

duquesne
reactsShould Pa.
ban texting
while driving?

"I think that it's a great idea," said Justin Seybert, a freshman liberal arts major. "You can lose focus because it is difficult to multitask. I will never text while driving a car."



"I'm a good multitasker, but I don't do it much," said Maria De Iuliis, a freshman music education major. "There are more good reasons to ban it versus talking on the phone."



"It's probably a good idea, but I can't say I'm not guilty of it," said junior pharmacy major Michelle Mikus.



"I think it would be a good idea, but I would probably still do it," said Stephanie Syrko, a sophomore occupational therapy major.

Compiled by Brad Morocco

University presidents decry 'privilege' tax

TAX— from page 1

"Whatever you tax, you get less of," said Duquesne University President Charles J. Dougherty. "Do we want fewer college students in Pittsburgh? I think the answer to that is no. College students are our lifeblood, and they're the future of this city. And so, taxing college students is simply the wrong way to go."

According to the city's Web site, Ravenstahl considered including a tax on local nonprofits in his budget, but decided in favor of the "Fair Share Tax."

Dougherty said he does not think an alternative tax on nonprofits would be a viable option, especially considering the non-profit status held by colleges and universities. Although most colleges in the area are tax exempt, some, including Duquesne, make voluntary contributions to the city on a yearly basis.

In an interview Tuesday evening, Dougherty said the proposed tax is the most pressing issue he has encountered in his time as Duquesne University president.

"I've never seen anything like this before," he said. "It's certainly ironic that one of the youngest mayors in the country would come up with this solution."

State law unclear on tax

Dougherty said the tax is illegal, referencing a 1997 Pennsylvania Supreme Court case involving a real estate tax dispute between the City of Washington and Washington and Jefferson College.

In that case, the court held that universities are nonprofit, tax exempt organizations, but it did not deal specifically with a tax targeting students.

"Taxes on higher education institutions have previously been judged illegal by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, and it is our belief that the mayor's proposed tax is similarly illegal," Dougherty said in an e-mail to University employees Monday afternoon.

PCHE members unanimously decry the tax as illegal. Despite that claim, state law does not provide a clear explanation of wheth-

er or not the proposed tax would hold up in court, according to Duquesne University law professor Bruce Ledewitz.

Currently, state law provides tax exempt status for colleges, but the language is not precise in defining how far that privilege extends.

"At the moment, it's a potentially open question," Ledewitz said.

Pittsburgh's Local Services Tax, for instance, levies a \$52 tax on everyone who works in the city, regardless of the for-profit or not-for-profit statuses of their companies. Other municipalities also impose the tax.

In addition to employees paying the Local Services Tax, Duquesne University also pays other taxes to the city, including city-school real estate taxes, parking and amusement taxes. Last year, Duquesne paid approximately \$2 million in these taxes.

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Charles J. Dougherty
DU President

According to Ledewitz, colleges may have a strong argument against the tuition tax.

"I could certainly see [colleges] prevailing, but I'm not certain they will prevail," he said.

University of Pittsburgh Chancellor Mark Nordenberg, who served as the university's law school dean between 1985 and 1993, said he will fight the tax as long as necessary.

"We do believe that this is not only a matter of bad public policy — we believe that it is an unlawful proposal," Nordenberg said.

"It's a national issue that has its root, at least here, tied to state law. So whether or not this could

ultimately wind its way to the U.S. Supreme Court, I think no one knows. And hopefully it will not get that far."

Proposed remedy
raises larger concerns

While PCHE's members were adamant about protecting the interests of local students, they also said the tax, if passed, could set a bad standard for other cities to follow.

Nordenberg said he was concerned that the tax would negatively impact student enrollment and jeopardize the economic support students already give to Pittsburgh.

"This isn't just a matter of fairness to students; this really is a matter that also deals with the short and long term health of the city," Nordenberg said. "This is an issue that ought to be of concern to anybody concerned with the future financial strength of the city."

Nordenberg said that of the 28,000 students at Pitt's Oakland campus, roughly 7,000 live in campus residence halls. The remaining three quarters of students live in surrounding communities and end up contributing to the city with rent payments.

"To say that this is some kind of catch-up, really, simply misses the facts of the situation," he said.

Although most colleges and universities are tax exempt, many make voluntary contributions to the city.

According to Matt Frist, director of Planning and Budget at Duquesne, the University takes part in the Pittsburgh Public Service Fund, a group of 73 nonprofit organizations that contributed \$13.9 million to the city between 2005 and 2007. Last year, Duquesne students and employees dedicated nearly 200,000 hours to public service. The University valued those services at roughly \$4 million.

"There's a lack of recognition for a lot of the services that we provide ... we have our own public safety department and Pitt and CMU do, too," Frist said. "So, it's not like we rely on Pittsburgh city police for events and things like that. We own all of the streets on this campus, and that means that we pay to

maintain those streets."

While colleges argue that the tax misrepresents the services that they offer students, Dougherty said the biggest concern is the financial strain that could be placed on students who are trying to improve their economic statuses.

Dougherty said the tax proposal directly contradicts the goals of Ravenstahl's "Pittsburgh Promise" and would overburden students, many of whom fund their education through scholarships and loans.

If passed, the tax could change the image of Pittsburgh as a progressive city, Dougherty said.

"We like being number one in a lot of things, but we don't like the idea of becoming number one when it comes to taxing college students," Dougherty said.

Tuition
tax slips
past students

WILL DODDS
the duquesne duke

With his recently proposed tax on Pittsburgh college students, Mayor Luke Ravenstahl shouldn't expect to have made many friends on Duquesne's campus. But he won't encounter many foes either.

The mayor's recent proposal calls for a 1 percent tax on all post-secondary education students in Pittsburgh to help balance the \$15 million deficit in the city's \$457 million 2010 budget. The money is also intended to help keep local libraries open and cover pension costs.

But, for the most part, Duquesne students were uninformed about the tax aimed directly at their demographic.

"I don't really know anything. This is the first time I've heard about it," said sophomore Casey Callahan.

see TUITION — page 16

County lacks vaccines

DAN ALTHOUSE
the duquesne duke

As Duquesne University finished its second wave of H1N1 vaccinations this week with vaccines to spare, many Allegheny County residents are without access to the vaccination.

With a student population of 10,300, Duquesne's Health Service received 2,000 H1N1 vaccines on Oct. 9 and has administered more than half of them through its series of 12 clinics since then.

But Allegheny County, with a 1.3

million population, received approximately 5,000, even though it has requested more than 100,000 doses.

"We have gotten a miniscule amount, compared to the size of the county," said Sharon Silvestri, chief of the Allegheny County Health Department's Infectious Diseases program.

Duquesne received enough vaccines to cover 19 percent of its population, while Allegheny County's vaccines only covered .38 percent of its citizens.

see H1N1 — page 15



BRAD MOROCCO/PHOTO EDITOR

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provided Duquesne University with enough vaccines to cover 19 percent of its student population, while Allegheny County received enough for only .38 percent of its population.

Student tax falls on deaf ears

TUITION — from page 6

Other students found themselves in the same shoes, oblivious to Ravenstahl's proposals and unsure of what the tax would entail.

For student-athletes like Josh Lott, a sophomore football player, and Ahjah Hall, a freshman basketball player, the student tax seemed irrelevant.

"I don't know anything," said Lott. "I'm on paid scholarship."

The tax, however, would account for 1 percent of a student's tuition regardless of how much the student pays each year out-of-pocket. Scholarships and financial aid would not reduce the amount a student is taxed.

The budget proposal comes less than a week after Ravenstahl won reelection with 55 percent of the vote. At the Fisher Hall polling station, which covers Duquesne University and parts of Downtown and Uptown, only 48 voters turned out, accounting for less than 2 percent of the area's registered voting population.

For those knowledgeable about Ravenstahl's proposal, the idea of being taxed solely because they are a city student doesn't bode well.

"I think it's a little bad that [Ravenstahl] waited until after the election results to come out with this new tax," said senior Jay Gallik. "I also think that [there are] a lot of students who live outside the city of Pittsburgh that shouldn't have to pay for this."

Others question the reasoning behind Ravenstahl's tax, citing the fact that students are already paying hefty tuition bills.

"If the tax is going to be for every Pittsburgh student, it seems unreasonable because we have a negative net worth," said sophomore Jerry Lynch.

Sophomore Tim Beck agreed. "I don't like [the tax proposal] because I see the kind of idea of supporting public libraries and pension costs as a government responsibility," he says. "Yeah, it comes from taxes, but not students. We already pay enough."

PC, but still offensive

AUGUSTUS — from page 9

According to Princeton University's lexical database of the English language, this is the "avoidance of expressions or actions that can be perceived to exclude or marginalize or insult people who are socially disadvantaged or discriminated against." If being politically correct was a test in America, Homeland Security failed — miserably!

This past Halloween, Target stores failed, too. On its Web site, Target advertised an "Illegal Alien" costume, which included a mask of an extra-terrestrial being, an orange jumpsuit and a fake "green card" to carry around for further clarification. Across America, reactions were mixed. Some people thought the costume was funny; others demanded Target withdraw it from the Web site immediately.

Perhaps Target is not held to such a high standard when it comes to judgments of this nature, but why should we expect any better from them? If Homeland Security is setting standards that make it acceptable to refer to anyone not born in the United States as an "alien," then I suppose we can't hold the common man or Target at fault.

In no way am I condoning illegal immigration, but I cannot remain silent while some people — American or otherwise — find funny something as offensive as Target's costume. It displayed wanton ignorance and plain poor taste and reflected a severe lack of political correctness. In clips on Youtube.com and CNN's Headline News, I saw that many people not only thought it was funny, but actually chided those who were upset and offended, saying they should "lighten up."

While reading about immigration online, I came across a blog in which the author chose to share his thoughts on immigration. He wrote that he understands "our great nation is made up of immigrants from all over the world," and went on to explain that the difference between immigrants today and those from "back in the day" is "the immigrants that came to our country 'back in the day' wanted nothing more than to be Americans."

I'm not sure where he got this information, but historically, we know that many factors — whether they were social, economic or otherwise — influenced the decisions of immigrants worldwide to leave their countries and settle in the United States. I believe it is important to remember that the majority of Americans would not be here if their ancestors did not come here as immigrants centuries ago.

America claims diversity quite often, and while it is a fact that people of many different origins and cultures live here, the nation is still segregated in many ways. There is a shallow "sharing" of culture at some schools and workplaces, but it is in no way a national effort. I acknowledge that this may not be as easy to do here as it is in other smaller, cosmopolitan countries. However, I would think a country this great would be able to come up with a better way to integrate its many cultural and ethnic groups.

I attempt to offend no one, simply to enlighten and educate, and I challenge you to be more cautious and responsible with your jokes and terminologies.

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Students aid disaster victims in Italy

ITALY — from page 7

"It was sad to see all those caskets," Lucente said, referring to a scene in the video. "We wanted to find a way for us to help."

Lucente said UPMC, The University of Pittsburgh and the National Italian American Foundation in Washington, D.C., made major contributions to the fund.

Giuseppe Piccoli, an Italian instructor and student at Duquesne, grew up in Southern Italy and felt a connection to the victims.

"I was on the Internet when the earthquake struck, because it was daytime [in America]," Piccoli said. "In the beginning, I didn't realize how big it was. The news was updating in front of me. I became homesick and sad."

Piccoli expressed concern about a church in L'Aquila, the Basilica di Santa Maria di Collemag-

gio. He said the church has become a symbol for citizens in L'Aquila, and he searched newspapers to see if it was damaged. Although the façade and structure remained intact, Piccoli found that the back of the church was destroyed.

"They love this church so much," Piccoli said. "I don't think the church is more important than saving people's lives, but, at the same time, there are some kind of buildings that are really important and are kind of symbols for a city."

Curtis Evans, a sophomore international relations major, attended the event.

"What I took from the movie was that they didn't want to concentrate on damage the earthquake did, but focus on the future and how we can rebuild," Evans said. "I think that's a good attitude to have."

The Italian Scientific Attaché, a representative or ambassador from a particular mission or embassy, also attended the fundraiser.

DU sees spurt of break-ins

GARAGE — from page 7

of safe," Cox said. "I try to go down a floor and park now."

When someone's vehicle is broken into, Okopal said, the best thing for them to do is "call public safety and don't touch the vehicle," because Public Safety may dust for finger prints.

According to Okopal, in the case of a pattern of multiple break-ins, Public Safety places extra security in the garages, usually in the form of patrolling officers dressed in civilian clothes or sitting in unmarked vehicles.

During the February incidents, Public Safety also stationed officers

at the entrance of both garages; they warned drivers with visible GPS systems to hide them, and also posted warning flyers in stairwells and elevators.

As normal security precautions, a Duquesne guard patrols the garages by foot or vehicle 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Parking and Traffic Management patrols the garages during the day for capacity, and they also report any suspicious activity.

"It's part of our parking attendants' jobs to understand that they're our eyes and ears out there and to be aware of their surroundings," Matrazzo said.

Public safety also monitors live feed from the cameras stationed in

the stairwells and elevator lobbies of both garages, as well as their vehicular entrances and exits. Most of the time, however, the cameras are fruitless in preventing and solving the crimes because so many people move in and out of the garages each day, Okopal said.

No one has been arrested in relation to any break-in cases so far this year. Although most break-in cases go unsolved, patrolling Public Safety officers have caught thieves in the act in previous years, according to Okopal. He added that, while most break-ins happen in the garages, some also occur with surface-parked vehicles, especially at the Forbes Avenue parking lot.

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