



Mr. Roger L. Williams
Executive Director, Penn State Alumni Association
The Pennsylvania State University
Hintz Family Alumni Center
University Park, PA 16802

Friday, May 19, 2006

Dear Mr. Williams,

We, the Board of the Council of Commonwealth Student Governments Alumni Interest Group (CCSG AIG) are writing to you in the hopes of initiating an ongoing dialogue about the Penn State Alumni Association's approach towards students and alumni from Commonwealth locations. While our Penn State community may be twenty undergraduate locations united as one university, an archaic stigma associated with the 19 commonwealth campuses continues to exist within this university and must continuously be addressed by its faculty, administrative, student and alumni leaders.

Our membership was thrilled to hear the news of our recent approval for full membership into the Alumni Society community, but was subsequently disheartened to see our organization's name not once, but twice printed incorrectly (as the "Commonwealth Council of Student Governments") in the Alumni Volunteer newsletter as well as the Penn Stater Magazine. This misprint is nothing more than a careless mistake that our Board President, Tim Daniels, caught and repeatedly asked to have changed prior to publication, but for whatever reason was not. Please understand that we are not writing to simply bring up our frustration with the simple misprint, but to use this occurrence as an example to jumpstart a campaign to change the image of Commonwealth locations throughout the Penn State system, starting with the Alumni Association.

The Council of Commonwealth Student Governments is an organization that does not get as much recognition or opportunity as our colleagues in USG; a reality our organization has unhappily coped with throughout our history. While we may never be as visible as our friends in USG, we believe the efforts of the hardworking and dedicated student leaders of CCSG deserve the overdue respect and dignity from University officers and the alumni leadership. When terms such as "branch campus" or "main campus" are used by employees, alumni, and students, it denotes a location of lesser value and decreased opportunity, thereby giving undergraduates at that location an inferior view of their own collegiate career. Instead of concentrating on the unique advantages of being in a smaller campus within a large university and building school pride upon that, the lazy nomenclature just references the misconception that a Commonwealth Campus *isn't really* Penn State. And when the name of the representative body for student governance is misspelled multiple times in an official publication of the Alumni Association, it decreases the organization's legitimacy in the eyes of readers, while reminding past and present CCSG leaders that we are still strangers in the eyes of our own University, despite our enormous

contributions to the institution we love and will always value. While the problem of this stigma is not something that will disappear with more attention to proper terminology, it is a positive step forward in addressing the problem at hand and developing solutions.

What we propose is to begin discussions with you and the Alumni Council about ways to address this outdated and careless terminology, as well as the implications it has on University relations, both internal and external. This idea is more than just getting our name written correctly in the Penn Stater; it's about shaping the University's image to one of total acceptance, regardless of race, gender, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, and in this particular case, campus assignment. We know that the Alumni Association is working to reach out to the alumni of our 19 Commonwealth Campuses, so perhaps our cooperation can address multiple goals for an inclusive and vibrant alumni/student community.

The CCSG AIG officers would greatly appreciate any feedback or helpful comments from you or your staff regarding our proposals. Any responses can be forwarded to our Board's Parliamentarian Mike Cooper at the address given below. Thank you for not only your time and consideration, but for your tireless efforts in making Penn State's Alumni Association the best in the world.

With Commonwealth Pride,

Timothy Daniels '97
Christopher Zegar '03
Nikkie DeSimone '03
Robert Hughes '95
Michael Cooper '03
Carlos Rodriguez '02
Brian Marko '04
Richel Perretti '97

Kindly Forward Any Response To:

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