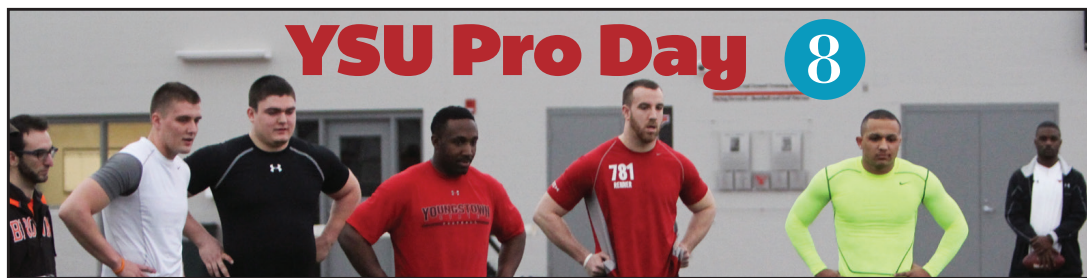


## Dunn's Goodbye 2



## Dunn Reflects on YSU



PHOTO BY DUSTIN LIVESAY/THEJAMBAR

Youngstown State University President Randy Dunn will leave office on March 21 after an abrupt and controversial announcement of his resignation. Dunn said he believes his policies will continue into the next administration.

### FRANK GEORGE LIAM BOUQUET

thejambor@gmail.com

After a dramatic and abrupt announcement of resignation, Youngstown State University President Randy Dunn will leave office on March 21.

With his departure quickly approaching, Dunn reflected on his time at YSU, his departure and his new job at Southern Illinois University.

"There are those at the university and certainly many in the community who feel betrayed by my departure and have the sense that I'm leaving the university hanging out there at a time when we have some pretty serious challenges in front of us — I understand that," Dunn said. "My initial response is to say, 'I absolutely get it.' ... I would be pretty shocked if there hadn't been a pretty strong reaction in that vein coming out of the announcement."

Though he said he understands the

community's disappointment in his decision to leave YSU, Dunn — who is an Illinois native — said the position at SIU is his "dream job."

"There is no place other than Youngstown that understands what it means to go home — I mean that local pride and that kind of spirit that draws people back is as much about Youngstown as any place I've ever been," Dunn said. "For Rhonda and me [Southern Illinois] is going home."

Dunn reaffirmed that he did not actively seek the SIU presidency; instead, he was approached several times by the search committee. He did not consider himself a candidate for the position at SIU until he agreed to visit the campus for an interview on Feb. 12.

"At what point I agreed to go and talk with that board — in essence, I was communicating to them that I was willing to listen to them and at least consider them," Dunn said. "It wouldn't be fair for me to take their money for a plane ticket and waste their time if I wasn't at least going to be open to the conversation that they wanted to have."

SIU's search for a new president

was closed, meaning Dunn's candidacy for the position was kept confidential. He was unable to alert the administration and the Board of Trustees about his possible resignation.

Dunn said he understands the utility of both confidential and open searches.

"In my view, there is no one right way for these things. I don't think it's appropriate to say one way is correct and one way is not correct. I think given wherever the institution is and the challenges that exist for a given search, you look at various approaches you can take, and ultimately it is for a board to make that determination," he said.

While Dunn only served eight months as YSU's president, he has worked to improve enrollment numbers, moved YSU from an open enrollment to an open access institution and introduced sweeping budget cuts to deal with a mounting deficit.

He believes these policies will endure throughout the next administration.

"These were changes that had to be made to strengthen the university over time," Dunn said. "It's my belief that

as a new president comes in and does his or her own scanning of the environment or look at the landscape, they're going to come to many of the same conclusions I was starting to reach about YSU. ... I don't think those decisions were at all out of character for what the next permanent president will have to wrestle with when he or she takes the chair."

Understanding the impact of his early resignation, Dunn concluded that the next university president should be one who is willing to invest considerable time into the university.

"I think that there will be a strong value attached to someone who is going to come here and ensure that they're willing to invest anywhere between five to 10 years to stay at the university, to wrestle through these problems we have and bring it out the other side a healthier institution, a more streamlined institution and one that speaks very directly to the educational and other needs of the Valley," he said.

## Buy One, Get One Free

Program to award four-year students associate degrees

### LIAM BOUQUET

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The administrators of Kent State University recently proposed a program that would award some students, enrolled in four-year programs, with an associate degree after hitting the 60-hour mark.

The underlying goal of granting students, already on their way to a bachelor's degree, with an associate degree — an undergraduate degree that typically requires two years of study — is to bolster student success and serve as a backup plan for students who drop out of their four-year programs.

It could also leave Kent State with an increase in state subsidies based on numerical data representing degree completion and student success.

This possible program has not crept by Youngstown State University's administration unnoticed. YSU President Randy Dunn said the university should

warily consider the pros and cons of such a program.

"I do believe it is probably prudent to put together a small work group to look at the pros and cons of such an approach. When we heard that Kent State had some plans in that direction, it actually raised more questions for us than it answered," Dunn said. "This could be seen as a potential gaming of the system. So I think we are going to probably have the state weighing in to give us some direction on this."

This is not the first time this type of initiative has been brought into consideration. Ikram Khawaja, YSU's provost, said Jim Petro, the previous chancellor for the Ohio Board of Regents, had brought the idea to the table a few years ago.

"Chancellor Petro, this was one of his interests — that somehow we should recognize the work students have done mid-stream to give them a sense of accomplishment and completion before they get a four-year degree. So this conversation

started, I would say, three or four years ago," Khawaja said.

Khawaja said Petro originally planned this simply as a method of encouragement for students, but the possibility of the program adding state funding could reinvigorate the conversation.

"The state has done a calculation for state support. Part of that calculation is based upon degree completion. So students who complete degrees, that helps in terms of our subsidy calculation. So, if you can ramp up the number of degree completion, I am thinking that will certainly help towards subsidy calculation. Now, I don't know whether Kent is doing it for that reason," Khawaja said.

One consideration the university has briefly discussed is granting students an associate degree in general studies — around 60 credit hours — because of the flexibility of the program.

DEGREE  
PAGE 2

## YSU's Acquisition of Grants

### FRANK GEORGE

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Just halfway through fiscal year 2014, Youngstown State University has already received more money in grants than was obtained during all of fiscal year 2013.

According to the Board of Trustee's Feb. 20 agenda, YSU has experienced recent success in the acquisition of grants.

"In the first half of FY 2014, a total of \$5,186,670 in external grants was received. This amount exceeds the total of \$3.55 million received by YSU for the entire fiscal year of 2013," the agenda stated.

Fiscal year 2013 marked the second consecutive year that the amount of money received from grant awards declined. Edward Orona, director of the office of grants and

sponsored programs, said he is not surprised that fiscal year 2014 has broken this two-year, downward trend and called this year's numbers "encouraging."

"Yes, so far in the past year we have exceeded last year. I expected so," Orona said. "Grants are here because they are ways of giving us these external dollars to help us do productive things."

Scott Martin, chair of the civil environmental & chemical engineering department and interim associate dean for research, oversees the office of grants and sponsored programs. He also positively commented on YSU's ability to receive grants.

"[The acquisition of grants] gives us great opportunities," Martin said. "It's given YSU a little more name recognition around the state and around the nation."

GRANTS  
PAGE 2

# What's for Dinner?



PHOTO BY DUSTIN LIVESAY/THE JAMBAR

Dinner the Yorkshire terrier has been going to work with his owner Alvy Armstrong, Youngstown State University's head equipment manager, for years. Some even say Dinner is an important part of the Penguins' Athletic Department.

**CAITLYN BROWN**  
Contributor

The average football weighs about 15 ounces. Add about seven footballs together and you get the weight of Youngstown State University's head equipment manager Alvy Armstrong's Yorkshire terrier Dinner.

Armstrong, a native of East Liverpool, has been taking Dinner to work with him for years. The 14-year-old dog found his way into Armstrong's front yard about

seven years ago.

"I came home one day from the grocery store, got out of my car and saw this little dog in my yard," said Armstrong. "I went inside and said to my wife, 'Honey, there is some dinner in the driveway.' The dog never left my property."

As YSU's head equipment manager for the past two years, Armstrong oversees all 18 athletic teams for the Penguins. He started out his equipment managing experience in high school, where he worked for his school's football program. A proud

YSU exercise science graduate, Armstrong spent his college years working along with former head equipment manager Carmine Cassese.

After he graduated from YSU, Armstrong went to Southern Illinois University to spend seven years working and specializing in the equipment room. Before his return to Youngstown, he spent three years with Northern Illinois University. With the Huskies, he dedicated his hard work as a football equipment specialist.

"I was happy to come back to work in Youngstown.

It is always nice to come home," Armstrong said.

Dinner, who got his name from Armstrong's first comment, roams the pits of Stambaugh Stadium. Some even say Dinner is an important part of the Penguins' Athletic Department.

As the job of an equipment manager requires you to travel with the football team, Armstrong's four-leg sidekick travels along with him.

"Dinner has gone on a lot of road trips with us. I usually just stick him in a gym bag and he loves it," Armstrong said. "I'm not really sure if the hotels we stay at allow dogs, but he is only seven pounds, there is only so much he can do."

If you don't see Dinner wandering the equipment room or following Armstrong's every step, you can find him in his two favorite spots: either on the pillow that lies alongside Armstrong's desk, or the Pittsburgh Steelers bed — a gift from the Pitt Panthers football program — which sits underneath the desk.

"When YSU played Pitt in 2012, I brought Dinner to Heinz Field. Everyone loved him there. Pitts staff must of noticed Dinner lying in a gym bag. So, at the end of the game they gave me this Steelers dog bed," Armstrong said.

As the Penguins went home with a victory of 31-17 against Pitt, Dinner went home with a new bed.

The equipment room gets a lot of traffic throughout the

day. Many athletes come in and out, dropping off and picking up their gear. One would think that a six-foot built athlete wouldn't be scared of a little seven-pound dog, but everyone has his or her own fears.

Tim Gallo, assistant equipment manager, finds humor in having Dinner around.

"It's always funny seeing some of our athletes scared of Dinner. They act as if he is going to attack them. Some athletes won't get near Dinner because they are so scared," Gallo said.

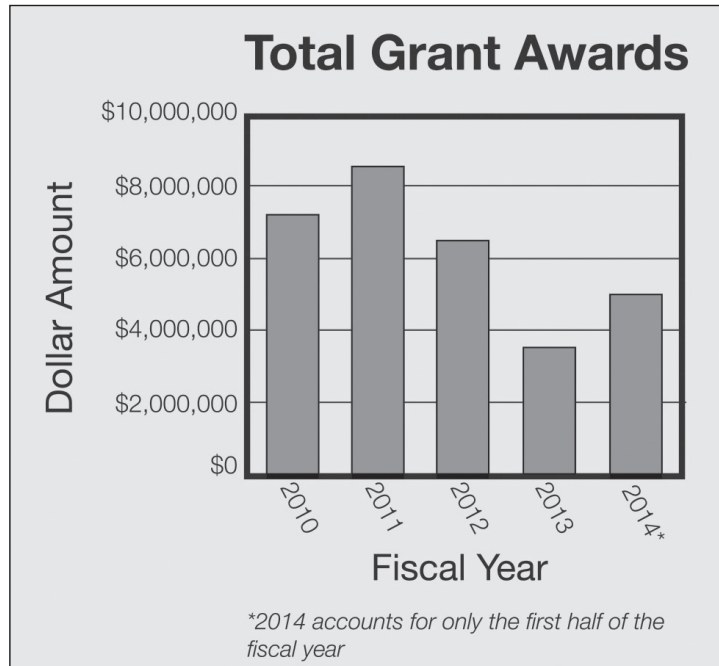
Although some of the athletes are frightened around Dinner, many coaches and staff members love him. Football coach Shane Montgomery, offensive coordinator of the Penguins, visits Dinner every day.

"Coach Montgomery likes Dinner the most out of everyone; sometimes I think he evens likes the dog more than me," Armstrong said.

Dinner and Armstrong aren't just the duo of the athletics department; they get recognized elsewhere as well. Armstrong stated that he was honored at a banquet a short time ago and when his name was called, so was Dinner's.

Armstrong can't remember the last time Dinner wasn't by his side at work. Some people may think it's odd, but for Dinner and Armstrong it is just another normal day.

"Dinner is the best to have around," Gallo said.



**GRANTS PAGE 1**

Martin indicated that an improved economy is one reason why grant awards have been more accessible this year.

"Grant income can be pretty volatile, and it tends to be affected by political and economic factors. The economy experienced a pretty rough time in 2009 and 2010, and tax revenue went way down. And federal agencies were not giving out as much money," he said. "It took a few years for that problem to correct itself."

The university's faculty has also contributed to the university's successful acquisition of grant awards. Orona commended YSU faculty members for successfully applying for grants.

"The story is not really about me. The faculty and staff are the ones doing the work; I'm just a facilitator," Orona said. "We can be competitive. I'm just here trying to facilitate and coordinate the process, giving as much administrative help as I can."

Martin also positively commented on YSU faculty members.

"Faculty and staff have found new opportunities, finding money for research and internship opportunities," Martin said. "That's been a big help for the numbers this year."

From 2008 to 2013, the

majority of YSU's external funding — 55.75 percent or \$4,130,328 — was given to the college of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

Martin said this grant money has funded 3-D printers and scanning electron microscopes, deeming these instruments "really cool toys."

"YSU is trying to make a push to become more of a research-oriented university and that's happening pretty significantly in the STEM college," he said.

Orona believes this kind of research-oriented university can have a positive impact on students.

"There is a certain set of things you do in higher ed. to sort of grow as an individual, to grow as a scientist and to grow as a researcher," he said. "The whole point is that you want to retain your options and I think the university is perfect for that in the sense that you get to see what your options are."

"Hopefully, the research part helps a lot. It may teach you about problem based learning — how to adapt certain principles. But, it makes you explore options and it tests certain ideas. In that sense, it's good for you because you can then decide on your career path."

## Goodbye From Randy Dunn

Greetings to the YSU Community.

The Jambar has been kind enough to allow me a bit of space here to take a final opportunity and share some thoughts as I complete my tenure at YSU this Friday, March 21.

Since I announced my resignation just over a month ago, I have tried to stay out of the limelight and not make too many public statements. To do otherwise would serve little purpose. But when The Jambar editors offered me this venue to say a last word to the campus, I didn't hesitate ... for one reason.

That reason is it gives me the chance to say THANK YOU to those people who, over the past weeks, have reached out with a note, email, call, thought or prayer. Ronda and I are very grateful to those of you who have made a special point to send a kind word or express your understanding of the situation.

Of course, I knew the press coverage given my abrupt departure would be tough for a while — in social media especially — but what has



**DUNN**

been gratifying for Ronda and me to witness are voices of support and caring extended to us by numerous folks during this time. I've tried to follow up with everyone who made a contact, but for those who I missed, please know your sentiments are much appreciated. As well, I wanted to publicly express my thanks to the YSU Board of Trustees, who were nothing but gracious in negotiating my wind-down agreement.

YSU is rightly proud of all that has been accomplished in its rich history ... and all that will continue to be accomplished. No strong university — no successful organization of any kind — is about one person. Rather, it is about the collective belief and action of many who come together at this place to do things in cooperation with others — such as teaching and learning and research and service and outreach — that none of us could have the hope of accomplishing alone. Indeed, that work continues no matter who is in Tod Hall.

I wish YSU — and the people who comprise it — every future success.

**DEGREE PAGE 1**

"We have had conversation," Khawaja said. "You may or may not know that we have a general studies bachelor degree that Jane Kestner supervises, and I thought that that would be a very logical way to get a two year — in that people who have completed work that may not be specific to an organized major, we could recognize as associate degrees under general studies."

Though this may not benefit students across the board, it could serve as a tangible award or inspiration for discouraged or

unmotivated students.

"There are students who are so focused that they don't need anything, and they know exactly where they are going. But, there are students who are sort of undecided, sort of migrating back and forth. They get reinforcement of this kind, it might give them reinforcement to finish up," Khawaja said.

Any such program has not even inched past the discussion phase, but the possibility of Kent spearheading a similar initiative may revitalize the idea

and lead the way to more serious discussion.

"There's a lot of questions. Are we going to make every student that hits 60 hours now pay a graduation fee? That is one of about 100 questions that come up, but, depending on how this continues to unfold in Ohio and the high stakes attached to it with performance funding, it is probably something that needs to at least be investigated until we get more guidance from Columbus," Dunn said.

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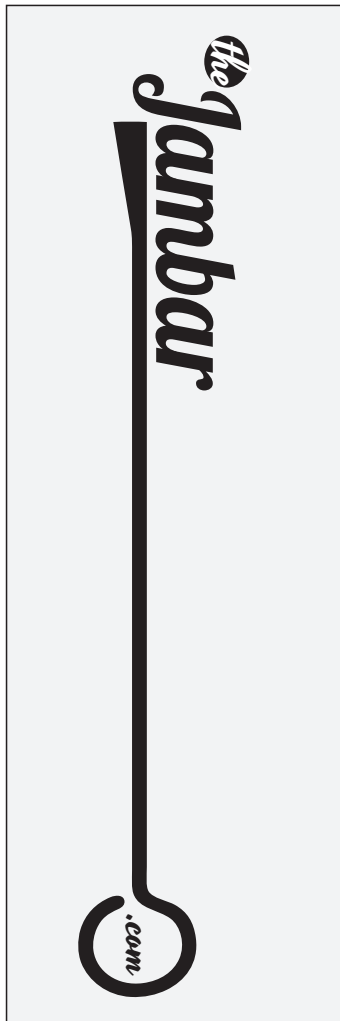
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*YSU Career Fair*

The Spring 2014 All Majors Career Fair will take place on April 2 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Chestnut Room of Kilcawley Center. The event is being presented by the Youngstown State University Office of Career Services and is open to current students and alumni as well as faculty and staff. It is recommended that students pre-register through PenguinLINK. For more information, call 330.941.3515 or email Career Services at careerservices@ysu.edu.

*Department of Art Lectures*

The Youngstown State University Department of Art is presenting the "Emergent Futures Now" lecture series through the end of April. The lectures are part of the Beecher Art + Technology Series. In addition to the series, the department will present a lecture by Dan Byers, the Richard Armstrong Curator of Modern Contemporary Art at the Carnegie Museum of Art on Monday at 5:30 p.m. in the McDonough Museum of Art's Lecture Hall.



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## YSU Considers Alternatives to Blackboard

**FRANK GEORGE  
SPENCER CURCILLO**

thejambar@gmail.com

As Youngstown State University's contract with Blackboard — the school's current online learning management system — nears expiration, the university has begun to consider an alternative package to Blackboard.

Millie Rodriguez, director of distance education, oversees the online programs services and the Instructional Design and Development Center, assisting faculty develop online courses.

"We are deciding on what LMS to use. The Blackboard contract is running out and we are taking the opportunity to explore our options and make sure that the university's LMS system is the best one for our future online course and program goals," Rodriguez said.

Though the university has not yet made a final decision regarding a new learning management system, both licensed learning management systems and open source software — software for which the original source code is freely available and may be redistributed and modified — are being considered.

While Ken Schindler, associative vice president and chief technology officer, expressed satisfaction with Black-

board, he said the university could save money by switching to another system.

"The product itself is a very good product. But, dealing with the company Blackboard is a little bit like dealing with Microsoft. They tend to dominate other companies and shut down products," he said. "While we do have a very good contract with Blackboard ... it's still an awful lot of money to pay for a learning management system."

YSU currently pays about \$190,000 per year for Blackboard. Schindler expects to pay about a third of that price for another licensed learning management system. If an open source software is selected, the cost would be non-existent.

YSU is considering four different packages at this point in time: Sakai, Moodle, Amvonet and Desire2Learn.

Bill Swann is an instructional designer in YSU's Distance Education Office. He is optimistic about a potential change, but remains cautious.

"I enjoy learning new systems and expanding my horizons, so for me [a change] would be fairly exciting. It would also be a significant challenge. I know that there will be a lot of concern among faculty and possibly students too," Swann said.

Swann also talked about the challenges in overcoming the learning curve

that Blackboard currently presents in terms of designing classes.

"I don't think Blackboard is completely intuitive," he said. "I think it does take some time and experience to get the hang of designing and building a class in Blackboard."

Rodriguez, Swann and Schindler all stressed the importance of a transitional period for implementing the change.

"If we decide to convert, it's up to me to put together a nice gentle conversion plan so that it's the least disruptive to the university," Schindler said. "I've been through one of these conversions about seven years ago now, and there are things you can do to make it a natural segue."

During the transitional period, YSU would likely run both platforms to give professors time to convert to the new format.

A change in the online learning management system is not expected to negatively impact the quality of resources available to students and faculty. The systems being considered all have similar functionality to Blackboard with only minor differences.

A decision on whether or not to convert learning management systems is likely to be made by the end of the 2014 spring semester.



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## In the Spotlight: Francois Fowler

**TAYLOR PHILLIPS**  
tayloraphillips92@gmail.com

Tuesday night, Francois Fowler, a Youngstown State University guitar professor, took the stage of the Bliss Recital Hall during his faculty artist recital.

The concert, which was a part of the Dana School of Music faculty artist recital series, featured Fowler playing various genres of music to showcase pieces he has played on tour.

Fowler said he feels very honored to have been asked to share his music in a faculty artist recital.

"Playing here on the YSU campus is really nice, since there will be friends and students in the audience, also," Fowler said. "It's a nice situation because I am completing a short concert tour of colleges and universities in Alabama, Georgia, Ohio and South Carolina."

At the concert, Fowler took the stage with his acoustic guitar and played three original songs. His most recent composed song was "Wavelength Sonata," a three-movement contemporary piece. He also performed songs like "The First Ride" by Don Ross and

Bach's Partita in A minor at the performance.

Fowler has taught in the Dana School of Music's guitar studio since 2007 and serves as the faculty adviser for the Dana Guitar Association.

Fowler said he decided to teach at YSU because of Dana's great reputation.

"The music faculty at YSU is amazing. We are well represented on all fronts — music history, music theory, music education, classical music performance, jazz studies, Dana Chorale," Fowler said. "The Dana School of Music has a very strong history, and this legacy will surely continue with the current dedicated and accomplished faculty in all the fields I just mentioned. I also love the mascot. I am from Canada, and I know how to speak penguin."

Philip Monrean, vice president of the Dana Guitar Association and music performance major, said the Dana School of Music is very lucky to have him on staff.

"He is not only a great teacher and pedagogue for his students but he is also a touring artist and master at classical guitar," Monrean said. "He really has our best interest at heart and really gets to know us as people and players. He



PHOTO COURTESY OF YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY.

Francois Fowler took the stage in the Bliss Recital Hall on Tuesday night to perform multiple compositions by various artists, including a few pieces he wrote himself.

also helps us figure out what we need at this stage in our lives and help us get to where we want to be."

Mike Reardon, treasurer of the Dana Guitar Association, said he also enjoys having Fowler as an adviser.

"Francois is so awesome. He really cares about his students and he has really done a lot for us," Reardon said. "He brings in guest artists every year and every semester to help us learn various styles

and it's great to have him here."

Besides teaching, Fowler openly recruits high school students each year to audition for Dana and enter the guitar program.

Fowler said the Youngstown area has amazing talent on guitar and that he can tell the prospective students in the area are very passionate about music.

"I am really excited that there are so many high school

students auditioning to study guitar at YSU year after year. Also, a significant number of new guitar auditions are coming from outside of the Youngstown, Pittsburgh and Cleveland areas for the school," he said. "Unfortunately, many of these amazing potentials never get the proper musical guidance. The Dana School of Music is a place where that won't happen. That's another important reason why I love working here."

## A Boy from the Country: An Artist Made for the City

**AMANDA TONOLI**  
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Jason Van Hoose, a Youngstown State University graduate, has a love for Youngstown that cannot be tamed. His uncanny talent in art drives him to stay focused on the core aspect of what he does rather than the economics. His work at the Knox Building is displayed in the soon-to-be art gallery on the third floor.

Before going to YSU, Van Hoose went to Ohio State University. He ended up at YSU because they had a better art program.

Van Hoose got his start, he said, by drawing on his arms when he was younger. His parents always discouraged it, but after one incident in which he covered both of his arms with a ballpoint pen, they gave up.

"It has something to do with what's in my mind, passing through my arm, in my hand onto something and into reality," Van Hoose said. "There's not only like a psychic feeling, but there's this very incredible tactical sensation that's either a pen or a pencil or a paintbrush moving across a surface. That's very appealing to me."

Van Hoose said his parents secretly enjoyed him doing art, but they pushed him towards going into business or the sciences. He started studying en-



PHOTO COURTESY OF JASON VAN HOOSE.

Jason Van Hoose displays his Digital Watershed Solo Exhibition at the Butler Institute of American Art.

vironmental science, despite not having a knack for it. He secretly took art classes on the side before coming to Youngstown and becoming a full-on art ma-

major. "The classes were small; the faculty were great," Van Hoose said. "The faculty were some of the best artists of that time."

Michael Green, another YSU graduate within the art department, also does work for the Knox Building with Van Hoose. "I was a naive kid from the

countryside that just fell off the turnip truck," Van Hoose said. "He helped me."

The two have been friends since they were in college together.

"We had at least seven to 12 people in our class, all of them trying to make something of themselves," Green said. "Our professors were all working artists. It was almost like an all-star team."

Green had come from Trumbull Business College, following his true love of art when he dropped out and enrolled in the art program at YSU.

Jacob Harver, the owner of the Knox Building, is working on helping new and existing artists get their work displayed and sold in his building and in the soon-to-be art gallery on the third floor.

"We've been working together for years, at least 25 years," Van Hoose said. "[Green]'s my old business partner and he's my new business partner [Harver]."

Van Hoose said he owes his professors a great deal. Students he sees now that want to be painters are having a large struggle because painting is thought to be an outdated technique.

"It is changing, but we need it," he said. "I think people think that it is something unto itself, but really, we are all interdependent on each other."

### STACY'S SKETCHES



GRAPHIC BY STACY RUBINIC/THE JAMBARI

## EDITORIAL

## Crisis in Crimea

Ukraine has become quite the buzzword in every corner of the globe with an Internet connection. Turning on any national news show or channel will likely result in being buffeted by a bout of renewed confrontations between the power brokers who have entrenched themselves in this riveting — and equally convoluted — situation.

On Wednesday, Russian military and Pro-Russian protestors stormed and captured the Ukrainian naval headquarters in Crimea. Ironically enough, this comes nearly four months after protests erupted in Kiev demanding more distance from the Russian regime.

In November, Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich suspended a popular agreement that would have drastically increased relations with the European Union through a Free Trade Agreement. It also would have forced the Ukrainian government to enact sweeping reform. Russia, who has expressed interest in forming an EU-esque alliance with previous Soviet Union satellite states, was not the biggest fan of this agreement. With a considerable monetary offer as well as a considerable amount of political pressure, Putin convinced the Ukrainian government that Russia was the preferable option.

Around 50 percent of the population, especially on

the west and in Kiev, was not pleased with what it perceived to be a step backwards for the reform of Ukraine. Thus, Ukraine was embroiled in three months of lethal protests — left to fester after authoritarian protest laws were enacted — that ended in parts of Kiev on fire and President Yanukovich fleeing the country.

Then the other shoe dropped, and Putin decided that negotiations and political pressure had grown a bit blasé, and he sent troops, sans the typical Russian insignia, to secure strategic locations throughout Crimea — under the guise of protecting ethnic Russians in the area.

The geopolitics of Crimea fill the situation with shades of grey. The peninsula has long served as an important port for Russia and has been a hub of immigration, with a clear ethnic Russian majority on the peninsula. Which is why the Crimean people have voted to secede from Ukraine and join the Russian Federation, despite no constitutional right to make such a prodigious decision.

These events have, obviously, left the majority of the international community reeling. The EU and America have taken aggressive postures but, though sanctions would have a substantial impact on Russia's not so diversified economy, oil and gas dependency and fear of

full-scale war have made most threats empty.

Ukraine is twiddling its thumb fearing full-scale war — one they are unlikely to win. Eastern European states like Lithuania and Latvia fear Russia's oppressive gaze turning their way. Meanwhile, some Russians are all too aware that, despite the international communities prolonged dismay, this aggression will not go unanswered, with perceptions of Russia reverting to Cold War-era indignation.

Though the trivial details of everyday life may make the chaos in Ukraine distant, and it may all seem tenuously connected to events here in Youngstown, the attention of the electorate in the nations involved can and will have a profound impact on their leader's actions.

Citizens — in Youngstown, America and across the seas — are far too dismissive of the machinations of distant leaders. This incident will impact us. It may lead to reinvigorated aggression between the U.S. and Russia, or it could result in tough sanctions that could partially reshape our economy and trade. This conversation seems daunting to students who are still working their way through the Affordable Health Care Act or even just trying to pass their newest calculus class, but, one way or another, this will seep into our day to day life and our elections. It is best to be prepared.

Right now, world leaders are standing with their guns out of the holster, but they aren't quite sure where to shoot — if they should shoot at all. The people forget they have the power to aim and pull the trigger.

## SATs Don't Always Mark a Successful Path

Michael Smerconish  
The Philadelphia Inquirer  
(MCT)

I just experienced the thrill of being invited back to the campus of my alma mater to speak to undergraduate students. The invitation came a few months ago from Jack Lule, the chair of journalism and communication at Lehigh University, from which I graduated in 1984. That someone in Lule's position would think students could benefit from listening to me for an hour gave me a measure of achievement and acceptance.

And I get why I was invited: The combination of my professional activities since graduation, including writing for The Philadelphia Inquirer, hosting a daily radio program nationwide on SiriusXM, writing five books with a novel on the way, and now hosting a Saturday morning program on CNN.

There's just one problem: According to my SATs, I was never Lehigh material.

Here are the bare facts. At Holicong Junior High School, and thereafter at Central Bucks West High School, I was a "sometimes" honor roll student. My grades were mostly B's with an infrequent A and an occasional C, frankly, more of the latter than the former. In a scrapbook somewhere I've got

a few clippings from the Intelligencer listing the most recent honor roll with my name mentioned.

My public school record included some other attributes — sports participation, a few class presidencies, a stint as newspaper editor — and some liabilities — such as when I was disciplined for selling fake IDs to classmates. What can I say? I was always entrepreneurial, the kid who sold you Christmas cards and came to shovel your drive. Sometimes that ambition got me in trouble. Such as when Coach Carey demanded I stop an NFL betting pool out of homeroom, or when I got thrown in a police van at the Spectrum for selling Genesis bumper stickers in my senior year. (They cost me a nickel to print, and I sold them for a buck.)

My SATs were never commensurate with my respectable school grades. And it was no one-off. I took the test several times and never batted above the Mendoza line.

Nine-ninety. I still hate seeing it numerically represented: 990. I never even broke 1,000.

Lucky for me that my father received his master's from Lehigh and my brother was president of his Lehigh class the year I was applying. Otherwise, I'm sure my SATs would have sunk my application.

Driving back to Bethlehem, Pa., I felt like George Bailey on the bridge toward the end of "It's a Wonderful Life, when an angel shows the Jimmy Stewart character an alternative path. Bailey's angel was named Clarence. Mine was Samuel Mis-simer, then Lehigh's dean of admissions, who admitted me despite my mediocre SATs. What if my college acceptance had been determined by that test?

A rejection would have meant I'd have never met a faculty mentor named Dave Amidon, who sparked in me an academic fire I never knew existed. Missing from the Lehigh campus in the fall of 1980, I would not have met "Ambassador" George H.W. Bush when he toured Bethlehem Steel, an event that led to my working for Vice President Bush and a string of extraordinary political experiences, which in turn caused media outlets to solicit my commentary. No Lehigh? No Amidon. No Amidon? No double major and no Phi Beta Kappa. No Phi Beta Kappa, no admission to Penn Law.

The intervening years haven't softened my antipathy toward the SAT, not even the recent experience of a son who aced it. I'm encouraged that the College Board is attempting to change the nature of the exam in a way that will recognize

evidence-based thinking that students should be gleaning in high school. Perhaps if I'd had an exam like the board now contemplates, I'd have scored more respectably. But maybe not. Better for students, parents, and colleges to scrap it altogether.

Today, out of roughly 2,800 four-year U.S. colleges and universities, about 850 make SAT or ACT submissions optional. A recent study by two former colleagues at Bates College, William Hiss, the former dean of admissions, and Valerie Wilson Franks, the study's lead investigator, found that there is a negligible difference between the performance of students who submit test results and those who do not.

The study, "Defining Promise: Optional Standardized Testing Policies in American College and University Ad-

missions," looked at 123,000 student and alumni records. It found only a 0.05 differential between the GPAs of those applicants who submitted a standardized test score and those who did not — and graduation rates for submitters were only 0.6 percent higher than those of non-submitters. In other words, trivial differences.

When I shared my personal experience with Hiss, he told me by e-mail that the disconnect between my SAT scores and later academic and career success is "strikingly common."

"In our one study, there were tens of thousands of students whom any statistician would call 'false negatives.' That is, these students' SAT scores suggest they could not do strong work in college, when in fact they can. Simply put, our country cannot afford to throw away up to 30 percent of its talent."

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## 'Give Me a Chance'

### Former YSU players showcase talents at Pro Day

PHOTO BY DUSTIN LIVESAY/THE JAMBAR

Former Youngstown State University center Chris Elkins runs drills during Wednesday's Pro Day at the Watson and Tressel Training Site. Along with five other teammates, Elkins shined in front of five NFL scouts, including ones from the Cleveland Browns and Pittsburgh Steelers.

#### JOE CATULLO JR.

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It has been 122 days since the Youngstown State University football team performed at Stambaugh Stadium in the season finale against South Dakota State University.

For Kurt Hess, Chris Elkins, Nick Liste, Dale Peterman, Kyle Bryant and Carson Sharbaugh, it was their last time playing at the collegiate level together. But for more than two hours on Wednesday at the Watson and Tressel Training Site, the group formed one final time during YSU's Pro Day.

"It means everything," Peterman said to media at the event. "I've got a lot of guys who I finished my senior year with, and it felt good that these guys were out here. It just felt good to come out here and perform with my friends and in front of scouts."

Whether it was fighting for a playoff spot on a snowy field or running drills in front of NFL scouts under a roof, nothing has changed.

"I think that being brothers and being really good teammates helps us to just push each other to keep grinding," Hess said. "Some days we don't want to wake up, but when we see the other guys wake up, it's a lot easier."

Scouts from the Cleveland Browns, Pittsburgh

Steelers, New York Giants, San Diego Chargers and San Francisco 49ers were in attendance for the event. It didn't matter to the athletes that the event began around 8 a.m.

"I woke up at 6 a.m., and I was just really ready to get started. It didn't really make a difference that much," Elkins said to members of the press.

Elkins seemed to catch the eyes of everyone. The second-team All-American center performed well with 25 reps on the bench press, a 29-inch vertical leap and a best of eight feet, nine inches in the broad jump.

"This is a great day for him," Hess said. "He's just a guy who has good numbers, and he's an athlete, man. If he was 235 or 245 pounds, he would be the best linebacker hands down. And he's put on healthy weight, which is good."

Probably the second-most intriguing athlete was Liste. The first-team All-Missouri Valley Football Conference punter was measured at 174 pounds with a vertical of 31 inches and a broad jump of nine feet, four inches. After the WATTS, Liste concluded his session kicking and punting at Stambaugh Stadium.

The hardest part for Liste is trying to make an NFL roster that usually contains roughly one or two punters — the same goes for kickers. Liste understands the slim opportunity and will continue striving for that chance, even if it isn't this upcoming season.

"For kickers and punters, that's really the case," Liste said to the media. "You see Phil Dawson out there, and he's been there for a while. Sometimes it takes a couple of years to get in."

When it was all said and done, everybody felt they performed well with improvements lingering in their minds. For some, it was a more relaxing feeling than anything else.

"I was looking forward to getting this done because I was training for Pro Day," Bryant said in a press interview. "Now there's more weight off of my shoulders, and I can train for football, what I'm actually trying to do in life. I've been playing it all my life. I haven't been running 40s all of my life."

With the conclusion of Pro Day, everybody working inside the WATTS has a lot of work ahead of them, whether it's just for one day or multiple months. The scouts begin analyzing their possible futures in the former Penguins. Numerous stories will be written by Thursday, including this one. Videos will be edited and posted on YouTube.

For the athletes, their work is done. All they can do is wait and hope.

"We're not at Alabama. We're not at Florida. We're not at Ohio State [University]. Not everybody knows us right away," Hess said. "I'm just hoping that somebody wrote my name down today and will give me a call some time. Give me a chance."

## Penguins Batter Up with Hard-Hitter

#### Steve Wilaj

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Miranda Castiglione doesn't think about it too much.

Actually, when it comes to her .449 batting average and 31 hits through 21 games, the Youngstown State University softball sophomore has found out that less is more in the batters box.

"I think I'm just relaxed more than locked in," Castiglione said. "When I go up to the plate, I go about it as just another at-bat like in practice."

It's an approach Penguins head coach Brian Campbell also notices from his number-three hitter.

"Miranda is just poised," he said. "She goes up there relaxed and just sees the ball and hits the ball."

In turn, the infielder from Brampton — located in Ontario, Canada — has hit safely in 18 of 21 contests. She's also collected 13 RBIs, scored a team-high 22 runs and hit four homeruns.

"I approach it as trying to lead the team," Castiglione said. "I feel that hitting is very contagious, so if someone starts it off then it will come. That's all that's on my mind right now."

Campbell applauds that leadership, especially coming from an underclassman.

"She has led this team as far as hitting-wise so far," he said. "In every situation she's in, she swings the same and she takes the same demeanor.

To be honest with you, that's rubbing off on some of these other young ladies — just that confidence in the batter's box."

To round out the top of the Penguins lineup, Haley Knight is hitting .355 while Courtney Ewing has a .298 batting average. Castiglione admits they are two big reasons for her early success.

"Our first and second batters do awesome leading off and letting us know where the pitcher is pitching it and whatnot," she said. "So really my job isn't that hard. I just try to keep it going."

And that's the same approach Castiglione's going to apply to her sizzling early-season statistics — even though she knows it will be difficult to stay so hot.

"My season's going to have its ups and downs," Castiglione said. "I'm sure [my numbers] might go down a little in the middle of the season. But that's what the team is for. They're going to be there to pick me up."

In Tuesday's facility-opening doubleheader against Eastern Michigan University at the YSU Softball Complex, Castiglione stayed hot.

She went a combined four for seven as YSU (12-9) won the first game, 7-0, and lost the second contest, 6-3. Casey Crozier (7-2) was the winning pitcher of Game 1, tossing seven scoreless innings while allowing just on hit.

Campbell called it "ex-

citing for the university" to finally open the new on-campus facility.

"It's just an honor for these young ladies to have a field on campus and they're excited to be able to walk straight across the street and play ball," he said.

He added it's something the team was anticipating for a while.

"We talked about the excitement going into it," Campbell said. "Just having the opportunity to play the first game here. It's something they're a part of history-wise. So to go out and just get the first one right off the bat was exciting."

Sarah Ingalls, who collected two hits — including the first-ever homerun in the facility's history — called the complex "really nice."

"It was really exciting and we were so pumped when we were taking warm-ups," she said. "It's nice because every other team has had that opportunity except for us."

The Penguins tied Game 2 in the bottom of the sixth inning, but Eastern Michigan (8-16) scored three in the top of the seventh to put YSU away. Knight had two hits as Kayla Haslett took the loss while tossing six innings.

"When you have your first one, there's always things you have to fix or whatever," Campbell said of the complex's debut. "But I think it went well — real smooth. Overall, it was a very good day."



PHOTO BY DUSTIN LIVESAY/THE JAMBAR

Youngstown State University's Miranda Castiglione (17) catches a ball at first base for a force out during Game 1 of a doubleheader against Eastern Michigan on Tuesday afternoon.