

The Dean's Almanac

This Halloween, I'm Dressing Up as a Dean of Students

October 30, 2007

You might have heard that President Hogan has discovered that Gulley Hall is haunted, apparently by the ghost of a former administrator who died from a surfeit of meetings. I think I understand that.

I was just reading an article in a professional journal about Facebook. A lot of people in my profession have been thinking and writing about Facebook, MySpace and other social networking sites, trying to figure out what it all means for college students like yourself. Is Facebook a good thing, enabling you to feel a sense of community here on campus and beyond? Or is it the work of the devil (I've often pictured the devil as a network administrator of a sort), stunting your growth as social creatures, as human beings?



I'm particularly interested in the concept of Facebook "friends." My definition of "friend" is someone I know, like, and have an investment in. I assume they know, like, and have an investment in me. But on Facebook, "friendships" happen with a couple of keystrokes, and that may be the extent of the friendship. Those individuals may never meet, communicate, or care about one another. So here's my question to you: Do you think that Facebook has devalued the concept of friendship? Or expanded it? Or something else entirely?

So when you get a chance, [send me a note](#) and let me know your thoughts on this and other aspects of Facebook and similar sites. How do they enable/disable community on a college campus?

You all keep asking about the excavation project going on between the Union and CUE, so here's what I know: they are going to install sidewalks in various directions across the half of it that is closer to Fairfield Way. The half that is directly between the Union and the Benton Museum will be more of a "mall" or "quad" or "really big open space." And then one day, not long from now, they will come and take out the sidewalks on the Fairfield Way side of the open space, and begin building a new classroom building. Why install sidewalks only to tear them up later? Because it will take a while before they're ready to break ground on the new classroom building, and having a large vacant lot and pile of dirt in the middle of campus does nothing good for anyone other than moles.

I got a lengthy question about financial aid, specifically work-study awards, from **Karen**, and thought that perhaps there are others who have similar questions about how work-study is awarded, and why it doesn't always seem fair. I sent her question along to Jean Main, Director of Financial Aid, and asked if she could offer up some comments about how work-study and

financial aid work, in a way that makes them seem less complicated than, say, governing a developing nation or solving the global warming problem. For those of you who don't know Jean, let's just say that she's the first Financial Aid director I've known who doesn't make me doze off when she explains things. She tends to make sense, demonstrates patience, and is interesting, too. I may adopt her as a role model.

Anyway, here's what she had to say:

Generally, UConn has about \$2.8 million in federal work study to award for 2007-2008. The University was given \$1.3 Million from the feds, and we are required to put a *minimum* of 25 percent into the total WS pot, or approximately \$434,000. Realizing that WS is in high demand, the University actually puts in \$1.3 million (over \$800,000 more than required). Lastly there is a small allocation from the state that is put into WS, as well.

There are a few competing priorities with WS; we want the awards to be large enough so that they are meaningful (e.g., a \$500 award does not allow for many hours to earn money), while awarding to as many students as possible. If awards were smaller, we'd be able to award to more students, however, students would earn their awards VERY quickly. Additionally, over the past 3 years, we've experienced several increases to the minimum wage on the state and federal level. All of these things impact the value of a WS award and the number of students we are able to award to.

Hope that clears things up in some ways. Definitely check with Financial Aid individually if you feel you have not been fairly awarded, or if you have other questions.

A question came in from **Michael** that he claimed would be an easy one, and yep, it is:

Why is there still a football players-only section to Putnam Dining Hall when the football players have their own football complex and facility?

According to C. (stands for Clarification) Dennis Pierce, Head Dining Guy, the answer is...there isn't. There is a separate room off of the dining hall, which was built and furnished by the Division of Athletics, that was previously used by the football team. But since the team now has, as Michael mentioned, its own dining facility in the Burton-Shankman Complex, that dining room is used by other teams for team meals and special events.

Dennis, who is a chronic overachiever, also wanted to answer a question that I've not been asked, but he has: Why do the football players get to eat off china while the rest of the dining halls are using paper and plastic due to the drought? "The dish machine in the football complex is yea big" (makes shape with his hands the size of a regular dishwasher). "The dish machines in our other halls are" (spreads arms as wide as possible) "like this, and use a whole lot more water."

As for Michael's other question: "What's going to happen to Memorial Stadium?" I don't know. I'm not sure a definite plan has taken shape yet. Maybe it will be the site of a new basketball

training facility, given its location close to Gampel, but a lot of money has to be raised before that can be decided. If I hear something definite, you'll be among the first to know.

Here's something **Geoff** wrote in for the "Gift that Keeps on Giving" file:

When I received my associate's degree in 2006, I received a gift from the university, a license plate frame that said "UConn" on it. I was pulled over on Saturday by a UConn cop and given a written warning because these plate frames cover the upper part of the "C" on Connecticut. Several people I know have had similar experiences. I just thought you should know this in case the college plans on giving out something like this again.

Mike Stenko from the Alumni Association has promised to look into this. "We may need to rethink the use of the license plate frame for graduates."

And **Melissa** had a question about who gets housing:

Why are seniors who came to UConn from regional campuses still eligible to lose housing? Many of them only lived on campus for a year or two.

The response comes from Maureen Armstrong in Housing Assignments, who despite her job, is almost always calm and cheerful, perhaps because she has three small children waiting at home and needs to save her energy for them:

The University feels strongly that the youngest students, who have never lived on campus, are most in need of the resources provided by living in the residence halls. As a result, newly-admitted freshmen are guaranteed housing. In making this guarantee it limits the number of semesters we can guarantee housing for transfers and students coming from the regional campuses. Because transfer and campus change students are older it was decided that they would not have as high a need for the support provided on campus as freshmen. As a result, transfer and campus change students are guaranteed two semesters of housing and are assigned lottery numbers in their first semester living on campus if they come in the fall.

And speaking of freshmen, here's a shout out to my FYE class, a fearless band of students who manage to show up at 9 am (well, most of them) once a week to discuss Really Big Questions like "What do I want to do with my life?" and "Where do I fit in on this campus and in the world?" and "Why are you making me go to this event?"

Speaking of questions, if you have any that you'd like answered, [send them along](#) and I'll harass my colleagues till someone answers. In the meantime, look after each other, make eye contact with your faculty members, and thank your parents for raising a kid smart enough to be a Husky.

And here's to more treats than tricks this Halloween, okay?