

The Dean's Almanac

Whoomp! And Other Expletives

February 8, 2007

You know that scene in “March of the Penguins” when the awful cold front blows in and the penguins are all huddled together, eyes shut against the howling wind, protecting their eggs? That scene has come to mind several times this week when I’ve passed a group of you standing at a bus stop. You look just like them - a combination of cute and pathetic. Of course, penguins don’t have the option of wearing hats, and you do. So stop worrying about having hat hair and pull something down over your ears, okay?



How about those Huskies, huh? Undefeated in the Big East, heading for the NCAA Tournament. Watching Kalana Greene is more entertaining than the entire NBC lineup. And the women’s ice hockey team is equally impressive. But if you really want to see some fast feet, check out the ballroom dancing in the Student Union on Monday nights.

Here’s another tip: check out the new Café Co-op for some good grub. You may not know this, but Dining Services took over the somewhat woeful café in the Co-op (yes, I thought it was woeful, but that’s only my opinion, not the official University position, as if I ever offer the official University position on anything), and is now offering a pretty interesting menu, including noodle bowls, at more reasonable prices (and they take points and Husky Bucks). Give it a try.

I’m a bit behind on the mailbag, so let me try and catch up. **Joellen** wrote to ask, “Is there a way we can get more new music to be played at sporting events? Jock Jams came out in 1995 and while “Whoomp! There It Is” is certainly a classic, there’s plenty of newer music that I would love to hear at Gampel.” I tracked down the Gampel music guy, [Dave Kaplan](#), who said he has been hoping to find some new music, and would be interested in suggestions from students. Keep in mind that this is a family crowd, so no profane, sexist, racist, homophobic or similar lyrics. If you know of some music that might work, send Dave your suggestion. I personally think we need more Talking Heads and ABBA, but again, that’s my opinion, not the official University position.

Ed wrote in asking why he keeps seeing flags at half-mast around campus. I’ve not been able to get an answer to this question, but I have learned that the state maintains a [website](http://www.ct.gov/mil/cwp/view.asp?a=1345&Q=314654) (<http://www.ct.gov/mil/cwp/view.asp?a=1345&Q=314654>) with “flag status” info. As far as I can tell, we’re not following protocol. Any answers out there?

Rebecca drives a shuttle bus, so has time to ponder deep things:

One night as I was driving around campus I realized that it seemed that just about every light, in every hallway, of every residence hall, that every student on campus is not allowed to be in over winter break, was on. I wondered how much electricity could be saved if these lights were just turned off. It seems counterintuitive to try to get students to cut down on their energy use and then just leave all the lights on while they weren't here. If everyone is so concerned with saving energy, couldn't we start by turning off all of the lights that don't need to be on while students aren't allowed in the dorms?

For this, I turned to **Logan Trimble**, Head Residence Life Facilities Guy, who responded,

Rebecca makes a good point. Since a lot of the hallways and stairwells do not have light switches for obvious safety reasons, light sensors could be the answer. We will need to check with the building code authorities to see if this is possible. It may be a project that Residential Life can do with our own campus labor force and complete the job over time without incurring a lot of expenses.

Lots of questions about Huskymail. Yes, I get that you are unhappy with it. Expletives are not necessary. But good news! Even though this looks like a new version of HM, it's really not. It's the same old mediocre version with a temporary new face. Here's the scoop **Mike Kerntke**, head of UITS, sent to me on February 2:

The new Huskymail system is just now being utilized to provide email services to the student population. We introduced a new front end to the student email system which is easing the migration to the new system. It is the introduction of this new front end that students have been seeing and assuming that the new system is now delivering their email with no noticeable enhancements.

The fact is that the old system is still being utilized within the new front end that students are seeing. It was our intention to run with the new front end for a period of time to ensure that nothing had been broken with its introduction and this has been accomplished.

As of February 9, about 6000 students have the new system, which is about 1/5 of the total student email accounts. The old system is still experiencing problems, but we anticipate that as more accounts are moved to the new system, performance in the old system will improve. Once all accounts have been migrated the delivery issues should disappear. It seems to be a slow process but we want to ensure that we introduce a quality product that is free of performance issues.

Several of you, including **Zach**, have asked about the possibility of outsourcing email to a vendor like Google, and **Sue Lipsky** from UITS says yes, this is a very real possibility, but there are some security concerns based on what has happened at some other universities that have done this, so it is a decision being very carefully evaluated. Folks, UITS knows you're frustrated, and they are working very hard on this. Hopefully you'll see some improvement almost immediately, and long-term help is on the way.

Numerous questions...okay, complaints...and expletives...have come in about the housing lottery. What can I say? We don't have enough housing for everyone. In-state residents think you should have priority because, as one father said, "we pay taxes here." Out-of-state students think you

should have priority because of difficulties of setting up an apartment when you don't live close enough to cart stuff back and forth (so by this reasoning, we really should do it by actual distance? So if you are a freshman from, say, South Windsor, you are less deserving of an apartment than a junior from Danbury?). There are no easy solutions. If there were, **Sam Miller** would have figured them out by now. He always gets the easy ones, and sometimes even the slightly difficult ones. We need better off-campus housing, and I hope the town of Mansfield will work with developers to build some high-quality student housing that you will want to live in. But don't be mad at Residence Life. They just implement the policies decided on by the Provost's Ad hoc Committee on Housing Priorities.

Speaking of supply and demand issues, several of you have also written about the overcrowded Student Recreation Facility. **Jen** wrote to say she is tired of being shut out of Bodywise classes, and others have complained about the long lines to get on equipment. My pal and golf tutor **Patti Bostic**, who works incredibly hard for all of you as Director of Recreation, is as frustrated as anyone. She told me that there were 350 students turned away in January alone (for those of you who blame pre-Spring Break Bathing Suit Panic, Patti reports that the number in September was similar). The SRF is at a breaking point. So what can you do? Well, for starters, it is the Division of Athletics that oversees Recreation. Students need to organize and encourage Athletics to expand its facilities - either build new ones or allow more student use of existing ones. You need to make sure the University's Board of Trustees knows this is an issue you care about (contact USG and your Student Trustee **Salmun Kazerounian**). But know this - the cost of a new rec center will be borne, in large part, by students - not necessarily you, but those who come after you. The cost of a UConn education is already high, and this will push it higher. Use your big brains to do the cost/benefit analysis necessary in this situation. What's it worth to have a state-of-the-art facility? Are you willing to organize? Press for it? Pay for it? Hey, I'm just asking. It's your money, and your body.

And, of course, it's your University. Take good care of it. See you around campus.