

THE PIONEER

PRAIRIE STATE COLLEGE

FEBRUARY 26, 2018

VOLUME 65, ISSUE 6

Fire Alarm Confusion

by Ida Alessandrini

At approximately 11 a.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 1, 2017 confused students and faculty poured out of Prairie State College after the fire alarm went off. Not everyone was out of the building before it stopped, but everyone who was there on that chilly day is curious to know what happened. After asking around I was able to find Prairie State College's chief of police, George Pfothenauer. When asked what had happened to cause the fire alarm he stated that he was checking the fire alarm box near the men's bathroom by the police department on the main floor when the alarm was set off in error. According to Chief Pfothenauer, "Prairie State College conducts periodic fire drill exercises which is developed to test the college's communication, police and fire response times and our Evacuation Plan capabilities." Although it is not as dramatic of an answer as one may prefer, we here at the Pioneer are just thankful that no one was hurt.

Calling All Clubs, PSC Organizations

by David Lisnek

The Pioneer is proud to announce it will routinely feature stories and interviews with PSC Clubs and Organizations in a mutual effort to keep the student body informed.

We trust students and faculty will appreciate the in-depth reporting of campus life in our regular beat Club Corner.

If your club or organization is seeking free exposure to the student population and local community, then please feel free to contact Anthony at thepioneerdropbox@gmail.com with the subject heading "CLUB CORNER" and let us know what is going on. A staff reporter will get in touch with you to write an article for an upcoming issue.

If you find that someone from your club or organization is willing to submit their own work, please feel free to attach the article to your email and it will be fully considered by The Pioneer staff.

Are You Being Outsmarted by Your Smartphone?

by David Lisnek, Tech Beat

We're all guilty of using our phones in class, in the car, in the elevator, everywhere. Smartphones have quickly become a modern-day pacifier for the growing population of digital natives (people who've never known a world without the internet) many of whom are Prairie State College students.

Look around you. How many people are glued to their devices while engaged in other activities requiring their full attention? The number doesn't matter. What does matter is the question of why?

One such reason for this increased dependency is the fact that students are often under tremendous stress and time constraints. There's nothing more frustrating than trying to print your paper due in an hour, only to discover you're out of ink.

But for students trying to find a balance between "stress and success" in their daily activities, there is always the promise of playing a game on their smartphones. While I am far from being a digital native, having grown up with a "teen-line" in my home (Google it), I, too, share an affection for my iPhone. Moreover, I've recently found myself addicted to a "free game" that has consumed a disproportionate share of my time and my money, as I'm sure many can relate. The name of the game is not important. In all fairness, you are probably better off not knowing to avoid becoming addicted. The game that I play sometimes requires the need for me to purchase a form of digital currency. In this case, gems, that are paid for through iTunes with the amazing ease of my iPhone's fingerprint technology.

The convenience of being able to avoid log-ins, user names, and passwords was the deciding factor in me upgrading to an iPhone SE two years ago. Yes, the SE is archaic when compared to the iPhone X, but it has what I need and then some.

The problem is the ease in which I quickly spend money playing a "free game" without giving it much thought. I run low on gems, and the game quickly provides the instant opportunity to buy more at an "incredibly low price" with a simple touch of my thumb. That simplicity is starting to add up as of late.

If you find yourself spending a little more money on-line through your smartphone, especially with fingerprint technology, then consider doing what I have done. I purchased a prepaid debit card and added \$50 at that time. I then registered that card as my payment option to my iTunes account, thus removing it from my primary checking account. It was giving myself an allowance that could no longer get out of hand while my iPhone was in hand. It's made a huge difference now that I have limited my funds where I could not limit my impulse.

What card you get and how much you add is your choice, and that is what is important, the fact that it is your choice. Whether you're a gamer, a song lover, or any other victim of fingerprint technology making it too easy for you to spend your hard-earned money, now is the time to get smart and limit your spending.

Students Trapped Serving Purgatory at Prairie State

by David Lisnek

Walk down any hall on campus and you will find sign after sign on office windows proudly displaying where that individual “reached higher” to obtain their college degree. This is meant to encourage the student body to see beyond the programs offered by PSC and transfer to a 4-year college or university.

However, students can only transfer once they have completed their 2-year program at PSC. Yet, students can only complete their 2-year program if, and when, PSC offers the courses that they require.

With the release of the 2018 Spring schedule, some communication students have discovered that a core requirement for their program is once again not being offered. The course is ENG 256 Film and Literature, and is required to receive an Associate’s Degree in Radio/TV/Film.

The course was not offered this semester, nor was it offered in the Spring of 2017. PSC’s website course description of ENG 256 appears with the following:

“Prerequisite: ENG 101 with a C or better. 3 lectures per week: 3 hrs. transfer credit. This course examines the formal, thematic, and historical relationships between literature and film, and includes an examination of the adaptations and influences that demonstrate the strengths of each artistic medium.”

Is it wrong to think that such a course that involves studying movies based books would not appeal to the PSC student body given the popularity of adaptive movies that are released?

Is it wrong to think that such a course required to complete a degree offered by PSC should be offered at least once in a 2-year period regardless if enough students sign-up?

Is it wrong for the student body to expect PSC to allow students to reach higher by ending this perpetual purgatory?

While we understand basic economic factors come into play regarding a course being offered based on student enrollment, does it really cost so much money to at least offer a required course in the catalogue and then let the student body decide?

We hope the communications department is the only stage of purgatory at Prairie State, and nothing like Dante’s vision. As far as when the course was last offered remains to be revealed as we at The Pioneer promise to get to the bottom of this matter, but we need your help, both students and faculty alike.

If you know of other core requirement courses that have not been offered to comply with a 2-year degree, contact The Pioneer’s Editor in Chief, Anthony Miller at The Pioneer with the subject “PURGATORY” at thepioneerdropbox@gmail.com and hopefully we can work together to bring to light this issue.

Café Mystery

An editorial by: Anthony Miller

We here at the Pioneer have, for a while, been trying to bring you, the reader, the true story of what happened to our cafeteria. Unfortunately, we have not reached any real answers; we have, however, been able to add some interesting facts and context. At the very least, we can provide you with information that you (as a paying student, or an employed faculty member) are entitled to.

I myself started attending Prairie State in spring of 2017, so I was able to experience our cafeteria in full swing before it abruptly shut down. I remember the quality and convenience that was provided day in and day out. In the mornings, one could smell the breakfast being cooked, and for just a small amount of money, someone could eat some delicious eggs, or maybe some toast, or bacon (you get the idea). The cafeteria was not only a place where you could go to grab a quick bite to eat. Due to the convenience and availability of the cafeteria, there was much more traffic than there is currently is. This obviously created a social setting and added to the community of the school.

As we all know now, the current cafeteria system comprises of several different vendors who come in on a semi-consistent basis. If you remember the end of spring semester 2017, we had an assortment of food trucks that would provide lunch services to students. Since then, they have moved the food serving inside (most days). But before we talk about why this is an issue, we need to talk about the larger point: Fratello’s, the in-house restaurant at the time, was able to supply the student body with fast, easy, cheap, and even partially healthy options. They abruptly left in the spring 2017 semester, and to my knowledge, almost no one was aware as to why, or what the future of our cafeteria would be. This is the larger issue because as students, we pay the school for its services. We provide the school with funding directly, and in return, the school is to provide services to us in the form of decent classrooms, good professors, and an environment that will foster learning.

As professors (some of you may be reading), you are employees and, therefore, entitled to information about your workplace, especially if you depend on the precedent that your place of work provides a cafeteria, and then takes that away with no warning or explanation.

The short answer, as provided by President Winfree to me via email, is “Earlier this year, the college ended their food services agreement with Fratello’s because Fratello’s was not in compliance with the terms of our agreement.” Before Fratello’s, the cafeteria was inhabited by the restaurant The Egg & I. I was able to reach out to them for some background on their experience, and although they did not have much to say on the matter, they had nothing but positive comments. When asked if they enjoyed working with the school, the manager stated that they did love being here, and they would love to come back any time. When I followed up by asking why they left if they had such a

Café Mystery (cont.)

An editorial by: Anthony Miller

wonderful experience, they responded that it wasn't their choice to stop; the administration at the school wanted to "switch it up."

I was also able to speak with the owner of Fratello's, Markos (last name?). I assured him that I (as well as many students) was a huge fan of their services and missed them greatly, and asked him a few questions. Markos assured me that just like The Egg & I, he did not want to leave. He said that Fratello's had made multiple attempts to try to come back; however, the school assured him that the students were being taken care of. Markos went on to say that the administration was "very happy with the current situation" as it provided "entrepreneurial opportunities" for other vendors, and that they "will never go back" to the old way, they "do not want a partner," and perhaps most interestingly, the administration told Markos they "decided the current situation is better for the students." In the end, Fratello's owner Markos (last name?) was very helpful and pointed me in the direction of Prairie State's recent fire over the previous summer as the main reason why they were no longer serving us food.

I was able to call the Chicago Heights Fire Department for some clarity on the school fire; however, I was only able to learn that the fire was caused by an electrical fault and a transformer melting down (consistent with previous statements from Prairie State). The Chicago Heights Fire Department was also able to comment that our school had no violations and no issues to speak of currently. In the end, we are able to provide more of a background than we had previously. However, some questions are still pressing. Why is it that we were never informed as to why our cafeteria left? Why does the school think they are

providing us with better options? And why is the school making decisions about what's best for the students, without even talking to us?

In an emailed statement to me, President Winfree said, "In the interest of serving the students and employees, the college has increased the number and variety of vending machines in the cafeteria area to offer fresh options, including sandwiches, salads, snack options and more. The college also reached agreements with several area restaurants to provide hot food selections several days of the week." The increased number of vending machines is admittedly nice, but they also come with a limited selection at best. The restaurants that provide hot food several days a week also have limited menus and a large price tag (subjectively speaking). You can no longer buy yourself a meal for \$4, or grab fresh fruit, or salads, like you could when the cafeteria was in full swing. If you want to argue that the bookstore provides fresh food and healthy options, sure, I agree with that. Except, of course, the bookstore is not immune from the curse of a limited selection and some items can be pricey.

In the end, I feel that the students and faculty alike have not been properly informed as to what is going on our campus. I understand that running a college is hard, and hard choices must be made sometimes for reasons I am sure I do not understand. My point is that someone must inform everyone else. Do we not owe it to each other to be as transparent as possible? Do we not owe each other the honesty and decency of asking how we feel about decisions that affect all campus life? I think we do, and I'm only here to do that. There are no bad guys, and no evil figure heads to get mad at, just busy people doing their best to look out for us. To those people I say this, "Please trust us to make these decisions as well, please tell us what is going on, we do care, and we want to help make this place better too."

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The Winner will receive
an article written about
them and their design!

The First, Second, and
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will all be published
in the reveal issue!

We here at *The Pioneer* are looking
for help from our fellow students.
We are asking all interested students
to submit and original design
to thepioneerdropbox@gmail.com.
We will be choosing the winner of the
contest in an upcoming issue of the
paper. The deadline for submissions
is March 23rd. We are looking for-
ward to seeing what you got!

THE PIONEER MISSION STATEMENT

Our goal is to provide our fellow students, faculty, and guests here at Prairie State an unbiased view to some of our most pressing issues both local and worldly. We here at The Pioneer are dedicated to the truth abstained from subjectivity. We understand the commitment that we have to our community and will honor that in all things we do. It is the responsibility of this paper to provide current events, inform the readers of all things happening around school, and promote an environment for critical thinking, and objective world views. We shall always strive toward bettering ourselves, our readers, and our paper. The search for truth is relentless and paved with hard work and hard times. Together we march toward making not only ourselves, but our readers better and more informed.

Thank you,
The Pioneer Staff