

# The Daily Collegian

*For the students. For the glory. Since 1887.*

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## A2

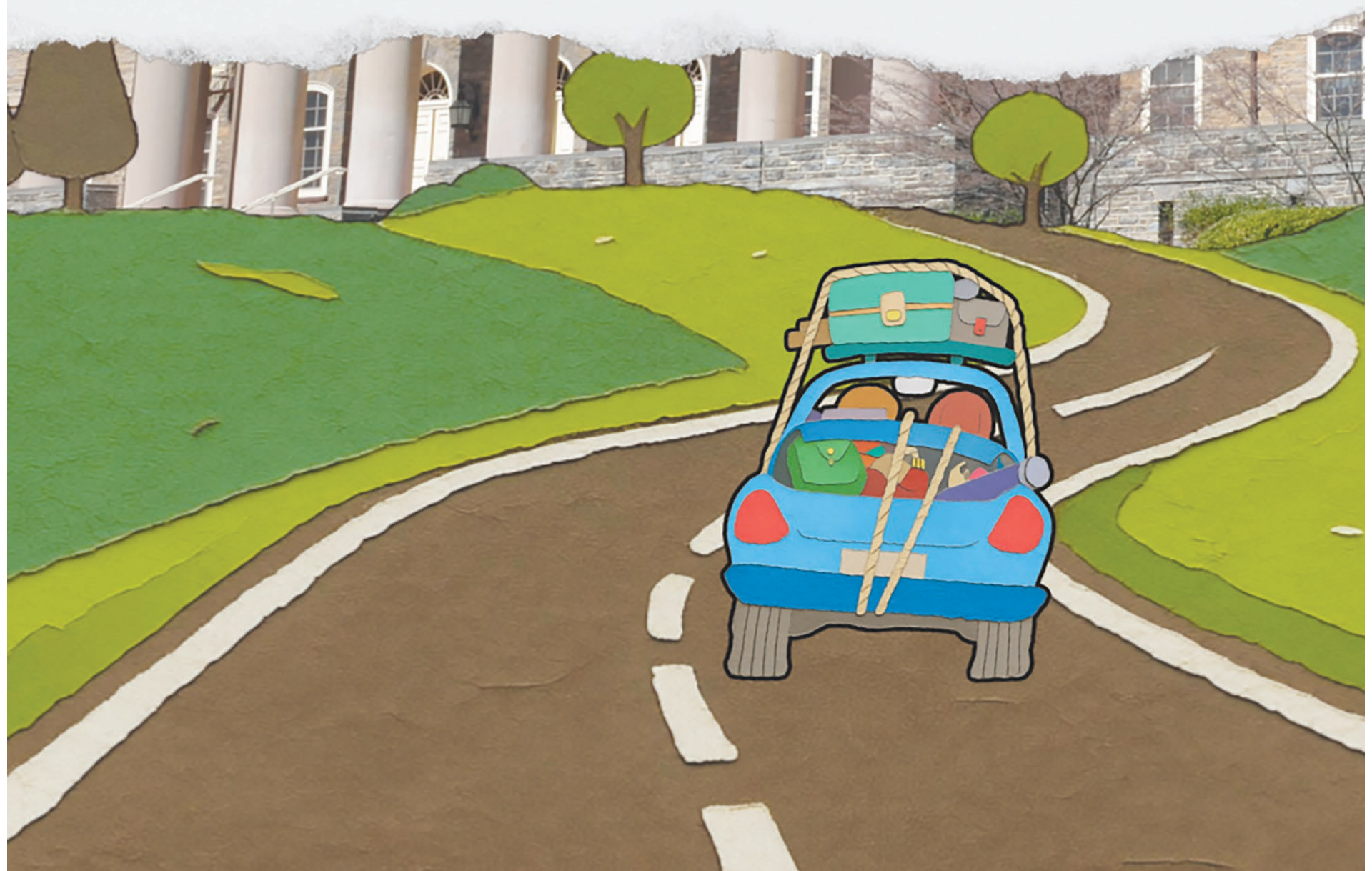
- People to Know on Campus
- Summer tips
- Campus Resources

## A5

- Sports Year in Review
- Dos & Don'ts of football games
- Must know songs for games

## A7

- Things I wish I knew
- Advice from a senior



# CAMPUS RESOURCES

By Annabella Chaklos  
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

For many new Penn State students, the excitement of such a large campus can be exhilarating, overwhelming or nerve-wracking, leaving incoming scholars feeling lost or unaware of all Penn State has to offer. Whether students are struggling to afford basic needs, require extra tutoring, or want new clothes, Penn State has resources for just about anything a student needs.

Here is a list of useful resources for both new and current students alike to benefit from during their time at Penn State.

## Student Care and Advocacy Center

The Student Care and Advocacy Center, located at 222 Boucke, focuses on setting students up with resources.

It has information on important aid students can receive for tuition, expenses, housing, food and health care. The center also provides students with basic needs such as clothing, toiletries and other items during their business hours which are Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Students can also fill out a Basic Needs Request Form for themselves or on behalf of another student, and the center will follow-up with a case worker who will give personalized guidance.

## University Health Services (UHS)

UHS, located at the Student Health Center on Eisenhower Road, is where students can find medical appointments, vaccines, pharmaceutical services, ultrasounds, x-rays, lab work, physical therapy and ambulance services.

Students are required to submit their insurance information before the start of each academic year or they can purchase the Student Health Insurance Plan.

## Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

CAPS is Penn State's mental health services. Located on the fifth floor of the Student Health Center, CAPS has self-care opportunities, individualized counseling, group counseling and psychiatric care.

To begin counseling, CAPS will perform an over-the-phone screening to decide what services will be most beneficial for students. Students may then be offered two rounds of six-week individual counseling.

CAPS also holds free, 30-minute, same-day counseling in various places on campus or virtually called CAPS Chat. Crisis services are also offered at the 24/7 Penn State Crisis Line at 1-877-229-6400.

## Penn State Learning

Penn State Learning is the university's free, peer-led tutoring and learning services, offering guided study groups, tutoring and workshops in fifteen different subjects, including math, writing and seven languages.

The Writing Center in 220 Boucke holds writing and world language tutoring; 7 Sparks holds math and undergraduate public speaking tutoring; and W102 Pattee Library in Sidewater Commons holds writing and peer research tutoring. Other subject tutoring is held virtually or by appointment via Starfish.

## Professional Attire Closet & Professional Headshots

The Professional Attire Closet and Professional Headshot services are offered by Career Services and run in partnership with University Park Fee Board and University Park Undergraduate Association.

Career Services offers free, professional clothing for networking events, career fairs and interviews. Students get one professional outfit per academic year. It also has a photography studio where students can get free, professional headshots taken.

Found in the Bank of America Career Services Center and available Monday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., no appointment is needed for either service — only a valid student ID.

## R-VOICE Center

The R-VOICE Center is a resource for students who have experienced sexual assault, harassment, dating violence, domestic violence or stalking. It also provides reproductive health resources, like free contraceptives.

The R-VOICE Center is in 222U Boucke and is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

## Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity (CSGD)

CSGD, located in LL011 HUB-Robeson Center from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., provides education on resources for LGBTQ+ students. It also has identity-based programs, helps students access gender-affirming care and inclusive housing and can help with reporting misconduct, bias or harassment.

It also has the Clothing Transit, allowing queer students to exchange or obtain clothing for free.

Student Disability Resources

This resource office helps students with disabilities receive access to accommodations within their classes and overall campus experience. Students can file discrimination complaints, learn more about accommodations by their course and different scholarship information on their website or in their office.

Student Disability Resources, located at 116 Boucke, is available Monday through Friday from 8:00

a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

## The Sokolov-Miller

## Financial and Life Skills Center

The Sokolov-Miller Financial and Life Skills Center allows students, faculty, staff and alumni schedule free appointments with financial coaches to learn how to manage finances independently.

It provides individual coaching, presentations, mentoring programs, workshops, self-study modules and webinars. This center can be found in 11-A Grange Building or can be contacted at [finlit@psu.edu](mailto:finlit@psu.edu).

## The Pattee Media

## Commons

The Pattee Media Commons are located in the Pattee Library in rooms W131-W142 and are open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

The commons provide free creative resources to students by appointment, including a 40-seat iMac computer lab, recording studios with podcast and editing equipment, a video recording studio, 3D print farm finishing and paint stations, an invention studio, a critcut maker, dye sublimation, a sewing machine, sticker printing and a laser engraver.

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## The who's who of Penn State, State College

By Kiera Ginn  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Stepping onto Penn State's campus for the first time as a student can be overwhelming, on top of that the incoming class often hears random names as though they should know them.

Here are names that get thrown around a lot at Penn State that every new student should know.

### President

#### Neeli Bendapudi

The 19th president of Penn State University has been in office since July 1, 2022 semester. Bendapudi is both the first woman and first person of color to hold the role at Penn State.

### The Willard Preacher

Outside no matter the weather stands a man in a red hoodie, or if it's exceptionally cold, a dark colored puffer, quoting the Bible to passersby.

The real name of this Willard Building staple is Gary Cattell, but he is more often than not referred to as The Willard Preacher.

### UPUA President

#### Kat Hogan

The University Park Undergraduate Association (UPUA) is Penn State's student government.

President Kat Hogan was elected on April 1 to lead the 21st assembly, which spans the majority of the 2026-27 school year.

### UPUA Vice President

#### Maria Lopez

Elected alongside Hogan on April 1, Lopez is currently serving as the Vice President of UPUA.

Hogan and Lopez ran their campaign on the goals of increasing student engagement with UPUA and transparency across the university.

### Matt Campbell

Entering his first season as the head football coach of the Nittany Lions, Matt Campbell previously coached at Iowa State for a decade.

All eyes will be on Campbell this season after a disappointing 2025 season under former coach James Franklin.

Be sure to try to spot him on the field during this season's games.

### Mayor Ezra Nanes

Ezra Nanes, Mayor of the Borough of State College, can be seen at events across town and campus as he seeks to build a relationship between the borough, the university and the students living here.

Nanes himself is a Penn State alum after graduating with a master's in marketing and finance in 2012.

### State College Police

#### Chief Joseph Merrill

Merrill was sworn into office in January and became the ninth police chief to serve the borough of State College.

The State College native served as police chief for Altoona for four years.

## University Police and Public Safety (UPPS)

UPPS is Penn State's own police department that patrols campus and surrounding areas. UPPS works in tandem with the university and local partners to ensure the safety of students.

## Your Academic Advisor

Unlike high school counselors, academic advisors are well-versed in the world that surrounds your particular major.

Semesterly or yearly meetings can ensure you, as a student, are able to accomplish all the academic goals you have for yourself at Penn State.

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Chris Eutsler/Collegian

**Penn State President Neeli Bendapudi** speaks during Advocate Penn State Capital Day on Wednesday, April 9, 2025 in Harrisburg, Pa.



Matt Cropp/Collegian

**Head coach Matt Campbell** speaks to players after the 2026 Blue-White Practice at Beaver Stadium on Saturday, April 25, 2026 in University Park, Pa.



Alexandra Antoniono/Collegian

**State College Mayor Ezra Nanes** participates in a dance and song at a rally to support trans youth at the Allen Street Gates on Friday, May 9, 2025 in State College, Pa.

# Items to check off your summer to-do list



Sienna Pinney/Collegian

Old Main stands behind spring blooms on Friday, April 19, 2024 in University Park, Pa.

By Neel Ved  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

As the 2026-27 academic year approaches, there will be a new freshmen class stepping foot on Penn State. Below are some important things to do this summer before arriving for the academic year.

## Attend NSO

New Student Orientation (NSO) is required for all first-year students to attend. NSO helps students learn about Penn State and what University Park campus offers students.

NSO has multiple days available throughout the summer. To register, students must complete three important steps: complete NSO tasklist, online academic consultation and course scheduling window and attend an in-person NSO program.

## File FAFSA

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is a form from the U.S. Department of Education for colleges to determine eligibility for federal, state and institutional financial aid. FAFSA is also used to determine grants and work-study funds.

The form is filled out every year.

## Submit Immunization Records

All incoming first-year students are required to submit immunization records. There may also be additional vaccination for anyone living on campus.

To submit immunization records students must log in to the myUHS portal.

## Select Housing

First-year students at University Park are required to live on campus. The Housing and

Food Service (HFS) Contract is included in the offer of admission to Penn State, students do not have to make a separate request for housing.

To choose housing students should sign in to the eLiving system with their Penn State Access ID to request housing and fill out the HFS Contract and pay a \$100 deposit.

Students are allowed to select a preference for what area of campus — East, Pollock, South, West or North Halls — they would like to stay, but this preference is not guaranteed. Submitting the housing contract early does not increase the chance of getting preferred housing.

Penn State does not use a survey to match roommates, but students are allowed to choose if they would like to room with someone they know. The roommate request must be mutual.

## Set Up Mobile id+ Card

As Penn State is a mobile campus the university uses the Mobile ID+ card.

To set it up, students are first required to submit a photo of themselves or a valid government-issued photo ID or valid passport, have the Transact eAccounts app on their phone and logged in through their Penn State account. The card must be added in the students Apple Wallet, Google, Wallet or Samsung Wallet.

## Select a Meal Plan

To select a meal plan at Penn State students must log in to the eLiving website and choose one of the three Campus Meal Plan options. Below is the Campus Meal Plan Cost for the 2026-27 academic year.

**Level 1** - \$987, Total Charge - \$2,737

**Level 2** - \$1,238, Total Charge - \$2,988

**Level 3** - \$1,468, Total Charge - \$3,218

## Put Your Name in the Football Lottery

If you are interested in getting football tickets, students must submit a request through the Penn State Student Account Manager during their assigned class-specific window. The window typically opens in late July and closes early August.

The lottery is not a first-come, first-served system. Everyone who requests will have the same chance of getting tickets no matter when they submit their request.

## Some Key Essentials

**Cleaning supplies** - As the rooms can get dusty and dirty it is necessary to have items to clean your room. Having a small hand-held vacuum and or swiffer jet would help with cleaning your room.

**Wipes** - Having wipes to clean door handles and desks would be helpful as there can be times throughout the semester when students get sick.

**Shower slippers** - As many of the bathrooms in East, Pollock, South, West or North Halls have communal bathrooms, having shower slippers would be beneficial.

**Umbrella** - As it is known to rain a lot in State College, having an umbrella is important as getting caught when it's raining is not fun especially if you are walking to a class.

**Cold medicine** - Having cold medicine is important as students are living close to one another. Having medicine to have a speedy recovery is important. Some medication that would be helpful would be acetaminophen, benadryl, and claritin.

**Reusable water bottle** - Water bottles such as an Owala, Hydro Flask, and Yeti are some top reusable water bottle brands and would be good ones to bring to college.

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# 6 BOOKS, MOVIES TO EXPERIENCE BEFORE YOUR FRESHMAN YEAR

By Ava Krysko  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

The anticipation of returning to school can accompany summer's long stretches. For high school graduates, your first year of college is on the horizon, and it's without a doubt an exciting yet nerve-racking time.

Now that you've graduated and the flurry of end-of-year senior activities is over, you have time to work on the list of Netflix shows and movies you've been dying to see, and maybe even incorporate some reading into your newfound downtime.

After all, you could be starting your next chapter — both in life and in your media consumption. Here's six different books and movies that will start your college career off on the right foot and, hopefully, get you excited for the years to come.

## Books

### 1. "Perks of Being a Wallflower" by Stephen Chbosky

One of the most prominent coming-of-age trope examples, "The Perks of Being a Wallflower" explores Charlie, who embarks on a journey to make friends and leave his comfort zone.

As your high school days wrap up, it's the perfect, relatable read for those looking for something that reminisces on the end of adolescence and showcases feelings like anxiety and uncertainty.

While this book does have plot twists, mature content and themes, it's an in-depth, insightful read on self-discovery and



Jonathon Chiu/Collegian

Books sit on shelves in Pattee and Paterno Library on Monday, Feb. 2, 2026 in University Park, Pa.

teenage friendships.

### 2. "The Catcher in the Rye" by JD Salinger

Of course, you can't leave out "The Catcher in the Rye" when it comes to books that exemplify growing up and changing as a person — I mean, it basically created the genre.

Although you may have read this already (and it often comes across as outdated), it's the exact kind of book that fits the theme of transitioning to adulthood.

Holden, the main character, takes readers on a journey of reflection, both on his life and what kind of person he wants to be. Holden can come off as a bit of a spoiled jerk at times, which is usually a turn off for readers. But, if you're interested in a com-

ing-of-age story that's still a classic, this may be the book for you.

### 3. "Normal People" by Sally Rooney

For all the romance fans, Sally Rooney's "Normal People" is a great recommendation. That is, if you love incessant pining and miscommunication with a dash of unrequited love.

Either way, "Normal People" perfectly fits as a novel, because it follows Marianne and Connell through the end of their high school years and into college as they figure out who they are.

Throughout the story, both of them learn what love is, and deal with all of the hardships that come with that lesson. Not to mention the rockiness of their relationship lingers throughout the

entire book — so there's enough drama that you'll want to stay up until 3 a.m. to keep reading.

## Movies

### 1. "Monsters University"

Maybe this one isn't the most scholarly pick, but when it comes to movies you should watch before freshman year, this one certainly has merit.

It follows familiar characters Mike and Sully as they navigate their freshmen year of college, and flawlessly depicts all the different aspects of what college is like (well, without all of the monsters, of course).

It's a fun watch that will get you excited for the college lifestyle, and hopefully ward off any of those last-minute nerves. After all, who can resist the temptation

of seeing Mike and Sully's best friend origin story?

### 2. "Ferris Bueller's Day Off"

If you haven't already watched it, you definitely should. "Ferris Bueller's Day Off" is basically the pinnacle of end-of-high-school movies. It follows Ferris, his girlfriend and his best friend as they skip a school day to roam around Chicago.

Heartfelt yet comical, this movie will help you think about your own feelings about leaving high school and get you ready to take on your next journey.

### 3. "Lady Bird"

Starring Saoirse Ronan, "Lady Bird" explores the relationship between a mother and her daughter as the latter transitions from high school to college.

As the name suggests, the movie follows Lady Bird during her senior year of high school, a teenager sick of her small town, ready to move on to college. When she eventually goes to college, the feelings she has are more bitter-sweet than she once thought they would be.

This movie is for those who have some trepidation about starting a new experience, but are doing it anyway.

No matter which of these selections you pick, it's important to remember your college experience is entirely your own, and will be what you make it. So, after checking out these titles, be sure to enter your first year with a positive mindset.

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## Penn State hidden lore, traditions

By Rebecca Fein  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

"For the glory of Old State, for her founders strong and great, for the future that we wait, raise the song, raise the song." Behind these words are 42,000 undergraduates, 800,000 alumni and loads of traditions.

If you're a new student, it can be overwhelming trying to learn all the references you hear around campus. And even though a lot of it comes from experience, it's not hard to get in the know.

Here are five important parts of Penn State's lore everyone should know before stepping foot on campus.

### Let it snow

The first tradition is an obvious one. When the first flake of snow graces campus, it's customary to grab a sled — though it's not uncommon to substitute for lunch trays, trash bags and pool floaties instead — and rush to the HUB-Robeson Center lawn.

Students engage in snowball fights, fly down the hill in makeshift sleds and create snow angels across the lawn. Adding a bit of whimsy to the weather makes the cold more bearable.

Contrarily, it's not uncommon to see Spikeball nets, people tanning in bathing suits and frisbees flying by when the weather hits 65 degrees. The State College weather is long and dark, so the sunlight we do receive instantly gets soaked up.

### Sealing the deal

This is perhaps a lesser-known piece of lore, but it's rumored that stepping on the seal located in the HUB-Robeson Center between the Student bookstore and Jamba Juice causes bad luck, such as failing exams or not graduating.

Since this information is not as well-known as some of the other Penn State traditions, the seal is constantly being walked on. The next time you're in a rut, try thinking back to earlier in the day — did you step on the seal?



Lucas Yendziwski/Collegian

The Berkey Creamery sits closed on a snow day on Sunday, Jan. 25, 2026, in University Park, Pa.

### Good eats

D.P. Dough's calzones in a drunken haze will forever be some students' answer to the question: "Why Penn State?"

The cheesy, saucy, doughy pocket of pizza is the standard after a night of fraternity parties and — for our 21+ readers — bar-hopping. Good thing D.P. Dough is open until 4 a.m. week-round to ensure you can get your fix any day.

If you're not feeling pizza, no need to worry. Try Uncle Chen's for Chinese food, Insomnia Cookies for a sweet treat, El Jefe's Taqueria for some chips and guacamole or Raising Cane's for some good old chicken tenders.

### Creamery covenant

Where else on campus would you go for an ice cream fix than the Penn State Berkey Creamery? Made with ingredients straight from Penn State's very own dairy farm, the creamery's ice cream is a famous frozen treat.

Although it may not be known to many people, the creamery actually has three specific rules every person in the world must follow.

Number one: There is only one size. Granted, the creamery

tends to give a big serving, so if you wanted a "large," this is pretty close.

Number two: There are only blue and white sprinkles. Topping lovers beware, as the creamery only offers jimmies in the colors of Dear Old State.

Number three: There is no mixing of flavors. If you are split between two, it is better to split from the line, as the creamery prohibits mixing flavors. The only person to ever mix flavors at the creamery was former President Bill Clinton.

### "We Are" cheer

Let's finish off with one of the most well-known aspects of Penn State lore, and one you don't have to be in Happy Valley to participate in. Whatever city, state, country or even continent you are in, chances are, whenever you hear someone shout "We Are," it is followed by a "Penn State!" It's nice to know we bleed blue and white all over the world.

The next time you see a Nittany Lion shirt, whether it's on vacation, a walk down the street or in a restaurant, try screaming "We Are," and you'll suddenly be surrounded by Penn State family.

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## Happy Valley Slang

By Avery Petellier  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

For many incoming students at Penn State, your journey began the day you accepted your offer. However, truly feeling like a Penn Stater requires engaging with the traditions and slang that come with the campus.

Here's a guide for new students — and those who may still be establishing their Penn State vocabulary — to campus slang you may hear this semester.

### Sylly Week

At the start of every semester, professors around campus typically spend the first few days of class going over the syllabus and introducing content. With a lighter course load, syllabus week, or "Sylly Week," is an opportunity for students to spend time connecting with friends instead of focusing solely on classes. As it takes place before the stress of assignments and exams, students can relax and enjoy settling into campus life.

### Meatball Mondays

McLanahan's Downtown Market "Meatball Monday" has been a staple in students' diets for over 15 years. With sandwiches being just \$4.50, this weekly tradition offers an affordable, convenient and delicious meal option.

While the lines can be long, it's a great way to beat the end-of-semester meal plan blues.

### Willard Preacher

Arguably one of the most recognizable campus figures, Gary Cattell, better known as the Willard Preacher, is an essential part of campus culture. He can be found outside of the Willard Building on a nice day.

Almost always in a red shirt, the Willard Preacher can be seen sharing his own beliefs and engaging in debates with students about religion and culture.

After years of standing on the left side of the building, the Willard Preacher is a campus celebrity that generations of Penn State students will recognize during visits.

### The BJC

The Bryce Jordan Center, commonly referred to as the BJC, is more than just a place to watch women's and men's basketball. Hosting THON, sorority bid day and a variety of concerts, this arena is part of the spirit of Penn State.

With a variety of events and games, the BJC can easily be home to some of your favorite Penn State memories.

### Frat Flu

While the name of this term may seem a little obvious, the origin of the virus continues to be a mystery. "Frat Flu" refers to the sickness that circulates campus at the beginning of

every semester after students come back from break.

However, despite its name, the sickness spreads beyond just those who interact with fraternities. At a certain point in the semester, it may seem like you cannot walk into a classroom without hearing someone coughing.

### The Bloop

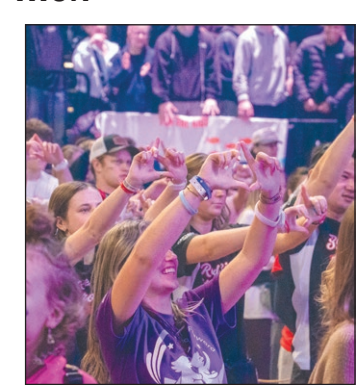
As Penn State is a large campus, the CATABUS system is an integral part of trekking across State College quickly. The Blue Loop, referred to as "The Bloop," is a route students can take to locations around campus and downtown.

Included in students' tuition, "The Bloop" is an affordable way to get around campus and still make it to class on time.

Pollock Testing Center Exactly as it says, the Pollock Testing Center is the location where professors across majors and colleges typically hold exams. With an essence of stress and despair, the center is located near South and Pollock dorms.

While the Pollock Testing Center may not be a favorite among students, it is a shared experience that all students have to conquer at some point.

### THON



Megan Miller/Collegian

The crowd holds up THON diamonds during the final four hours at the 54th THON.

My personal favorite Penn State term is THON. A yearly tradition that symbolizes what it means to be a student here, THON is held every February in the BJC.

THON is the world's largest student-run philanthropy that aims to provide emotional and financial support to Four Diamonds families who have been impacted by childhood cancer.

THON provides a way for students to not only fundraise for an important cause but build friendships through its 17 committees.

FTK As part of THON's vocabulary, the term "FTK" stands for "For The Kids," referring to the children and families that experience pediatric cancer every day.

At Penn State, students often use FTK as a reminder of why students spend hours fundraising and stand for almost two days straight.

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# A Year in Review



Zach Gleiter/Collegian

**Zara Larsson performs** at the Movin' On music festival in the Intramural Fields on Friday, May 1, 2026 in University Park, Pa.



Geraldine Cruz/Collegian

**Protesters sit** during the No Kings 2.0 Protest on Old Main Lawn on Saturday, Oct. 18, 2025 in University Park, Pa.



Zach Gleiter/Collegian

**Protesters gather** in front of the Allen Street Gates during the No Kings protest on Saturday, March 28, 2026, in University Park, Pa.



Matt Cropp/Collegian

**Penn State football coach Matt Campbell speaks** during a press conference in Beaver Stadium



Joe Klein/Collegian

**Fireworks erupt** above Beaver Stadium during the Penn State White Out football game against Oregon on Saturday, Sept. 27, 2025 in University Park, Pa. The Ducks beat the Nittany Lions 30-24 in double overtime.



Sawyer Hadlum/Collegian

**Mitchell Mesenbrink poses** with his trophy for Most Outstanding Wrestler of the NCAA Tournament.



Noah Aberegg/Collegian

**Penn State women's hockey raises** the trophy in the air after winning the 2026 AHA Women's Championship game



Aayan Hamdani/Collegian

**The Nittany Lion sleds** down the HUB Lawn with Meredith McCallum, a graduate student studying school counseling, on Monday, Jan. 26, 2026 in University Park, Pa.



Zach Gleiter/Collegian

**The Penn State Powwow** at C3 Sports Complex on Sunday, March 29, 2026 in State College, Pa.



Megan Miller/Collegian

**Blue Band drum major and Blue Sapphire hug.**



Matthew Kemper/Collegian

**Students walk** around the HUB Lawn during the first day of the Penn State campus-wide involvement fair on Tuesday, Sept. 2, 2025.

# ATHLETICS YEAR IN REVIEW



Sawyer Hadlum/Collegian

The Nittany Lion looks up during the Penn State football game against Rutgers at SHI Stadium on Nov. 29, 2025 in Piscataway, N.J.

By Dom Megats  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Well, it has been another eventful year in Happy Valley. From the diamond to the ice. While not every sports endured great results, there was historical territory reached throughout the year. With that being said, let me recap another year in athletics, and award this season's athlete moments.

## Team of the Year – Women's Hockey

After three years of not being able to advance past the first round of the NCAA tournament, the Nittany Lions had a historic season and reached their first-ever Frozen Four. Penn State's season featured several historic moments, from playing in the first Division 1 hockey game inside Beaver Stadium to earning its highest ranking in program history at No. 3 in the nation. Head coach Jeff Kampersal led his team to a 33-6 season, defeating Mercyhurst for its fourth-straight AHA Championship. Despite ultimately losing to Wisconsin in overtime of the national semifinal, the Nittany Lions used their season to build the program to

its highest level and earn awards along the way.

Notably, Tessa Janecke won her third-straight AHA Player of the Year award and was a finalist for the Patty Kazmaier Memorial Award. Kampersal earned the CCM/AHCA Women's University Division Coach of the Year award, becoming the first coach to win this award at Penn State.

Also nominated – Wrestling, Men's Lacrosse

## Coach of the Year – Jeff Kampersal, women's hockey

Since taking the head coaching role for Penn State women's hockey in 2017, Kampersal took a non-existent program and turned it into one of the winningest teams on campus today. Kampersal has led his team to four-straight conference championships and NCAA tournament appearances. In his most recent season, Kampersal reached 500 total wins as a head coach, making him only the fifth women's hockey coach to reach the milestone. Although not finishing his most successful season on campus with a national championship, Kampersal's years of developing a dominant team came to fruition through its first Frozen Four appearance, capping a historic year for the program.

Also nominated – Clarisa Crowell, softball; Cael Sandersen, Wrestling

## Game of the Year – Wisconsin in the Frozen Four

A record breaking 5,176 fans filled Pegula Ice Arena in hopes to witness one of the biggest wins in Penn State women's hockey history. The Nittany Lions faced Wisconsin in the semifinal round of the Frozen Four after defeating UConn 3-0 in the Regional Final. After Tessa Janecke blew the roof off the arena with the first goal of the game, both teams exchanged scores ultimately leading to a 3-2 Badgers lead with less than 10 minutes left in the game.

That was until Janecke received a breakout pass from Nicole Hall that sparked a quick breakaway. The captain went from her forehand to her backhand and sent the home crowd into a frenzy. Although ultimately losing to Wisconsin in overtime, the game went down as one of Penn State's most memorable games, and will leave a lasting impact on the players and fans.

## Freshman of the Year – Gavin McKenna

After announcing his commitment to Penn State on July 8, Gavin McKenna became one of the most hyped athletes to arrive in Happy Valley. The 17-year-old phenom had his name on the scoresheet in his first game as a Nittany Lion with a pair of assists, but it wasn't until the following day where he earned his first collegiate goal that proved to be the game-winner against Arizona State. McKenna only became more famous at Penn State as the season continued, eventually leading the team with 51 points as the season came to an end. McKenna earned several awards and honors such as the Big Ten Freshman of the Year, a Hobey Baker Award Finalist and Big Ten Scoring Champion.

Also nominated – Rocquette Allen, women's lacrosse; Jack Iannantuono, men's lacrosse

## Play of the Year – Gavin McKenna goal at Beaver Stadium

It could be hard to make over 74,000 people lose their minds at once, but a game-tying Gavin McKenna goal in the second period did just that. Trailing 2-1 late in the second period to Michigan State, a historic crowd was waiting in angst for a reason to yell. McKenna received a pass in the slot from Mac Gadowsky and made no mistake with it, firing a quick wrist shot that snuck under the Spartan netminder's blocker and sent the stadium into an uproar. The Nittany Lions remained neck-and-neck with Michigan

State, ultimately falling in overtime. However, the McKenna goal will be remembered for quite some time through a picture of his celebration in front of the record crowd.

Also nominated – Tessa Janecke Frozen Four Goal

## Upset of the Year – men's basketball: Penn State 71, Iowa 69

The Nittany Lions were -9.5 point underdogs as they welcomed a 20-8 Iowa team to the Bryce Jordan Center for a late-season conference game. At this point, Penn State's season was all but finished, as they began the day 12-17. There was no chance of reaching a .500 season, and a quick exit in the Big Ten tournament seemed imminent. However, the Nittany Lions were able to earn their last win of the season in upset fashion with a 71-69 victory over the Hawkeyes. Josh Reed led the charge with 25 points and knocked down 3-of-4 from beyond the arc.

## Best Transfer Portal Additions – Michael Anderson

## baseball; Kennedy

## Martin, volleyball

Coach Mike Gambino landed one of the best transfer portal additions in the Big Ten on the season. Michael Anderson has been dominant in his first season for the Nittany Lions. The Arkansas transfer brought his SEC power to the Big Ten as he currently leads the conference with a .779 slugging percentage and 19 home runs. Anderson has been a noticeable addition to the lineup throughout the season.

Kennedy Martin proved to be one of the best transfer portal additions on the season through a record-setting season with Penn State. The Florida transfer broke the record for points scored in a single season with 728, and continued to shine throughout the NCAA tournament by remain-

ing a key offensive leader. The Fort Mill, South Carolina, native earned a finalist spot for the AVCA National Player of the Year after a dominant first season as a

Nittany Lion.

## Most Disappointing Team – Football

Penn State entered the 2025-26 with the highest expectations it's had in some time. After falling just short to Notre Dame in the semifinals of the college football playoffs, the players were expected to return the following year with revenge on their minds. However, after starting the season 3-0, the Nittany Lions lost their following six games leading to one of the biggest flops in program history. The losses seemed never-ending as Drew Allar was sidelined for the remainder of the season due to an ankle injury against Northwestern. Following the same game, James Franklin was fired, putting Terry Smith in the head coach position. A disastrous and completely unexpected season ended in a 7-6 record, with the Nittany Lions going 3-6 in Big Ten play. After being a few plays away from the championship the season before, Penn State missed the playoffs entirely.

Also nominated – Basketball

## Comeback Player of the Year – Bridget Nemeth, softball

Following an injury that kept her out for her sophomore season, Bridget Nemeth returned to Penn State's pitching rotation in dominant fashion. The Glendora, California, native heads into the playoffs with a 5.01 ERA through 17 starts. Nemeth earned 57 strikeouts throughout her returning year, the third most on the team. Although not anywhere close to her freshman year total at 202, the junior proved that her season-ending injury the season before didn't deter her in her comeback year.

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# Dos and Don'ts at Beaver Stadium

By Andrew Mercer  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Welcome to Penn State, young football fans.

Happy Valley brings together students from all backgrounds, many of whom share the same love — sports. However, attending a football game at Beaver Stadium is a different experience than the majority of other sports at Penn State.

Here are the Dos and Don'ts that you should be aware of going into your first football season.

## Do – Arrive early

You'd be surprised how fast the student section fills up to maximum capacity.

If you want your spot among the students, and don't want to miss the pregame theatrics, you should arrive at the stadium no later than 30 minutes before kickoff. The Blue Band will play, the Lionettes will dance and the anticipation builds over that time. You especially wouldn't want to miss the Floating Lions routine.

For bigger games, like the Big Ten opener or the White Out, try to arrive at least an hour and a half prior to kickoff. Beat the chaos and get some snacks while the bulk of the crowd is outside tailgating.

If you're early enough, you can be a part of the iconic S-Zone, where the Lion Ambassadors hand out specific shirts to form an "S" in the center of the student section. It's the easiest way to look back at the game online and see where exactly you were sitting.

It's worth noting that Nittanyville, the student organization behind the student section, gets the first few rows of the bleachers while everyone else files in above them.

## Don't – Leave early

Conversely, you shouldn't leave the game early, no matter what the outcome of the game is.

If the game is within two scores, don't go anywhere — you may be about to witness a legendary comeback or nail-biting end to the game. If that happens while you're on your way back to your dorm hall, you'd regret it.

Even if the game is a complete blowout, favoring either team, there is still much tradition to take part in. This includes the singing of the alma mater and the ringing of the victory bell should the Nittany Lions come out on top.

These are things that bring the

community together. Swaying back and forth with your friends or strangers singing the alma mater will become a core memory. Sometimes it's rowdy after a win or somber after a tough loss but it's a piece of Penn State that bridges the connection from the past to the present.

If you leave early, you'd miss out.

## Do – Learn the songs and chants

It seems like everybody knows the famous "We Are Penn State" chant, but that's not the only one that you should know by heart.

There are many variations of the "We Are" chant that plays in the stadium, and at specific times too. When the Nittany Lions run out onto the field or snag a turnover, "Zombie Nation" by Kernkraft 400 blasts over the loudspeakers.

The Blue Band will also play a slowed-down version of the song at various intervals, with a fittingly slowed-down chant to accompany it.

In addition, it's important to remember the "Let's Go P-S-U" chant.

That brings us to the two harder songs to learn: "Fight On' State" and the alma mater.

"Fight On' State" plays immediately after Penn State scores a touchdown, pausing midway through so that the kicker can make his extra-point attempt, and subsequently finishing. The alma mater plays immediately following the end of the game, where the team salutes the fans before exiting through the tunnel.

Both songs are also prevalent at the vast majority of other Penn State sporting events.

## Don't – "Sit" in the student section

You don't sit in the student section, you stand. Even between plays, during timeouts and between quarters, the students behind the end zone don't actually use the bleachers until halftime.

It's a long, exhausting day, as you're standing for roughly four hours straight with small breaks in between to use the bathroom if needed.

However, the constant standing is what brings the energy to the crowd — voices are amplified and energized.

Besides, if you sit down, you won't be able to see the action because the taller folks standing in front of you will be blocking the view. So enjoy the energy,

and take in the once in a lifetime crowd.

## Do – Wear Penn State gear (and know where to find some)

This should go without saying, but you never know.

Fans will generally be wearing blue and white in some fashion, whether it be Penn State's uniforms, the striped jumpsuits or a plain outfit that fits the scheme. Plan to wear a lot of white, though, as the Stripe Out, Helmet Stripe and of course, the White Out all require the student section to wear white.

With that said, there have been sightings of fans putting in the effort to honor a past alumnus by wearing their NFL jersey. While the sentiment is there, make sure to check the schedule — and the colors — of Penn State's opponent that week. Therefore, you wouldn't want to show up to Beaver Stadium wearing a Saquon Barkley Philadelphia Eagles jersey for the Week 1 game against Marshall.

Well, you may ask what if you don't own any Penn State drip? In that case, The Family Clothesline is located right on East College Ave and has everything you need to look at home on your first game day.

## Don't – Tailgate too hard

You paid a lot of money for those tickets, whether it be for the student section or for a seat elsewhere in the stadium. That's why it's imperative that you stay energized and coherent for the main event: the game itself.

Tailgating is huge in college football overall, but especially at Penn State. Hot dogs and burgers on the grill, cornhole and pong on plastic tables, loud music on speakers. It's all part of the festivities.

But it can be overwhelming and it can drain all of your energy fast if you aren't mindful about it. Make sure to pace yourself as there's a lot of screaming, singing and dancing in the stadium during the game too.

For those who are over the age of 21, drink responsibly. You want to be able to understand what's going on in the game, and remember it too. Safety is of the utmost importance. So, don't go too crazy, no matter how much fun it'll be out in the lots.

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# MUST-KNOW SPORTS SONGS

By Chase Mitchell  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

So you're a new student at Penn State on this beautiful campus.

Whether you're on Frat Row (you'll learn), the bars (you'll be old enough soon) or your first White Out game, there are some songs that you'll hear all over the place, and trust me when I say that you don't want to be the lone one out who doesn't know the words — we've all been there.

## Penn State Alma Mater

Please, please, please, learn the words. They're not hard to memorize. Beaver Stadium, Bryce Jordan Center, Pegula Ice Arena and virtually everywhere else around campus display the words for your convenience.

There was a version of the song popular among students back in the nineties that replaced the existing verses with one of their own: "we don't know the bleep words." You can guess what their expletive of choice was.

By learning this song — hopefully before your fourth year — you'll immediately feel more connected to the school and those around you. Plus, you get to lock arms with your friends while singing it. What's better than that?

## Mo Bamba - Sheck Wes

Ahh, the name alone conjures up memories of that 2019 White Out game against Michigan (Sean Clifford, they could never make me hate you).

Whether it's a huge third down against a tough division rival or an opponent taking a timeout on the first play of the game, you're bound to hear this jam inside Beaver Stadium. You already know it, so prepare to hear it even more.

## Seven Nation Army - The White Stripes

Similar to the last entry on my list, you know this one. You've heard it a thousand times. And guess what? The folks at Beaver Stadium play the heck out of this one, too. The Blue Band also plays it frequently, so there's no escaping this White Stripes classic when you're at Penn State.

Not a fan of the garage rock revival genre? Maybe think about

attending a different school. It's not too late. You won't be able to get Peachy Paterno anywhere else, though. Wink wink.

## Sweet Caroline - Neil Diamond

Bum-bum-bum. You know it. I know you know it. We all know it's overplayed, but it's still a Beaver Stadium classic that usually plays during the fourth quarter.

Neil Diamond's 1969 classic has been a staple at Red Sox games forever, but the student section at Beaver Stadium sure goes wild when this one comes on.

There's a certain in-state school that Penn State students aren't huge fans of, so maybe learn the alternative version of this song, too, if you know what I mean.

## Kernkraft 400 - Zombie Nation

It's a huge misconception, but no, the name of the song is NOT Zombie Nation. Sorry to ruin it for you.

The iconic song that's probably most affiliated with Penn State at this point has no lyrics, meaning you only need to know the part of the song you start chanting "We Are Penn State!"

This German techno jam from the nineties started out as a club song and was brought over to Beaver Stadium around 2005 — and it isn't going anywhere anytime soon.

## Dreams and Nightmares - Meek Mill

This one's for you, Philly.

Just about three hours from the original capital of the United States, it makes sense that this song can be heard at Penn State football games. With a solid chunk of Beaver Stadium being Philadelphia sports fans on any given Saturday, don't be surprised when everyone around you knows every word to this song.

Don't be the odd one out.

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Listen Here:



# A biased guide to dining halls

## Food options that are worth the tap

By Avery Petellier  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

While Penn State might not necessarily be known for its revolutionary cuisine, that doesn't prevent students from having their own favorite spots.

Here is a review of the different dining locations across campus so students don't miss out on potential favorites.

### West

With all locations in Waring Commons, West Food District is the most underrated dining location. Waring Square Buffet @ West consistently has a variety of hot food options with sides to accompany. What I would argue makes it so underrated though is the other options besides the main course.

With multiple types of pizza, salad and pasta options, West provides a mixture of dishes that allows those who have dietary restrictions or dislikes to find something satisfying for dinner.

For coffee drinkers, Edge @ West serves a list of drinks and pastries. With it only being open Monday through Friday and consistently having up to an hour-long wait, this is my least favorite location.

Lastly, across from the dining hall, the restaurant State Chick'n serves everything from chicken tenders to salads. While the sauces may be good, it's not worth the long walk or bus ride to the west part of campus.

The highlight of West Dining District is by far the fresh chocolate chip cookies served warm every day in the dining hall.

### East

With the East part of campus housing the most students, it's no surprise that East has the most amount of dining options overall. Located in Findlay Commons, there are nine restaurants that accompany the standard buffet.



Celia Lewis/Collegian

Students eat lunch in Redifer Commons on Sunday, April 26, 2026, in University Park, Pa.

The East Food District Buffet is not bad by any means and is a great option for students who want a bit of everything. However, I think the restaurants are the only thing worth coming to this part of campus for.

From Bowls @ East that offers acai and yogurt bowls, to Grillers that offers unique burger options, to On A Roll that has an infinite amount of sandwich combinations, there are a lot of restaurant options to choose from.

While I don't have one favorite pick here, I would argue that Edge @ East is the best location out of the few, even if it has long lines.

### Pollock

If you were to ask most upperclassmen where their favorite place on campus to eat was, many would likely say Pollock Dining Commons. While I wanted to say it was overrated, after trying it out, I understand why it has this reputation.

The Pollock Commons Buffet, typically known as the

best on campus, is not only good overall but consistent. The dining hall itself is by far the biggest, and I loved how it offered an assortment of options for picky eaters.

With yet another location, Edge @ Pollock offers more than just food, but easy options for the coffee drinkers on this side of campus.

My personal favorite food lies at Fresco @ Pollock, as it has a delicious burrito bowl and walking taco, better than the East location.

### North

Out of all the dining options on campus, I would say I have heard the least about North. While I don't think it has the worst options on this list, it's probably the least memorable location.

Northside @ Warnock Commons is similar to the other buffet options on campus, but typically has less variety than the rest.

Greens + Grains @ Market North is the best dining hall salad option. With the freshest

ingredients and the best variety, it's a great place for students to get a healthier meal.

Nosh is one of the most unique options for on-campus dining that offers items like chicken tenders, hot dogs and other fried foods. What makes it unique is that it's a completely kosher restaurant catering to students who follow that diet.

My favorite option at North would have to be the chicken tenders at Nosh, as they're consistently good.

Overall, North may not be a stick-out option but I don't think that's always a bad thing.

### South

Out of all the dining locations on campus, The South Food District at Redifer Commons is overall my personal favorite. However, I also think it has the worst buffet.

Southside Buffet @ South Food District may not be bad, but it's not worth a visit if you don't live in south. The food is usually the least fresh and if you don't like the main dish that night, you'll likely not have much else.

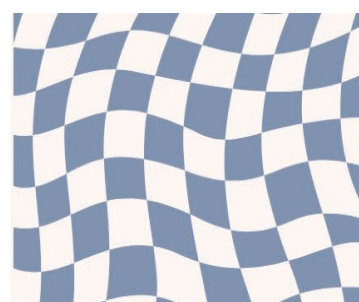
Where South Food District pulls through is with its restaurants. Bowls @ South has incredibly fresh fruit and sweet acai that make it worth the usually long wait.

Choolaah Indian BBQ is a standout with its vegetarian-friendly options that also cater to varying spice tolerances.

My favorite item in South can be found at Redifer City Grill. The mozzarella sticks are fried to perfection and always have a great cheese pull.

Overall, South Food District may have the worst buffet, but that doesn't mean it falls out of the race. With it having some of the best restaurants on campus, it's worth the walk.

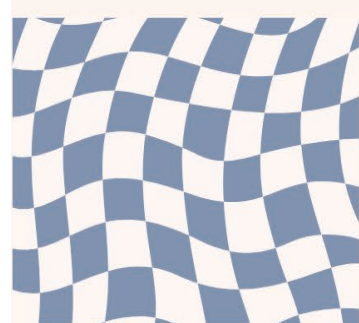
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# An out-of-stater's guide to Happy Valley



Joe Klein/Collegian

Students study outside of Old Botany on Monday, April 13, 2026, in University Park, Pa.

By Alli Satterfield  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Transitioning to college is daunting to begin with, and when you choose a school far away from home, that change can be even more difficult.

Being an out-of-state student can mean a lot of things. You might have different perspectives, expectations or norms than your peers, but that also means you can share insights they may not have.

I grew up in South Carolina, and the cultural norms from the Southeastern coast to Central Pennsylvania are a bit different.

Here are some of the things I learned to make your transition slightly easier. Think of it as an out-of-state to Penn State guide.

### 1. You're somewhere... in the middle of nowhere

When driving into Penn State's University Park campus, you may notice there's not a lot going on. The sights and sounds of mooing cows can be a little intimidating for students from more metropolitan areas.

But, never fear, because there are definitely things to do and see on campus and in State College. Our little city in the middle of nowhere also has the perk of being in the middle of nowhere.

While that may sound like a non sequitur, the location means there are plenty of state parks and places for outdoor recreation

nearby. It's kind of the best of both worlds.

### 2. Pack your whole closet

In South Carolina, I was faced with constant reminders that "it'll be cold up there" before I came to Penn State. What I didn't realize is that it would be below freezing, incredibly windy and blisteringly warm all within the same day at Penn State.

The weather here can be a little bit unpredictable, and in my freshman year, I didn't pack generously enough to allow for that. Frankly, you may need your big winter coat one morning, but be wearing shorts and a t-shirt by the same afternoon.

### 3. Learn the words to the alma mater (or don't)

During my first football game, when everyone started singing the alma mater, I was so lost.

Here's a heads up: They have the lyrics on the jumbotron at Beaver Stadium. You don't actually have to know the lyrics, which is a great cheat code for students who maybe didn't have the Penn State upbringing that some in-state students did.

In the Bryce Jordan Center, the lyrics are written around the arena on the ribbon board, so no matter where you are, there's probably a fail-safe if you forget the lyrics.

So learn the lyrics — or don't. It's up to you.

### 4. Take the whoop!

I refused to learn the bus system at Penn State my freshman year. I lived in South Halls, and I said to myself, "I must walk everywhere." This year, I'm a resident assistant living in East Halls, and my building is just so far from all of my classes.

Luckily, the CATA bus stop is right in front of my dorm building, and, even though I didn't know how to navigate the bus system at first, it has been the biggest blessing. The White Loop (whoop) goes right from my doorstep across campus and downtown, which I love.

And it's free, so I highly recommend taking advantage of the bus system sooner than I did.

### 5. Invest in a dolly

Since I just recommended basically bringing your whole wardrobe to school with you, I have to concede that the process of moving does involve a lot of active parts. I've found it's easier to use reusable tote boxes to move, but the really handy tool is a dolly. It's easy to load three to five boxes at a time, and that means fewer trips in and out of your room on move-in day. You can thank me later.

I wish all of our new out-of-state students the best. It takes everyone to make us who "We Are." (Penn State!)

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# Dorm essentials

By Alli Satterfield  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

I'm a resident assistant on campus, so I'm familiar with the emotions of transitioning college students. But, also, the emotions of their parents.

A lot of parents step into dorm buildings not knowing what to expect, and they're nervous to send their babies into this unknown land alone. But, never fear. Everything will work out in the end, especially if you're prepared.

So, here are some of the dorm essentials I think new students should definitely look into.

### 1. An ottoman/step stool

Dorm rooms are small, obviously, and they may be smaller than some students are used to, especially in terms of storage space. Ottomans are a great way to incorporate some extra storage into a dorm room, with a hint of practicality, too.

A lot, if not all, of the Penn State dormitory beds are lofted, so ottomans can be a good way to have two uses for one purchase. They can hold your things while also helping you crawl into bed. But, even if you don't need the extra storage, I would probably recommend a step stool so you don't have to do acrobatics to get into your bed.

### 2. Fans

I'd also recommend getting a fan (or two) for your living space.

When I first moved in, I questioned whether or not I would actually need a fan at Penn State. It gets so cold during the winter that I assumed I wouldn't want to make my space any colder. But, after two years here, I'm so glad my dad encouraged me to keep it "just in case."

Since dorm rooms are a little bit smaller, they keep heat in very well. Even in the dead of Pennsylvania winter, I had my fan going. Now, with so many options online, there are easy

ways to adjust speed and intensity, so fans are something of a no-brainer.

### 3. Command strips

Decorations are one, simple thing that can help make a dorm room feel more like home. Although, it can be difficult to decorate because of the restrictions in the dorms. You aren't allowed to hang anything or decorate in a way that may damage or alter the paint or integrity of the room.

So, Command strips are a lifesaver. They attach to the wall sturdily and can be removed with little-to-no residue. They also come in a variety of shapes and sizes, so they're helpful to hang almost anything.

### 4. A comfier chair

There'll be a chair paired with your desk when you arrive at your PSU dorm room. But, if you spend a lot of time working at your desk like I do, it may not be the comfiest option. They're typically wooden chairs or small, plastic rollers.

I'm so grateful I got something for myself with a little bit of cushion and a lot more lumbar support.

### 5. Laundry detergent, towels, etc.

A lot of parents think that going away to college is like going for a school-year-long hotel stay. But, that couldn't be further from the truth.

It's important that you remember to pack anything you would use at home. Bring laundry detergent (liquid or pods), towels, linens, brooms and more, because it won't be here waiting for you.

Although packing those essentials is crucial, there are some items that deserve to be left behind. The printer, steamer and mound of throw pillows Pinterest told you are an absolute must can probably stay at home.

Have a great NSO and an even better freshman year, new Penn Staters.

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## Column | A reality check

Maybe it was arrogance or some sort of delusion, but I thought I was immune to all the bad things that come with being a freshman on a college campus.

Immune to homesickness, immune to late nights wondering if this was the right choice.

Surprise, I wasn't. I was a mess, and quite honestly, a loser. I think the version of myself that couldn't even imagine graduating because I was so miserable would be in awe of the person who's writing this column.

Coming from a Penn State family meant only one thing: After graduating from high school, I would make my way to State College in the fall.

Upon my arrival, I quickly realized two things. One, I wasn't happy. Two, everyone else was.

The perfect, ideal college aesthetic was a figment of my imagination, and every day just meant that I was one day closer to being able to pack up all my things and go home.

I think about everything I missed out on because I was some shell of a human that couldn't realize what was in front of her.

I understand how this is coming off, though. I should've stopped

moping around and actually made some change for myself instead of wallowing in my misery, but hindsight is 20/20.

It's easy to say that I should've done something different, stopped complaining and actually gotten my things together. I was in a constant limbo of wanting to go anywhere but here, but recognizing that nothing was going to change unless I did.

So, that's what I did. And what every first-year student needs to do: Put on big girl pants and take control of the things you want.

If you want to change your major, do it.

If your friends want to get

Mexican food at 11 p.m., go.

I can't stress the importance of spontaneity enough. Don't be stupid, but you'll thank yourself.

As I'm writing this, I'm contemplating whether the major I convinced myself was perfect for me truly is. I could spiral and spend all night mad at myself, because maybe I should've spent more time thinking it through, but it's too late. And to 18-year-old-me, it was right.

Sometimes you'll make decisions that conflict with something you once believed in, and it will make your head and stomach ache, but you need to suppress it. Not in an "ignore your

mental health" way, but understanding that growing up means being uncomfortable with new situations, people and things that push you to be a different version of yourself.

A version of yourself that can take a punch to the ego, a version of yourself that can stand up and ask for help.

There are a lot of hard truths you have to face head-on. You might not like your roommate and you might not get the internship you definitely thought you had in the bag, but you need to get over it.

Dwelling in your sorrow and misery isn't going to fix the situation at hand and once it

finally clicks that it's out of your control, it all changes.

So much of your time can, and probably will, be wasted thinking about what could have been said or done differently, but what's that accomplishing... nothing.

Focusing on things in your control and within your means to change is what's going to make you happy and contribute to a successful time at Penn State.

Not everything is sunshine and rainbows all the time, and don't let anyone convince you otherwise. No one is thriving 100% of the time, and although their Instagram feeds say differently, it's not their reality and it certainly doesn't have to be yours.

There are going to be people who will convince you that you're not doing enough, you're behind, you don't deserve to be in the room and it's not true. Do what you want at the pace that works for you and everything else will follow.

I'm convinced that everything will work out; it's just a matter of time. Give yourself grace and kindness, even if you don't believe you deserve it.



The sun sets over a bus stop on Teresa's first day on campus during the Fall 2023 semester.

Teresa Phelan / Collegian

MY VIEW | Emma Lessick

## Column | Advice from a graduating senior

There's something about being a graduating senior that suddenly makes you feel qualified to give life advice. Despite the fact that only a few years ago, I was walking around campus in your shoes, an underclassman at the bottom of the food chain.

Regardless, in the spirit of growth (and mild delusion), here's my completely unsolicited advice, most of which I had to learn the hard way. So, maybe just take a moment to hear me out.

First, romanticize your life. I'm serious. Put your headphones on, pretend you're the main character and walk to class like you have somewhere important to be (even if it's just a lecture you will half listen to). It doesn't fix everything, but trying to enjoy the small things can make the day exponentially better. Also, it encourages you to enjoy the mundane, everyday things.

Go to office hours. Not because you're an overachiever or because you have deeply intellectual questions, but because most professors are significantly more

generous to students whose names they recognize. I don't make the rules.

Also, stop taking 8 a.m. classes with the mindset of "I'll just get over it." You won't. It will get you. There's no version of you, no matter how motivated, rested or optimistic, that enjoys walking to class while the sun is still figuring out what it wants to do for the rest of the day.

Here's another one. Canvas will humble you. Every time. You can have your entire week planned out, your life together, your notes color-coded and then suddenly it's 11:58 p.m. and you're submitting something you started only a little bit ago.

Those pesky notifications at whatever time of day or night always gave me cardiac arrhythmia in anticipation of whether it was a grade, message from my professor or a reminder for an assignment I've yet to turn in.

Now onto less academic stuff:

Text your friends back. Not eventually. Not "I'll get to it later." Later turns into never and then suddenly you're "so busy" and find your inner circle of friends shrinking by the day.

Take pictures of everything, even the random, boring moments. You think you'll

remember them. You won't. At the end of your college years, your camera roll will end up meaning more to you than your GPA.

Learn how to be alone without feeling lonely. There will be nights when no one's around, plans fall through or everyone else seems busy. Take yourself out. Go on a walk. Go get food. It's not sad, it's independence, self-care and a skill to be able to enjoy your own company.

Stop waiting to feel "put together." No one wakes up one day and suddenly has their life perfectly aligned. Everyone is improvising. Some people just have better outfits while doing it (couldn't be me).

Don't stay in situations (or with people) that make you feel small. Whether it's friendships, relationships or just the environment in general, if you constantly feel, or are being made to feel like you're not enough, that's your sign to leave.

Protect your peace.

Likewise, let yourself out-grow people and places. It doesn't have to mean anything dramatic happened. Sometimes you change, sometimes other people change, that's allowed.

Say yes more than you say no, but know when to say no.

Go out, try things, be spontaneous. But also, if you need a night in, take it. Missing one night out with your friends will not ruin your social life.

Drink water. Seriously. Not everything can be solved with iced coffee, vibes or alcohol. Stay hydrated with H2O.

Call your parents (or whoever feels like home). Even if it's quick. Even if you think you don't have much to say. One day, you'll wish you did it more.

You will be OK. Even when things don't go how you planned, even when you feel behind or have no idea what you're doing next, you'll figure it out. You always do.

If you take something from this, let it be this. College doesn't end with some big moment where everything suddenly makes sense. It kind of just ends, and you're left with a camera roll full of blurry pictures and the absolute best memories.

And if all else fails, at least check Canvas before 11:59 p.m. Some habits are just worth keeping for a while.

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