

The Dean's Almanac

You Can't Steal Music!

February 6, 2008

We've gotta talk, folks.

The Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) is waging a very effective campaign to stop the illegal downloading of music through file-sharing. They have been systematically going after college students, some of the most egregious offenders, demanding settlements of \$3000, more if students choose not to accept the initial offer. What they are doing is within their rights as the association that is charged with protecting artists' property (whether this is of benefit to the artists is debatable, but that's not my purpose here).

When the RIAA contacts the University, and produces a legal subpoena, we are obliged to give them information about students' identification and online activity. This has now happened—we've been subpoenaed. All we can (and will) do on your behalf

is notify you that the RIAA is after you. At that point, you'll have to either pay this fine, or hire a lawyer to fight this (and, if you'll Google around on this topic, you'll see that this can backfire and turn into a huge fine, plus legal fees). [March 5 Update: I stand corrected. While the RIAA made known its intention to subpoena UConn, it hasn't yet happened. Sorry for repeating inaccurate information.]

The bottom line is: illegal downloading is...illegal. And it will cost you a bundle. 159 students at the [University of Tennessee](http://arstechnica.com/news.ars/post/20080129-less-than-1-of-u-of-tennessee-students-hold-out-against-riaa.html) (http://arstechnica.com/news.ars/post/20080129-less-than-1-of-u-of-tennessee-students-hold-out-against-riaa.html), for example, received what are called "pre-settlement" letters accusing them of illegal (P2P) downloading. Half of them paid the \$3000. Half decided to ignore it. Eventually, all but one of them settled for a larger sum after the battle with the RIAA heated up. One lone person decided to fight it further, and a judge rejected his claim that what the RIAA did was a violation of privacy.

Please take this seriously, because it is serious. You cannot plead ignorance (plenty of people have tried, to no avail). Just pay for the music you listen to, and if you don't want to, try this thing called the radio. It's worked well for me.



The Dean takes a dive

Okay. Lecture over. Onto other things.

This is a little after-the-fact, but I'll tell you anyway: **Andrew** wrote in to say that he was disappointed the UConn-Rutgers game on February 5 would be shown on College Sports TV, which is not on the University's cable package. I checked, and it actually is, so hopefully you tuned in to watch the game on HuskyVision channel 95. Unfortunately, our valiant women were defeated by Rutgers in a hard-fought contest. But we'll see them again when they come to Hartford on March 3, and again in the Big East tournament, and maybe again in the NCAA tournament. Those girls from Jersey are good, but my money's on Renee & company.

Speaking of New Jersey, my sister Susan asked, "What is it about these New York/New Jersey teams beating up on teams from New England this week?" Okay. So it wasn't a great week for us. We'll be okay. Go Celtics!

Sarah sent an email saying, "My roommate and I are really frustrated with the showers on our floor (water only comes out of half of them and the pressure is terrible)." And I guess the work order website wasn't working either (talk about a tough week). So I walked her request over to Logan Trimble in Residence Life, and he forwarded it to the shower-head-unclogging crew, who reported success later that same day. Hopefully, Sarah now has all the water pressure she needs to stay clean and shiny.

And speaking of water pressure: I don't understand this: Even when it's bitterly cold out, you don't want to wear hats because they mess up your hair. But it's been pouring rain the last couple of days. You're still not wearing hats, and your hair looks really, really bad when you've been drenched in a downpour. Helpful hint from someone who has a Ph.D. in college student stuff: Nobody else cares about your hair as much as you do. Put on a hat! Or use an umbrella, at least. Umbrellas are a proven technology and can double as a way to meet people: "Um, hi. Would you like to share my umbrella, (insert name of cute person here)?"

An interesting question came in from **Shrina**, who asked,

Is it just me or has the enrollment of students on the Storrs campus increased drastically? I am taking all 200 level classes (mostly 260's and beyond) but somehow there are like 60 people in all my classes, I thought the more you get into your major the less people in your class? Also, some of the classrooms that those 60 people are shoved into don't have enough room for all of us. Sitting on the floor for a class is just not what we paid money for.

Yes, Shrina, it is you, and thousands just like you. While our freshman class size has stayed the same, our retention of students following their first year has improved, so of course that means there are more students on campus. And yes, classes are more full. That's the reason the University has requested that the State Legislature fund 175 new faculty lines—to offer more classes, especially in our most popular majors. As for classroom crowding—this is tough. Classrooms are assigned based on the number of slots supposedly available in the class. But sometimes faculty give permission to students beyond the limit. Sometimes chairs go missing from rooms. Sometimes students bring their friends to class (okay—that one's pretty rare, but

you get the idea). The Registrar's office only knows there's a problem with seats if someone reports it, and then they attempt to find another room. This isn't always possible.

A question came in from **Garrett** about a lurking danger on campus: "Why is there a giant hole in the road on Alumni Drive? It is blocking 3 valuable parking spaces. It literally makes the road one lane and holds up traffic and the buses."

I checked with Head Landscape Guy Dave Lotreck, who replied, "The telecom manhole cover was damaged by a plow this winter. As luck would have it, the cover is an odd size and had to be fabricated. It is slated to be here this week. Once the cover is here they will replace it as soon as possible," maybe even by the time this Almanac gets posted.

Garrett also asked about extending the hours of residence hall mailrooms so students can get packages in the evening. Steve Kremer, our new Director of All Things Residence Life, is looking into that possibility, so stay tuned.

Using up his allotment of questions for the semester, **Dominick** asked three. The first is about the hill outside the Student Union (near the movie theatre). Students have worn a muddy path from the door down to the sidewalk. Will we put a staircase there? Maybe. But we'll probably wait to see how foot traffic is affected when the mall...or quad...or green (someone needs to decide what to call it) outside the Union on the north side of the building is completed.

Question number two: Can we have more than one "reading day" after classes end and before finals begin? Other schools do sometimes have more—two, three, a week even. The academic calendar is a complex thing with many interrelated parts, so I'm going to let Registrar Jeff Von Munkwitz Smith answer give you a quick UConn history lesson:

Under the former calendar, we did have one or two weekday Reading Days prior to final exams. Classes ended on a Tuesday or Wednesday, Wednesday and/or Thursday were Reading Days, and exams started on Friday and ran through the following Friday. When the calendar was redone in 2002, classes ended on a Friday, so the weekend days were declared Reading Days. There was some discussion of having the Monday and Tuesday following the final class become Reading Days, effectively giving students four Reading Days. The result would have either further compressed the final exam period or extended it into the following week. Given the timing of the Fall semester, we probably would not have been able to have a December Commencement ceremony. The break between the Fall and Spring semesters would have been reduced and there was a strong sentiment among both faculty and students against that. In the Spring, we would have had to move the Commencement ceremonies to weekdays or to the following weekend, complicating matters for Residential Life. Ending the Spring semester later would have eliminated the May Term. There are institutions that have a "Reading Week". Instead of fourteen weeks of classes, they have thirteen. That possibility was discussed, but rejected.

If the number of Reading Days is a significant issue for students, they might have the student members of the University Senate raise it during one of the upcoming Senate meetings.

And Dominick's third question is about items for sale in the new convenience store, the Union Exchange. "Why can't we use points to buy the same items that we can use points to purchase at the coffee shops, like Vitamin Water." Here's a response from C. (stands for e-Conomical) Dennis Pierce, Head Dining Guy:

There are a few items that appear in the store that are in our other venues. They are there for convenience. The items that are in the convenience store are predominantly retail packed items and the cost to us is high. We do not have the buying power of 7-Eleven so we have to limit sales to cash or Husky bucks. Husky bucks have an even dollar exchange, whereas the value of points is about 43 cents on the dollar. One dollar is not the equivalent of one point.

Dennis wants students to know that Dining Services is a business that is fully self-supporting. It gets no money from the state or from tuition dollars. So they have to be very thoughtful about what they sell and for how much.

Get out your pom-poms! Pull on your True Blue t-shirts! Call the Blue and White Guy! The Student Fee Advisory Committee season is about to begin! For you new Huskies, you should know that each year, a group of intrepid students and administrators distributes hundreds of thousands of dollars of your fee money to those offices and groups that are fee-supported. These include Parking and Transportation, Athletics, all student media groups, Student Activities, Fraternity and Sorority Life, Marching Band, and many more. All groups participate in a hearing where their budgets are scrutinized. If they want an increase, this is the group they have to convince. This is a truly great process and something you should be proud of—that students' money is so well-tended. You can attend these hearings, and your input is always welcome. Here's more [information](http://www.studentaffairs.uconn.edu/committees_sfacs.html) (http://www.studentaffairs.uconn.edu/committees_sfacs.html), including the hearing schedule and list of committee members.

Speaking of fee-supported groups, here's a shout-out to our outstanding pep band. I've really enjoyed your company during games at Gampel (I'm the one on your left who keeps screaming "Yay Band!!" after every song).

Keep your emails and questions coming. I need something to keep me distracted from the weather. Stay dry, and I'll see you around the Student Union.