

# PSU makes Katrina victims pay full tuition

by Amber Fusiak

Penn State University isn't putting its money where its mouth is when it comes to helping victims of Katrina.

While PSU as an institution invites members of its community to donate goods and services to the victims of Katrina, unlike a number of other universities across the country, Penn State is requiring student hurricane victims to pay regular tuition, as well as full room and board if they want to continue their studies here.

Senior administrators, including members of the president's office, the registrar and the financial aid office, decided that rather than offering the 25 provisional students free tuition and a room, the school would decide students' financial assessments individually, said Anna Griswold, PSU's assistant vice provost for Enrollment Management and Student Aid. This requires students to pay full price, except for the grants, loans and scholarships they might receive like any other students.

Virginia State University and Duke University, on the other hand, accommodate provisional students with free tuition, along with free room and board. Oklahoma City University, Lynchburg College and Delaware State University are offering free tuition to any student enrolled at a college or university affected by the hurricane. The University of Richmond also accepted 20

**Oklahoma City University, Lynchburg College and Delaware State University are offering free tuition to any student enrolled at a college or university affected by the hurricane.**

undergraduate students and several law students free of charge. Similarly, Randolph-Macon College in Ashland offers free tuition and room in the fall.

Several schools specifically arranged reduced tuition for temporary students. The Randolph-Macon Women's College in Lynchburg grants students previously enrolled in a four-year institution half off the yearly tuition as well as free room and board. The University of Arkansas fully waived tuition and fees for Arkansas residential students planning on attending the university on a provisional basis, while extending out-of-state students in-state tuition rates.

Several organizations - ranging from the Association of American Universities to the American Association of State Colleges and Universities - have urged member institutions enrolling temporary students not to "charge tuition if the student has already paid tuition to the home institution; and if the student has not paid the home institution, charge the home institution's rate of tuition and remit that amount to the home institution."

John Hopkins will abide by this declaration either by admitting students free of charge if they already paid their home institution or by collecting and remitting the home institution's tuition to the specific school.

Scott Cowen, president of Tulane University in New Orleans went so far as to declare to provisional students attending other schools across the nation that "no Tulane student will ultimately have to pay more than they would have if they were at Tulane for the fall semester."

While Tulane students are required to pay tuition to their home institution despite the fact that they are not attending the school due to the hurricane, the university will later take steps to ensure that the student's total expenditures for tuition will not ultimately exceed that of Tulane tuition, explained Cowen.

"Most of the students [enrolling at Penn State due to the hurricane] were attending Tulane University," said Bill Mahon, the director of PSU public information.

Penn State's Griswold said her office is helping students through the financial aid process.

"We are informing each student about how to apply for federal and state student financial aid," she said. "Our goal is to make sure that each student's need is evaluated individually and that all available sources of assistance be made available to help them with their college costs during their semester here at Penn State."

Penn State, however, is exploring ways to help any students who are facing financial difficulties. Particularly, Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistant Agency (PHEAA) has announced a \$2 million grant for victims of Hurricane Katrina within Pennsylvania.

"We have applied to receive some of this funding and we believe this will enable us to better assist those students with the great-



Photo courtesy of Tulane University  
Scott Cowen, president of Tulane University, declared that Tulane students would not be forced to pay more than the price of their home university tuition.

est financial need - needs which were created as a result of losses from the hurricane. We are waiting to hear about approval for these funds," said Griswold.

According to Bill Mahon, many of the students attending the university due to the hurricane have not had severe financial losses.

Mahon said that most of the students attending Penn State because their universities of choice were destroyed by the hurricane were not from Louisiana or Mississippi.

"They come from New Jersey, New York, and Maryland," he said of the students. "That being the case, they for the most part have not faced the hardship of losing homes, family members, or parents who have lost jobs."

"The students we are working with are expressing gratitude for our assistance," added Griswold.

"I think Penn State has helped me out and has been as open as possible," said provisional student Laura Rochon, who previously attended Loyola University in New Orleans. "I believe they're doing all that they can. I already was aware that they weren't going to give me money, so I wasn't expecting it."



A flooded neighborhood is shown in New Orleans, Wednesday, Sept. 28, 2005. One month after Katrina devastated the city, the Lower Ninth Ward section of the city is still drying out. (AP Photo/LM Otero)