seasons, sidelining her for the entirety of those years. While the two-year setback initially appeared as a major detriment, it later helped shape her into the athlete she is today.

"One thing she brings to our group is her compassion for our injured players," Dambach said. "She helps me to help them get treated the way they deserve to

be treated and keep them in the forefront of our minds."

During her first year on the pitch and across the two she was sidelined, MacBean studied behind former Nittany Lion Ally Schlegel, who Dambach accredited much of MacBean's training from.

In her redshirt junior year, however, is when things began picking up for the young star. After coming off the bench for the first three games of the 2023 season, MacBean became a consistent starter and scorer for the blue and white.

"Kaitlyn has so many strengths as a forward," former player Jordan Fusco said. "She makes great runs in behind, creates great partnerships with her midfielders, and most importantly, she knows how to score."

Scoring is exactly what she did in her 20 games in the starting lineup. In her first career start on Aug. 23, MacBean recorded her second goal of the season. She would end up with a team-best 10 goals.

"She was very optimistic and was able to convert many of her chances," Dambach said. "Sometimes forwards require three to four chances to score. Kaitlyn is more in the one-two range, so when she got into dangerous moments, she was able to convert."

MacBean also became a steady presence in the locker room, serving as a mentor to many on the team, not just at her position, and has seen plenty of academic success off the field as well.

But while her redshirt junior year was full of success, much more was on the horizon for the young star. In Year 5, MacBean was tagged as a Big Ten Player to Watch in the preseason, and she lived up to that honor.

"I've played every role on this team, which is cool," MacBean said. "I think it brings a different

perspective, because I'm obviously really grateful to be in the position that I'm in because of all the roles I've been in before this."

With the opportunity to start in all 25 games, MacBean pioneered a largely successful season for the blue and white.

After scoring a goal in each of the first three games of the season, MacBean tallied three against West Virginia and two against Saint Louis.

"Honestly the team does most of the work, I'm just the one at the end putting it in," MacBean said. "I think it's a huge tribute to them and all the work that we put in as a team this summer."

The same success continued for MacBean in the remaining 20 games of the season as she tallied a career-high 16 goals — more than double the second-highest scorer at Penn State had.

While MacBean's season ended with All-American and All-Big Ten honors, the team fell just shy of its national championship aspirations, losing 2-1 in overtime to UNC in the NCAA quarterfinals.

After her fifth season with the team, it was general consensus that she would go play professional soccer. However, an unexpected surgery changed the course for MacBean.

"(The surgery) opened the opportunity for me to come back, which I hadn't really thought much about before," MacBean said. "A new door opened, and honestly, I just couldn't say no."

With MacBean returning for one final season to the place that's "developed who (MacBean is)," she hopes that others can experience the return she got from the program and the emphasis on each individual athlete. Until then, she's focused on one final mission in her final year.

"Everyone says they want to win championships, so that's the big goal," MacBean said. "But honestly I just want to have fun. I'm playing with my best friends, and I think I just want to have a good last run playing the game that I love and I've been dreaming of since I was younger."

Stakes are high for MacBean in Year 6 after forgoing professional opportunities, but that's not stopping her from making the most of her final year with the Nittany Lions.

"She had opportunities beyond Penn State, and the fact that she chose to return is a reflection of her love for the program and her desire to leave the place better than she found it," Dambach said.

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Chris Eutsler/Collegian File Photo

Penn State athletic director Pat Kraft smiles at the media during a press conference in Pegula Ice Arena on Feb. 24, 2025.

What's next?

By Lexie Linderman
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

June 6 was monumental for college athletics. California Judge Claudia Wilken approved the \$2.8 billion House v. NCAA settlement — an agreement that was a long time coming after nearly a year of deliberation and months of waiting for approval.

The decision means Division I schools can now pay their athletes directly, while new scholarship and roster limits will be effective July 1. A salary cap will also be in place, which is estimated to begin at \$20.5 million per school in 2025-26.

Additionally, the NCAA will pay back \$2.8 billion in damages across the next decade at approximately \$280 million annually to all D1 athletes who participated between 2016 and 2024.

Revenue sharing

Most athletic programs, including Penn State, plan to use the majority of the revenue-sharing money on football, but every other team is also set to receive investment from the Nittany Lions in this new era of college athletics.

Per NIL-NCAA, it's been estimated that Penn State will spend 91% of that \$20.5 million on football and men's basketball. Men's hockey comes in third with an estimated \$394,839 available to pay its athletes, then wrestling with \$310,241.

Women's hockey and women's volleyball are expected to receive \$83,794 and \$79,371 respectively, while women's basketball is estimated to have \$63,218 to pay its athletes. Men's tennis is set to receive the least amount with just \$15,064, an average of \$1,674 per player.

Women's soccer will receive \$61,440 with the men getting \$39,825. Baseball has \$53,323 to use, while softball is estimated to have \$47,991. In short, each sport at Penn State is getting some sum of money to share among its athletes.

It's worth noting that these estimates assume "each school

which will now have to be reported through the new NIL Go portal. The portal will be run by Deloitte with the purpose of reviewing all third-party NIL deals worth \$600 or more in aggregate to ensure deals are made at fair market value.

Roster limits

While the settlement eliminates scholarship limits, it adds roster limits, meaning each team will have to decrease the number of players on its roster. This change allows any athletes on the team to receive scholarship aid, allowing teams to offer a scholarship to each player up to the roster limits.

Men's basketball is limited to 15 athletes, while the women are capped at 14. Baseball has a limit of 34, and men's and women's lacrosse are capped at 48 and 35, respectively.

Women's volleyball is allowed 15 roster spots, men's hockey has 26 and women's hockey is capped at 23. How the revenue sharing allocated to each team is split among the roster is up to the discretion of the program.

There are rules to "grandfather" in the roster limits, which Judge Wilken requested when she paused the implementation of the settlement.

The final ruling reads: "... the parties modified the [settlement agreement] to provide that settlement class members whose roster spots were taken away or would have been taken away because of the immediate implementation of the SA will be exempt from roster limits at any Division I school for the duration of their college athletics careers."

In short, those who would've been cut because of the new roster limits will instead have the opportunity to play out the rest of their collegiate eligibility.

Penn State will have until June 15 to fully commit to revenue sharing and will have to "designate" athletes it wants grandfathered in. Fall sports must have its roster cut down to its new limit by its first game of the 2025 season, with the exception of the designated athletes. Winter and spring sports must do the same by Dec. 1.

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A crowd gathers during the 2025 Central Pennsylvania Festival of the Arts.

Alexandra Antoniono/Collegian

SUMMER IN STATE COLLEGE



Alexandra Antoniono/Collegian
Michel Lee Garrett speaks to the crowd at a rally to support trans youth at the Allen Street Gates.



Jonah Richmond/Collegian
A bee pollinates the lavender at the Happy Valley Lavender Farm.



Alexandra Antoniono/Collegian
The Marching Cobras perform during the annual Juneteenth Block Party.



Alexandra Antoniono/Collegian
An athlete eats an orange during the Ironman 70.3 Happy Valley.



Alex Fischer/Collegian
An American flag cake sits on a table at 4th Fest.



Herley Gong/Collegian
Preenaa Moyer, a 2015 Penn State Alumni, draws using sidewalk chalk at the Central Pennsylvania Festival of the Arts.



Jonah Richmond/Collegian
Ceramics sit on a table at the 2025 Central Pennsylvania Festival of the Arts.



Alexandra Antoniono/Collegian
A drag queen performs during State College Pride.



Alexandra Antoniono/Collegian
The Marching Cobras perform during the annual Juneteenth Block Party.