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What is behind the proposed cuts at AU?

By Jericho Shackelford
Staff Writer

In a step toward transparency, AU President Charley Edmondson attended Student Senate Nov. 18 with a grave forecast of events to come: the cutting of multiple University programs.

"Every institution, whether educational or not, must change, must adapt to its environment," Edmondson said.

The Strategic Planning Council was created after a consultation of University statistics. Seats on this council were given to representatives from each department within the University, the University provost and two student representatives, sophomore Ana Gauthier and junior Amos Mainville, the Student Senate President.

According to the document disseminated by council members, the Strategic Planning Council was formed to create proposals for restructuring or cutting certain departments, programs, or positions based on their financial viability. The council aims to assess the financial integrity of every program and individual at Alfred University.

In the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, consideration is being given to the elimination of the German program and the reduction of the French program to a minor. Within the Inamori School of Engineering, Electrical Engineering is being considered for elimination. The ski team also faces possible elimination, and depending on how high fall semester enrollment is for 2010, one of the suites will be closed.

Cutting the German major has been proposed based on course statistics stating that the program has the fewest overall credit hours of the three majors: German, French and Spanish. French is facing a reduction to a minor based on the same analysis.

The Inamori School of Engineering considered class listings with enrollment less than 10 students, the number of graduating majors, student-to-faculty ratios and program costs in suggesting a cut. Based on these criteria, Electrical Engineering was found to be the weakest program.

In accordance with the Faculty Handbook, the timeline provided to Faculty Senate states that the

final decision will be made Feb. 5, and information will be provided to the University community by Feb. 15.

Edmondson said at the Nov. 18 meeting that part of the reason for these cuts is that New York is experiencing the toughest economic period it has encountered since 1931. The repercussions of this are that the state is now looking to cut funding across the board.

The New York State Division of the Budget website states that financing of education and arts are facing a proposed reduction of \$36,910,000. These reductions include cuts to both the Higher Education Opportunity Program, or HEOP, as well as Bundy Aid, which funds private colleges and universities based on graduation rates and level of degrees awarded. Fiscal support of SUNY schools can expect to be truncated by the sum of \$17,412,000. The significance of this data has hastened timelines throughout New York's higher education system.

Although AU is a private institution, its stability, longevity, and overall vitality are contingent upon certain qualifications that are ultimately beyond the breadth of AU's control.

"This will not be a set of comments directed towards a short-term financial crisis of the institution," Edmondson said in the introduction to his speech to Student Senate. "We do not have a short term financial crisis."

At the Senate meeting, Edmondson said 70 percent of students who enroll at Alfred University are residents of New York State. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, between the years 2000 and 2008 the population of New York State grew by 2.7 percent, or 5.3 percent less than the national average, which was 8 percent.

At this point it is understood that Alfred University is experiencing many of the same unforeseen circumstances as its New York contemporaries.

Private and public institutions big and small throughout New York State, such as SUNY Geneseo and Hofstra University, either are or will be working to circumnavigate the turbulent economic future in store. Exacerbating the situation is the fact that the number and the quality of institutions of higher education in New York State make New York a very

competitive market for recruiting college students.

The three counties most represented in Alfred University's student population are Monroe, Steuben and Allegany. Between the years 2000 and 2008, these counties all experienced negative population growth. Administrative decisions have been made to counteract the effects of declining numbers of college-age persons, decreasing birth rates and a trend of significant emigration from New York.

Data reported in the 2006 census has led officials at AU to believe that by 2017 the pool from which prospective AU students are recruited will have shrunk by 18.5 percent. Also by 2017, the population of high school graduates within Monroe, Steuben and Allegany counties available to the University will have fallen by 23 percent. Furthermore, the average household income is expected to fall enough to restrict the number of persons who may realistically be able to attend AU.

According to Gauthier, the University is making vertical cuts, as opposed to previously implemented horizontal cuts, due to an analysis and recognition of the differing results.

A horizontal cut is one that takes a percentage out of individual university budgets. For instance, a cut to the Modern Languages department would mean that each program's budget would receive a decreased percentage of funding. The result would be that for each language, fewer credit hours would be taught to larger classes.

University officials found that this method of retaining revenue was too short-sighted and ultimately weakens the department. The goal of these budget and corresponding position cuts, according to the proposal, is to prospectively strengthen Alfred University.

A vertical cut is one that, instead of taking a percentage off the top of the program, eliminates the entire program or position.

Vertical cuts are being administered to aspects of the University that do not have a favorable cost-benefit ratio.

The vertical cut of a program or position is thought by administrators to be more beneficial because it leaves the surrounding programs unscathed. Were there to be a cut to programs within the Modern Languages department, an entire position or program would be eliminated. In this case,



PHOTO BY DAVID LEMMO

President Edmondson spoke about cutting programs at the Nov. 18 Student Senate meeting.

a budget cut means the complete elimination of a program. Through this practice of loss prevention, if a language were to be cut, the remaining programs and salaries would be unaffected. Theoretically, this would allow those programs remaining to be strengthened over a period of time.

The Strategic Planning Council has written into its criteria that both the past and prospective future of these programs is thoroughly considered prior to their elimination. These proposals are the result of consensus based on present statistics and historical records.

The reasons for and against cutting each program can be seen in the proposal, which was disseminated by the Strategic Planning Council's student representatives. The proposal can also be found at thefiatlux.com.

According to documents provided to the Fiat Lux, not all relevant historical data concerning Modern Languages is presented in the proposal.

Between 1973 and 1993, there were six alterations to the department, either through the cut of a program or the termination of course offerings for a program. The German program was affected three times and French was affected four times. This implies that these programs, among other Modern Languages programs, have been either passively or

actively cut several times only to be reinstated at a later time.

As mentioned in the proposal, the potential cuts to the department of Modern Languages could endanger Alfred University's Phi Beta Kappa chapter. The first request for a PBK chapter was made in 1974 with the submission of a letter to the headquarters in Washington, D.C. AU received its chapter in 2004.

At the time, Edmondson acknowledged PBK's importance to the value of an AU degree.

"It's a special achievement for Liberal Arts and Sciences. I think it will enhance the value of an Alfred degree, but most of all, I am happy for those who are in it," Edmondson said in a May 4, 2004 Fiat Lux article.

Phi Beta Kappa was founded in 1776 at the College of William and Mary. Since then, PBK has been associated with distinguished institutions that are dedicated to the study of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Currently, as stated on the Phi Beta Kappa website, only about 10 percent of colleges and universities in the U.S. have a Phi Beta Kappa chapter. Among those attributes considered by Phi Beta Kappa is the integrity of Modern Languages taught at a university.

More information about the proposed cuts can be found on the thefiatlux.com, including a liveblog covering the Dec. 2 Student Senate meeting where Mainville and Gauthier discussed the cuts with the student body.

EDITORIAL

Is 2017 AU's 2012? Not if we can help it

"If you want a college degree that has value in 20, 30, 40 years, we must do these things," President Edmondson said at the Nov. 18 Student Senate meeting, announcing that the University was planning to make some major program cuts.

Less than two weeks later, on Dec. 1, the Strategic Planning Council consisting of the University's deans, vice presidents, six faculty members, two students and two staff members disseminated a proposal suggesting cuts to Modern Languages, Electrical Engineering and the ski team, among others.

By Feb. 5, the cuts will be final. This decision will arrive less than two weeks after students return to campus—a hasty timeline for cuts that are supposed to protect the University against an anticipated 18.5 percent loss in prospective students by 2017.

We really do care that our degree has value decades from now, and given the short timeline so close to finals, we want to make sure that everybody—faculty and students especially—has the correct information so that they can suggest insightful and financially feasible solutions to our administrators.

We don't know if this is possible, since decisions are being made almost faster than we can publish quality stories. We have used the tools of the Web 2.0 age to make this process more efficient: Facebook and thefiatlux.com.

Our liveblog generated 21 unique readers during the Dec. 2 Student Senate meeting. We were even able to read one abroad student's question during the meeting. A Facebook page titled "AU Program Elimination Page" that was started by our Editor in Chief has generated over 260 members and multiple comments in the past week.

However, there is still barely enough time for our student reporters, knee-deep in finals and paper production, to keep up with this hasty process and its long-term outcomes.

Edmondson said that the short-term financial state of the University is healthy, but we have to prepare for the future. This proposal is only the first wave of proposed cuts we can expect. We are aware that other schools are in similar situations right now, and we understand that there is a harsh reality facing higher education today, and that cuts have to be made.

Other schools such as Meredith College in North Carolina are going through almost the exact same process with almost the exact same response from students and faculty.

Now is the time for Alfred University to make decisions that will ultimately shape the University's identity. Although we cannot speak for the all-female school that is Meredith College, we can speak for Alfred University, a school with a proud tradition of diversity.

With that said, in addition to our news coverage, we would like to make the following suggestions to the Strategic Planning Council, President Edmondson and Provost Hall:

1. Save Phi Beta Kappa

Only 10 percent of schools in the United States have a Phi Beta Kappa chapter. Alfred University is privileged to be in such elite company. Schools near us such as Alfred State College, St. Bonaventure, RIT and Houghton College do not share this special honor.

In a May 4, 2004 Fiat Lux article titled "AU honored by Phi Beta Kappa decision," Edmondson said, "It's a special achievement for Liberal Arts and Sciences. I think it will enhance the value of an Alfred degree, but most of all, I am happy for those who are in it."

Five years later, at the Nov. 18 Student Senate meeting, Edmondson brought up the value of our degree once again. We, as students, still consider Phi Beta Kappa a vital component of that value.

In the Dec. 2 proposal, Modern

Languages would be reduced to offering only Spanish as a major, eliminating German, reducing French to minor, and offering Italian, Japanese and Chinese on its current adjunct basis.

This is unacceptable for maintaining a Phi Beta Kappa chapter as, according to the Phi Beta Kappa website, "the study of literature, languages, philosophy, religion, the fine arts, history, the social sciences, mathematics and the natural sciences is held to be central to the objectives of Phi Beta Kappa." The reduction of Modern Languages was the only area of study singled out in the proposal. We don't understand the logic.

The Phi Beta Kappa website states that the chapter-holding institution must have "dependable income sufficient to maintain academic excellence." The stated reason for cutting Modern Languages is that "it is challenging to sustain the number of languages we offer here at Alfred." With that said, we understand that cuts must be made. However, the aforementioned criteria should be considered when it comes to Modern Languages, since cutting it will help the University meet the financial requirements for Phi Beta Kappa, but it will hinder the objective of promoting foreign languages.

The following two suggestions will likely be very unpopular, but if there are "no sacred cows," as Edmondson said, we think they must be considered.

2. A voluntary reduction to clubs and organizations

This is not a widely publicized fact, but every year, money available to student clubs and organizations increases by 3 percent, as long as students spend the budgeted money.

Although an administration-level cut would likely lead to chaos, we as a responsible student body should offer to take a cut for the University. This cut could either take the form of an elimination of our 3-percent increase, or an actual cut to the amount of money available for clubs and organizations.

3. Reduce the size of the football program

We know this idea will be very unpopular, especially given the great success of our Saxons in reaching the NCAA championships, but hear us out.

First, this suggestion isn't as far-fetched as it sounds. Within the past two weeks, both Hofstra and Northeastern cut their Division I football teams. We are only singling out football because it essentially has two teams, and because two Division I schools cut football from their institutions.

Football recruits a lot of students to both its varsity and junior varsity teams, but uses a lot of University resources to do so. If this elimination process is truly for the long-term health of Alfred University, this area of the school needs to be seriously considered. As with all other programs, we need to look closely at placement rates, the cost of the programs, profiles and contributions of alumni, etc.

If the football team is proving to be as successful at recruiting and retaining students as it is at playing the Empire 8, we think that information should be made explicit to the University community at this time.

It's possible that football has been scrutinized, but with only a vague reason for the proposed cutting of the ski team given in the Strategic Planning Council proposal, it is difficult to make a stronger suggestion in terms of potential athletics cuts.

4. Look at the cost and likelihood of bringing programs back

Nobody is going to be happy when these cuts are made, no matter what they are. We are aware that the current proposal barely covers the amount of money the University needs to save. Therefore, we suggest more emphasis on one criterion that was suggested by the Faculty Senate Task Force in their criteria for evaluating programs that we feel hasn't been given proper attention: "History/future of the discipline or major."

The proposal looks at a five-year

period between 2004 and 2009, assuming that this timeline provides a broad enough historical background on the disciplines or majors to be cut. If we were to look further than five years into the past, we would see that, due to administrative decisions, some programs have either been passively or actively cut. However, these programs were always reinstated later, presumably because of their value to the University.

For example, between 1974 and 1993, Modern Languages programs were either cut or not offered a total of six times, alternating between French, German and Spanish.

With this evidence in mind, it is obvious that one consideration has not been made when evaluating these proposed cuts: the fact that the programs might not be permanently removed, and therefore would not be a wise choice for a long-term cost-reduction plan.

The University clearly has not seen a cut to Modern Languages as permanent. Language programs have come back in the past. Though the loss of programs may not be permanent, these proposed cuts do run a needless risk of permanently severing the University from some of its greatest assets. We don't want to see an Alfred University without some of the most involved and highest quality professors on campus, membership to one of the oldest and most widely respected academic fraternities in the country or resources for other programs such as art history.

Looking at the history of Modern Languages, it is obvious that sometimes program cuts have not been permanent. Other programs, such as nursing and computer science, however, have, thus far, been permanent. This fact is unfortunate, considering the popularity of such programs today.

We suggest that the potential of a program's return and the cost of bringing a program back be more strongly considered as a criterion in this process to help prevent the short-sightedness of previous program cuts.

FIAT LUX

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Backspace

a comic by Alfred alumni



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OPINION

Letter to the Editor: What is CLAS?

To the Editor:

I do not agree that the current Proposal for Structural Reorganization offers the time line necessary to restructure a University. Pragmatically, I recognize the need to compromise and to meet both intellectual principles and financial realities. I know that a negotiated, thoughtful proposal will be fundamental to Alfred's long-term health and integrity. In fact, our CLAS students, with their Liberal Arts Education, could offer valuable critical reflection. Unfortunately, I fear that the 1970s and

'80s are back in style in Alfred, and I'm not referring to music. This proposal repeats Alfred's past history more than it forges a new path toward Alfred's future. I do not agree that the same strategies used thirty or forty years ago in CLAS are the best with which to enter the 21st century.

In theory a "strategic reorganization," when completed thoughtfully and carefully, could initiate a healthy dialogue for our entire academic community, especially the students. In the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, students would have the chance to define

what a "liberal arts" education means to each of you, and then by extension, how you wanted Alfred University to help you meet that goal. Students who are clearly aware of their expectations for a college education are exciting and challenging students to work with in the classroom.

What is the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Alfred University? What kind of school do you attend? In my opinion CLAS should not be a job-training center nor should it offer a community-college curriculum. It should not diminish itself by merely provid-

ing services for other colleges at Alfred. I firmly believe in the value of a liberal arts education for students and, also, that the CLAS should compete with other elite liberal arts colleges and universities. Why? A liberal arts education fosters student development of analytical thought and the synthesis of a breadth of knowledge. It values diversity and freedom of choice. The study of foreign languages is one of the cornerstones of this student development. For this reason, CLAS counts it as one of the three basic competencies toward which students should

strive. For this same reason, Phi Beta Kappa counts the study of language as a key to membership. Phi Beta Kappa highlights the excellence of Alfred's CLAS and confirms that we are in the top ten percent of our peers.

Alfred is a special intellectual community that is both incredibly diverse, yet small. My conviction that we, as a community, will find a shared solution remains unshaken.

Kerry Kautzman

Letter to the Editor: Letter to the Student Senate

To the Editor:

Some Senators may remember me from when I was among your ranks. I have passed on to another stage in life, and I'm not sure it would be appropriate for me to crash your meeting in order to tell you what I think you should do. I hope this letter, then, will suffice to offer the perspective of one alumnus who saw this coming down the pike for years and has lost a few hours of sleep contemplating the future of Alfred University. Please disseminate by email, if you think it worthy of the Senate's attention and consideration.

Amid the questions of which programs or teaching positions to eliminate is a much larger but unacknowledged question of identity and mission. The big question is: What does Alfred University want to be when it grows up? Like a fourth-year undecided major, it doesn't want to decide. Deciding is hard. It means foreclosing on some possibilities, while committing to others. It means disappointing some people. It's hard. But most things worth doing are hard. Choosing to do the hard thing is

part of growing up, and it's time for AU to grow up.

We have labeled ourselves as a "small but comprehensive university." What does that mean? I would argue that it's really deferred decision-making being passed off as a legitimate category. It is an untenable status quo, in which we want to be all things to all people, and hope to skate by another ten years by trimming a little bit off the edges and closing our eyes to existential questions we hope the next generation, and not us, will have to make.

Supposing our basket is too small -- we don't have enough money for all we have undertaken to do -- which eggs will we put in it? Do we choose to do one or two things that we do exceptionally well, or a lot of things we can't devote enough resources to in order to excel at any one of them? Historically, before the turn of the 20th century, Alfred University was a selective private liberal arts college, among the best in New York State. It was a model that worked for us, given our small size and remote location. It was a model that bore true and faithful witness to

our revered patron saint, Alfred the Great. And it's still a model that works for any number of similarly situated private colleges around the nation, some of which we hope to compete with.

If we want solid, lasting solutions, we need the answers to the questions we're not asking. If our future is tied to our 19th century roots -- as I would contend they are -- it means closing doors, it means disappointing people and breaking off some relationships. But no matter how we retrain our focus, some people are going to lose their jobs. Some students will have no future generations to follow in their footsteps. Whether we focus on letters, arts or science, unpleasant decisions will have to be made. But the current approach doesn't make those decisions. What the proposed cuts do is make the minimum effort to keep things the way they are, in order to defer the hard decisions

to a later date, and to a future generation -- one which will, as we are now dimly beginning to see, find the "small comprehensive university" as untenable.

If we love Alfred University, then we must work to make it all it can be and accept no half-measures or half-hearted fixes. We must embrace the hard work ahead, though it hurts, though it means dreams will go unrealized, in order that the community we love will survive and flourish in this century and beyond. Your administrators apparently have no heart for this sort of work. Unfortunately, Alfred University has no tradition of shared governance, the sort that involves students and alumni -- at least, not alumni who don't

have big accounts from which to draw large donation checks. If we have the heart for this work, it means demanding a place at the table, and then making good use of the voice we're given. Before we can ask the big question, the question of identity, and mission, and values, we have to ask the more fundamental question, Do we have hearts big enough, and hides thick enough, to bear true witness to the love we have for Alfred University?

My education has taught me, and our education has taught us, that asking questions is worth the while. Good luck finding your answers, big and small.

Ian J. L. Adkins, B.A.Phil./
Psych., Class of 2007

Letter to the Editor: Ski team

My name is Stephen Barton and I am the current Men's Ski Team captain. This news of the proposed cut came as a complete surprise to me and all the other members of the Ski Team. Most of the members on the Ski Team have been recruited by our coach Kevin Walsh and were told about the great history and success of the Ski Team.

I am going by what is on the McLane Center wall when I say that the Men's team has 11 national championship appearances, and the Women's team has 8. Since 2000 alone, the teams have combined for a total of 13 national championship appearances. I don't want this to sound at all like a shot at the other athletic teams, because I support them all. It was great to see the football team accomplish so much this season and the basketball and swimming teams are off to great starts in their respective seasons. All other athletic teams have combined for a total of 14 NCAA tournament banners on the gym wall. If these banners are the only information about national championship appearances, the University would be cutting its most successful athletic team.

I also understand these are hard economic times, but I disagree with the the University's decision to cut the team. We're willing to make our own sacrifices to help

keep the program going. As a team, we can buy our own season passes and could travel Saturday morning instead of Friday night to help trim expenses. The members on the Ski Team and myself could really use and appreciate every student's support and help with this situation.

The best thing students can do to help keep the Ski Team a part of Alfred Athletics is to go online to the my.alfred.edu website and click on the student survey to vote against the proposed cut. Also, tell all of your friends about the survey and get them to vote. All of us on the Ski Team love to ski and enjoy the satisfaction and thrill it brings to us. Just think of yourself in a situation like this, with the University cutting something you love to do and how you would be impacted by it.

I am going to do everything I can to make sure the Ski Team doesn't get cut, but I need everyone's help. If we all join together, we can make a difference and save the Alpine Ski Team. There is nothing that I would love to do more than bring some more national championship appearances to Alfred. The members of the Ski Team and myself are thankful for your time and support in this situation.

Stephen Barton



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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Informal Dance Showing



PHOTO BY DAVID LEMMO

Members of Alfred University's step team, the Alfred Steppas, perform during the annual informal dance showing that ran nightly from Dec. 3-5 in the CD Smith Theater. Other dance teams who performed included the AU Dance Team, The Middle Eastern Dance Organization and the Alfred State Japanese Team. AU professors of dance Chase Angier and Robert Bingham performed, and students from each of their various dance classes showcased pieces they had been working on in class.

HAFLA



PHOTOS BY DAVID LEMMO

Alfred University's Middle Eastern Dance Organization (MEDO) presented their annual Hafla, or evening of music, food and dance, at Susan Howell Hall Nov. 20. MEDO donated the proceeds of the event to charity. (Left) Ed Thigpen spins fire poi outside Susan Howell Hall. (Above) MEDO dancers perform upstairs in Susan Howell Hall.

EVERCLEAR AT ALFRED



PHOTO BY ZACHARY HOUK

Art Alexakis from Everclear plays his "PORTLAND, OR"-labeled guitar Nov. 20 in the McLane Center.

By Kylie Smith
Contributing Writer

Knowing only one Everclear song myself, I was curious to see how many fans of the band there were at Alfred University.

First-year Ali Garcia was very excited to see Everclear in concert. She expressed that when she was in elementary school, she was very much into their music. Her enthusiasm has since waned, but she still keeps a few songs on iTunes.

When Garcia found out about Everclear's appearance in Alfred, she bought her ticket as soon as they were on sale.

As a first-year, I had no idea what to expect from an Alfred concert such as this one. The majority of concerts I had been to on campus had been in the Knight Club and were quite small. The setting of McLane Gym that night was one of a real concert, with fluorescent lighting and a large stage.

As the excitement of others grew, so did mine.

I was shocked to find out that many local townspeople attended the concert. A 23-year old Alfred State alumnus expressed his excitement for Everclear's concert. He spoke of how he used to listen to them on the radio all the time when he was in middle school. He was pleased to listen to their music again, and even more excited to be at a concert with some of his buddies.

Sophomore John Kearner showed up with his suitemates, not knowing what to expect.

"I'm not too sure about this band. I know about two songs, and that's about it. But I think

it will be something fun to do, and I am excited to see them," said Kearner.

The opening act was a local band called Badgemen. As they played, the crowd cheered for Everclear to come out and perform.

The second act was another local band comprised of Alfred University students. The funky chords and hip beats of Steam Whistle Cartel got the crowd rocking and dancing. To see students you see on campus every day play on the same stage as Everclear was exciting.

The band was late in arriving in Buffalo from Portland, so they were late getting on stage as well. However, 45 minutes past the expected start time, golden blonde lead singer Art Alexakis and his post-grunge band Everclear graced the stage. The wait was well worth it. They played several hit songs such as "Father of Mine," "AM Radio" and "So much for the Afterglow" and the crowd cheered and bopped to the beat as Everclear delivered a good performance.

The speed at which they moved from song to song was alarming, which may have been a no-nonsense approach to playing the concert or an indication of a hurried performance. However, this concert was a worthwhile experience, considering that tickets were only five dollars. Now that the concert is over, we can look forward to what SAB brings to Alfred for Hot Dog Day.

Rhetoric: the key to the transition between university and reality

By Jennifer Winikus
Contributing Writer

Editor's Note: Dr. Cox contributed to the editing of this article.

At the Bergren Forum Nov. 19, Dr. Timothy Cox, an English and Technical Communications Professor, presented "Why Rhetoric Matters?" The presentation explored the principles of rhetoric, the influence rhetoric has on culture and the important role rhetoric plays in the communication skills students need when they enter the reality outside of the University.

A fundamental principle of rhetoric is the development of arguments appropriate for their contexts; however, not everything is arguable. Unless you are Albert Einstein arguing the facts of gravity that Sir Isaac Newton developed, you should stick to arguing about definitions, analysis, evaluations and

problem solving. Rhetoric usually involves three persuasive techniques: logos, or an appeal to logic; pathos, or an appeal to emotions; and ethos, or a convincing argument for the authority of the speaker. There are also five elements that are considered the canons, or established principles, of rhetoric: memory, invention, delivery, style and arrangement. Rhetoric is also one of the three ancient arts of discourse, which formed ancient and modern culture's democratic processes.

A key component to the education Dr. Cox provided on rhetoric was that the classroom environment should nurture the development of a rhetorical and critical thinking ability in students. Good rhetoric is formed from key ingredients. The inclusion of these ingredients in the education process is one component of developing a student's rhetoric. The key component to teaching

in a rhetorical manner is being dynamic and nearly democratic in the process in the course. The students need the ability to participate in the process of learning and changing things, something traditional education methods do not always include. Beyond classroom assignments that promote rhetorical processes and nurture critical thinking, there should be more open-ended assignments, the final result of which the professor does not necessarily know. The pedagogy (study of teaching and learning) of rhetoric positions students as knowledge-makers by redefining the roles and expectations of teachers and students in such a way that everyone, including the teacher, learns from the experience. The change in the structure of education can prove successful, as traditional methods typically result in communication gaps between university education and reality.

The development of critical thinking skills connects to the development of the argument using the ingredients, but rhetoric is about communication; after all, Cox is a professor of technical communications. There are tools that Dr. Cox suggests for the development of an argument, which essentially comes down to communication. Research and preparation are useless if a student cannot communicate them well. Cox's point brings to mind the War of the Currents waged by Tesla and Westinghouse versus Edison during the 1880's and 1890's, a situation in which culture and technology suffered due to a poor application of the rhetoric.

A successful transition to reality is dependent on communication. Rhetoric, as Dr. Cox put it, is an art; one that can shape culture and the future.

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OPINION

Senior gift making a comeback

Ian Cramer

Opinions Editor

Typically, when a graduating class of students walks the stage, they give the institution something in return as a "thank you" for everything the University has done for them. This is commonly called a Senior Gift. If you've never heard of a senior gift, that's probably not your fault because the last class to give a senior gift was the class of 2003. I have a problem with this.

Giving a senior gift is a good idea for many reasons:

1. It shows class unity and class pride. It's a huge accomplishment to make it through 4 years of college. As we near this life-changing period in our lives, let's all pull together as a senior

class and collaborate on a gift to express our appreciation for the education and experiences we received. Ask yourself: Is it customary to show appreciation for an entity that changed your life for the better?

2. It sets an example for younger classes to give back. Much like a younger brother looks up to his older brother, our senior class might inspire future classes to raise funds for their own gifts and carry on the legacy for generations to come.

3. It starts a tradition that classes can carry on from year to year. We don't have many traditions, so wouldn't this be a great way to start?

4. It's a way to introduce the idea of philanthropy. It's a new idea that not many college-age students are used to. Many of

us have already donated time and energy for a cause; look at Passionately Pink, Relay for Life and Habitat for Humanity! But donating money is not as common and is not the same. Philanthropy and patronage play large roles in social goals of the real world.

5. It helps with recruitment. When prospective students see or hear of a senior class gift, it shows them an appreciation for the University and reflects well on that class and the University as a whole.

6. It's a transformation. Giving a senior gift is a way to recognize emerging adults in a student body.

Odds are you are here on some form of financial assistance. That financial assistance comes from patronage and gift giving.

"Even if you're paying full tuition, it doesn't cover the full cost," said Stan Colla, Vice President for University Relations.

He added that donations and philanthropy pay for at least 15% of the cost of your education.

Laurie McFadden, AU Archivist added, "most students are here on a discounted tuition, paid through many scholarships set up by past students who received the same kind of support."

There is talk of bringing this lost tradition back as the class of 2010 says goodbye to Alfred. The class is currently formulating ideas and brainstorming schemes for a sufficient senior gift.

If you have any ideas, I encourage you to speak with adminis-

trator Susan Gorman or myself. Students long ago weren't any more enthusiastic about giving up their hard earned dollars, but they managed to pull together and give back to the University. College students are poor and we understand that. We're not asking for a large amount.

"It's more about participation than amount," said Colla.

If you're graduating this May, the University has had, and will continue to have, a significant impact on your life both professionally and personally.

Giving a senior gift is not an unreasonable goal and we can accomplish it if we have the support and cooperation of the seniors. Class of 2010, assemble!

Is slow Internet our fault?

Ian Cramer

Opinions Editor

Has anyone noticed that the internet on campus seems a little sluggish? I have personally found that Youtube, iTunes and other popular sites seem to be loading much slower than normal. So, instead of joining a meaningless Facebook group entitled "AU needs faster internet" (yes, it's a real group), I decided to seek out factual information and find out why the internet seems to be slower than normal.

I had the opportunity to speak with Adrian Morling, manager

for network services at AU. He explained to me that the reason the internet is slow is, in part, our fault.

"As the number of students who use the internet goes up, the speed goes down," Morling said. He explained that the speed of any internet connection is dependent on the bandwidth within the community. And any community, including Alfred University, is only supplied by a finite amount of bandwidth.

We purchase a certain amount of bandwidth from Time Warner Cable and in order to get faster internet we can do one of two things: tell our neighbors to get off

their computers to make our own experiences faster or we can buy more bandwidth.

Option one is unfair for courtesy reasons and option two is difficult because of financial reasons.

Morling said that the money that pays for our current bandwidth comes straight from ITS's budget, and ITS is trying to get us more bandwidth for the same cost by obtaining a different pricing scheme.

Morling and his team of internet gurus are also in charge of designating certain portions of our bandwidth to certain applications. Data on application usage at AU has found that particular

applications like YouTube, flash-based video sites, iTunes, movie and music downloads and peer to peer sharing are very popular. Due to this popularity, the team designates more of our bandwidth to those applications than to others in order to decrease loading time.

Morling made an analogy comparing the internet to a highway. Any highway, with enough traffic, will become congested. Traffic will slow and decrease driver satisfaction. In the same way, any bandwidth, with enough traffic, will get congested and users' experiences will become less pleasant.

To solve this problem, one needs to build more lanes to support

the increase in traffic. Similarly, to support more internet users, simply buying more bandwidth would solve the problem. But, as previously stated, the solution is complicated by tight wallets and different priorities.

Another option that many universities implement to increase internet speed is a "Technology Fee." This money can increase bandwidth and make the internet faster for students. Would we benefit from this fee? Maybe. But as tuition keeps growing, now might not be the best time to slap students with another charge.

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FEATURES

The Alfred Computer Guy: Buying a Christmas computer

Mike Stone
Contributing Writer



As we ride with confidence into the New Year, the act of giving and receiving gifts weighs heavily on our minds. It is during these times that I am presented with the second-most frequently asked question by friends and family, "Where can I get a good deal on a computer for Christmas?"

You should first start out by realizing that shopping by price alone is one of the biggest mistakes you can make. I know that the notion of a \$300 complete computer system is appealing, especially when you're wander-

ing down the aisles of your local all-purpose store and see them in a "going fast" pile. Take your time and read the label - what you see there might surprise you.

Doing some preliminary shopping, I came across a bundle deal on a Compaq desktop with a 17" LCD display for \$378.00. That's pretty decent... until you look at the specifications. First, it says it has an Intel Atom processor, but no actual speed is listed. The Atom processor is the same type they put in Netbook systems - not exactly beefy enough to handle a true desktop very well. It also lists 1GB of RAM and a 160GB hard drive, fairly substandard by today's measure. To top it off, the computer comes with XP Home installed when we are well into Windows 7 territory.

The reality is that this computer will feel underpowered the minute it is pulled out of the box, and personally, I like to think that a new system should last 3-5 years minimum. So what's the answer? That's easy:

be aware of the price, but don't let it be your sole guide in this shopping endeavor.

For instance, Dell currently has a very respectable desktop system available on their website with a 1.8GHz AMD Athlon 2850e processor (much faster than your basic Intel Atom), 3GB of RAM, 500GB hard drive, and an 18" LCD monitor for \$549.00. His may be a higher price than the Compaq offering, but it's also a better value overall. For less than \$200 more, you get a computer that will last you three times longer... that spells "savings" in my book.

Still want a better deal? Alright then, how about a refurbished system? This option turns the stomach of many computer users, but I believe that a refurbished computer can be a truly sound investment. Let's just get a nasty rumor dispelled right now - "refurbished" does not necessarily mean "used."

Many times, systems are custom ordered, custom built, and then the transaction never goes through for whatever reason.

Sometimes, a computer doesn't pass the first line of assembly inspection, has its "guts" replaced and passes on the next round. Either way, it can wind its way into the special refurbished or outlet portions of the manufacturer's web store at a big discount over retail prices (complete with standard retail warranty, I might add). These special stores can usually be found right at the manufacturer's website if you look hard enough.

Another hot holiday item are Netbooks. I personally think these are fantastic little devices that have filled a need we had never quite realized existed. For those unfamiliar with the product or the term, Netbooks are laptops that are both small in physical size (usually with screen sizes ten inches or smaller), computing power, and price.

Unfortunately, many people fall into the same trap as I mentioned earlier: shopping by only looking at the cost. If all you want to do is browse the internet, check e-mail and perform office functions while main-

taining a small "footprint" (a term used for how much physical space a computer takes up), then Netbook laptops are a fantastic economical option.

If your needs ever extend beyond this, if you are uncomfortable typing on a smaller keyboard, if you don't want to purchase or carry additional external add-ons (generally, Netbooks do not have CD or DVD drives built in), or if the smaller screen will strain your eyes after prolonged usage, then you would do well to look into investing more toward a laptop that will suit you better.

Remember, there are always good deals out there around the holiday season, but don't be sold on a computer that won't meet the needs of the intended recipient just because it has a blowout price tag.

Do you have any questions you would like to ask? Send me an e-mail at: stone@alfred.edu with the subject "Alfred Computer Guy". Mac, PC, Linux, OS/2 Warp, NeXT... hit me with your best shot!

What the Houari is going on in Algeria?

Kristin Rubisch
Managing/Features Editor



The conflict in Algeria is perhaps one of the most unclear and peculiar cases in recent history. Despite increasing economic stability as a result of their large oil and natural gas reserves, this north African nation is still full of turmoil. Unfortunately, the Algerian government is accused of hiding information from the international community and suppressing dissenting media; this results in some lack or even fabrication of evidence in certain situations that must be kept

in mind.

Like many of the surrounding countries, Algeria is a largely Islamic nation that European powers colonized during the 19th and 20th centuries. The French invaded as early as 1830, but could not consider Algeria a colony until roughly 1900. The indigenous people suffered intensely under colonial rule: roughly 1/3 of the population disappeared, literacy rates collapsed to an all-time low, large percentages of land were confiscated and given to European settlers and Muslim inhabitants were prohibited from government participation. In 1954, the National Liberation Front (FLN) began a guerrilla war for independence that lasted until 1962. Throughout this war, terrorism and torture ran rampant on all sides as domestic groups jockeyed for a position of power. When the war finally ended, roughly 200,000 people had been killed and the population had voted for independence from France. The first election

placed FLN leader Ahmed Ben Bella in the presidency, but he was overthrown only 2 years later by Houari Boumediene, who pushed the country towards collectivism, nationalization of industries and authoritarianism. In 1978, following Houari's death, Chadli Bendjedid assumed control. Despite some successful attempts at modernization (including raising literacy rates and diversifying the economy), corruption was still an issue. This led to the election events of 1991, where internal pressure forced Chadli to allow other parties to run. The Islamic Salvation Front won the first round of the elections, but the military intervened immediately after, causing the Algerian Civil War.

The civil war lasted from 1991 to 2002, and the aftermath is still present today. Islamic groups were furious at the military for blocking their election (and for placing a military officer in charge of the government through rigged elections)

and launched guerrilla warfare against them. The military party (still the FLN of old) claimed that Islamic control would end all semblance of democracy, and used this justification to routinely kill civilians suspected of being terrorists. By 2002, most of the Islamic militant groups had collapsed, arguably ending the war. Abdelaziz Bouteflika, who assumed the presidency in 1999, has made several attempts at reconciliation between all sides of the conflict. These attempts, however, are viewed as biased in favor of those on the winning side of the civil war by groups such as the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC). The GSPC, partnering with al-Qaeda, continues to attack the Algerian government to create an Islamic state. This insurgency has spread to neighboring Mauritania and Morocco, and no moves made by Bouteflika have been able to quell the GSPC.

Despite outward appearances, the Algerian conflict is not one of religion. 98% of the civilians are,

in fact, Muslim. The question then is who will assume power and what will the government turn into? Bouteflika's election is of questionable legality (opponents argue that he was the only candidate covered by the government-controlled media), and claims that the GSPC's government would be authoritarian and based only on Sharia law are also of questionable truth. The future of Algeria is uncertain; if the situation with the GSPC is not addressed, another civil war is very likely. But is a power-sharing agreement an acceptable alternative to the military-controlled state?

The purpose of this column is to inform people about global events. While one article is not enough to fully explain a conflict, it is enough to provide the reader with the basics. It is my hope that when you are finished reading, you can readily answer the question, "What the (blank) is going on in (blank)?"

Faculty soap box: Smoking grass in church

Gary Ostrower
Contributing Writer

The First Amendment to our Constitution addresses religion in two ways. It states that we have freedom of religion, and it reminds us that there shall be no established church in the US. Most of us rarely think about these things, but the "establishment clause" guaranteeing church/state separation is one of the most distinctive things about our form of government. Most European countries with their official churches, not to mention countries like the Islamic Republics of Pakistan and Iran and the very Islamic Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, have established religions. Regardless of one's own religion (or lack thereof), citizens of these countries pay taxes to support the es-

tablished churches.

But not here. The ghost of Jerry Falwell can cry his heart out, but this is not a Christian country, or Jewish, or any other kind of religious country. That's why you do not say the Lord's prayer in your public schools, or see crosses in public school classrooms.

But what about that other clause, the religious liberty clause in the First Amendment? How far can we--should we--promote religious liberty? Does it mean that you can smoke a joint to enhance your religious experience? Do you have the right to drink sacramental wine at Sunday mass in a "dry" Kansas town? Does it mean that your church can promote biblical slavery? Should members of a fundamentalist church (Fundamentalists generally believe in the literal truth of the Bible)

have the freedom to stone kids who play hooky from Sunday school? Do you have the right to sacrifice cute Golden Retriever puppies to appease an angry god?

And does religious liberty mean that we, the majority, have the right to print "In God we trust" on our coins? Is printing "In God We Trust" a violation of the establishment clause? In truth, it probably is, although doing something about it might make us wish we had watched a kinky episode of "Lost" instead of debating religion.

Most Americans would not elect an atheist to the post of dog catcher, so let's remember that the men who brought us our establishment clause were not exactly the praying sort. Carol Hamilton, a historian who knows more about religion than

most of you know about your iPods, reminds us that Benjamin Franklin abandoned his early Calvinism because he found it incomprehensible. Thomas Jefferson rejected the idea that Jesus was the son of God and refused to pray because he thought prayer useless. James Madison once wrote that if members of Congress wanted chaplains, "they should pay for them out of their own pockets."

So, 200 years after the age of Franklin and Jefferson, why have we become so religious? Why do so many more Americans attend church on a regular basis (about 40% of us) than do the citizens of those European countries with their established churches (about 3% in Denmark and maybe 7% in England where the national anthem is "God Save the Queen")? One humorist wrote

that if you toss an egg off a train anywhere in America, you're bound to hit a Fundamentalist. If you doubt this, take a stroll through Memphis--or even Allegheny County--this week.

My hunch is that the answer to my question about the popularity of religion is found in that establishment clause. By separating church and state, American religion has become much more energetic than religion in the establishment countries. We have many varieties of religion, not one boring official brand. Many of our churches proudly proclaim themselves to be the one true faith. That kind of energy and certainty promotes popularity. And American religion will remain popular so long as you don't mess around with those Golden Retriever pups.

SPORTS

Concert security provided by the Rugby Club

By Bill Pulos
Contributing Writer

On Friday evening, Nov. 20, the Alfred Rugby Club served as Event Security Staff for the Everclear concert at McLane Center at Alfred University.

Dan Napolitano, Director of Student Activities at AU's Center for Student Involvement, called the Rugby Club into service.

The club was pleased to work at this University event. A total of 20 rugby players worked the event from 7 p.m. to midnight and put in a total of over 100 hours in the effort to make this concert a University success.



PROVIDED BY AU RUGBY CLUB

Men's Swimming and Diving remains unbeaten

By Justin McCombs
Sports Editor

Fredonia, NY- The AU men's swimming team beat SUNY Fredonia 120-87 to remain undefeated.

The women fell 131-62. Junior Tyler Olsen was a force as he won two individual races and was also part of two winning relays to back the AU men (4-0,2-0 Empire 8). Olsen's victorious individual

races were the 200-yard freestyle and the 500-yard freestyle.

Other winners from the men's team, in the individual department, consisted of freshman Nate Chapman in the 1,000-yard free, senior Greg Pilgrim in the 100-yard butterfly, sophomore Andrew Moragne in the 50-yard free, senior Andrew Brisson in the 100-yard freestyle, and sophomore Warren Dolben in the 100-yard breaststroke.

The men's relay teams once again proved why AU Swimming and Diving is becoming a powerhouse by winning all of the relays. Brisson, Dolben, Moragne and Olsen took the 200-yard medley relay; Moragne, junior Zach Mix, Olsen and Brisson won the 200-yard free relay.

Junior Sarah Blair was the only winner for the women individuals, in the 50-yard freestyle. Blair also came up with a second place

finish in the 100-yard freestyle.

Some other top performances for the AU women included freshman Shelby Remington who was third in the 1000-yard freestyle and in the 100-yard backstroke, junior Calista Merritt who was second in the 500-yard free and also third in the 200-yard freestyle followed by sophomore Maggie Callesano who finished second in the 100-yard back.

AU women took the first two

spots in the 200-yard freestyle relay. Junior Cailin Asmo, freshman Nicole Ramos, freshmen Eda Pellumbi and Kylie Smith and sophomore Julie Dalbey came up with the second place finish.

Both men and women (1-3,0-2 Empire 8) will be competing in the RIT Don Richards Invitational Dec. 4-6.

AU English equestrian team competes at St. Lawrence, Cazenovia

CAZENOVIA, NY — The Alfred University English equestrian team competed in a pair of shows the weekend of Nov. 21-22. The Saxons took third of 15 teams competing at St. Lawrence Nov. 21 and second of 15 teams at Cazenovia Nov. 22.

Senior Beth Ulbrecht (Penn Furnace, PA/State College), in intermediate equitation on the flat; junior Barbara Koziol (Syracuse, NY/Bishop Ludden), in open equitation over fences; sophomore

Kelly Rinebold (Ontario, NY/Wayne), in intermediate equitation over fences; freshman Tesla Parker (Waitsfield, VT), in novice equitation on the flat; and sophomore Jessica Maffey (Richmond, VA), in beginner walk-trot-canter; all earned first-place ribbons to lead the Saxons at St. Lawrence.

Placing second for AU at St. Lawrence were Ulbrecht in open equitation over fences, Rinebold in novice equitation on the flat; junior Johanna Moore (Sum-

mit, NY/Morristown-Beard) in novice equitation over fences; senior Kate West (Pavilion, NY/Pavilion) in intermediate equitation over fences, and sophomore Zhenia Bemko (Cranford, NJ) in walk-trot.

Rinebold took home first-place ribbons in intermediate equitation over fences and novice equitation on the flat in the show at Cazenovia Nov. 22 and won reserve high-point honors for that show. Other first-place riders for

AU at Cazenovia were Ulbrecht in intermediate equitation on the flat; Moore in intermediate equitation over fences; sophomore Katie LeSuer (Edinboro, PA/Cambridge Springs) in advanced walk-trot-canter; and Maffey, in beginner walk-trot-canter.

Second-place finishers for Alfred at Cazenovia were: senior Jessica Tufgariello (Point Pleasant Beach, NJ) in open equitation over fences; sophomore Kalcy O'Keefe (Rochester, NY/Penfield)

in intermediate equitation over fences; sophomore Danielle Ross (Staten Island, NY/St. Peter's) in novice equitation on the flat; and freshman Danielle Delaria in beginner walk-trot-canter.

The AU English equestrian team is idle until a pair of shows the weekend of Feb. 27 (at Cazenovia) and Feb. 28 (at St. Lawrence).

STATE JETS F IND

Griffin Taylor

Staff Writer

Misery this week came three days early for the painfully loyal Bills fans, as their team lost its only Thursday Night Football game to the Jets at home, 19-13.

It was a rather ugly contest. Jets quarterback Mark Sanchez hyper-extended his knee right before halftime, and during the second half, backup Kellen Clemens and Bills' backup-turned-starter Ryan Fitzpatrick battled for the title of Worst Possible Quarterback. Clemens produced a whopping 14 passing yards in the entire second half. The Jets elite defense was too much for Fitzpatrick to handle,

as he threw an interception and sported an ugly QB rating of 34.3.

It is a shame that the Bills could not build upon the momentum of their 31-14 thrashing of Miami two weekends ago. On the bright side, Terrell Owens is seemingly making the best of his situation in Buffalo (no, that is not a typo, and no, I am not insane), as his numbers are steadily increasing week by week. The Bills will have to decide whether or not to keep Owens at the end of the season, along with many others.

If Buffalo is serious about reversing the losing trend next season, it must lure an established coach, and in order to do so, it may have to throw some serious

cash in, say, a Bill Cowher's direction. The Bills must also bring in a quarterback who is actually good at what he does, and that will not be cheap, either.

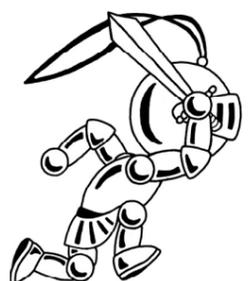
Speculations have recently surfaced about Michael Vick possibly being under center next year. However, one would have to wonder just how ready and able Vick would be to lead a team to the playoffs after such a long layoff. As it is, he is really only utilized by the Eagles on Wildcat formations, when the entire defense, and most everyone in the stadium, knows that he is going to run the ball.

All is back to normal in the land of blue and red, for a few days at least. The Giants washed away

the taste of their short rest, high altitude debacle in Denver on Thanksgiving day by defeating the Cowboys at home, 31-24, in a key divisional match up. If one were to tell a betting man that Tony Romo would complete 41 of 55 passes for 392 yards and three scores that day, he probably would wager an arm and a leg on the Cowboys to win. However, the Giants managed to stifle the Dallas rushing attack, and got a key punt return TD from Dominic Hixon to wrap this one up.

The Giants now stand at 7-5, only a game behind the Cowboys in the NFC East division, and having already swept the season series 2-0, the Giants would own

a potential tie breaker over the 'Boys. The Giants looked like a JV team less than two years removed from a Super Bowl championship in five of their past six contests. Luckily, the Giants finally righted the ship just in time, flexing all of the necessary muscles to grind out a victory over their bitter rivals for a sold-out stadium filled with freezing New Yorkers willing to brave the elements to watch their team come away with the win.



ALFRED SAXON SCOREBOARD

Team	Last Opponent	Result	Record	Next Opponent
Men's Swimming and Diving	RIT Invitational	1st of 6	4 - 0 - 0	Utica
Women's Swimming and Diving	RIT Invitational	6th of 6	1 - 4 - 0	Utica
Men's Basketball	Stevens	L, 55 - 68	5 - 3 - 0	Penn State-Abington
Women's Basketball	Stevens	L, 52 - 80	5 - 2 - 0	Mount Union, at Waynesburg Classic