

# The Dean's Almanac

## New Dog, Old Tricks

*October 7, 2007*

I don't understand why you're all here. It's 82 degrees out, so it must still be summer. You should all still be working your summer jobs, or tooling around Greece and Italy, or watching reruns of South Park, drinking Rockstar and sleeping till 1 pm. And I should be leaving work at 5 every day. Instead, you're all here, looking increasingly panicked about your approaching midterms, and I'm having way too many Panda Bowls for dinner.



For those of you depressed about being shut out of basketball tickets, I'm really sorry. I'm even more sorry when I see (via TV) the empty prime seats at men's games, tickets that are going unused by season ticket holders and donors and that really ought to be occupied by screaming Husky fans painted blue and white. I hope USG is successful in pushing for a system that allows people to give tickets they don't plan to use back to UConn for distribution to students. But that idea notwithstanding, take heart. If you watch the games on TV, you get to see replays and up-close shots of Jim Calhoun's face turning red in frustration at something or someone.

Speaking of sports, how's this for great news? The search is over for a new live Jonathan (the one you see at football games giving high fives to the cheerleaders is not actually a real dog). **Danielle**, from Alpha Phi Omega (the official Husky-sitters), tells me that **Jonathan XIII** has arrived and is living with his host family, learning to be a mascot. You might remember from a previous Almanac that huskies are not particularly good with crowds, so they need a good bit of training to play the role well. Danielle says we can expect to see him after winter break, just in time for the start of the Big East schedule. Thank goodness. We were just about to resort to putting a husky suit on a pot-bellied pig (which are much friendlier with large audiences).

Homecoming is fast approaching, so whether you like to participate in such things or sit back and snidely ridicule those who do, you'll be busy over the next couple of weeks. For reasons I'm not quite clear on, I'll be mc-ing the Royalty Pageant that week. No, I don't get to sing, but I was told I could wear a tux. I've never worn a tux before, so I'm kind of excited. I really like ruffled shirts and patent leather shoes.

Enough about me. Let's talk about you and your future and how you might change the world. I assume you've heard of [Teach for America](http://teachforamerica.org/) (http://teachforamerica.org/)? It's an organization that recruits outstanding graduating students from campuses across the country and sends them to teach for at least two years in some of America's most challenging schools. If you need to feel needed, and are wondering how you'll fulfill that need after graduation, give this some thought.

We have a campus recruiter, our own [Samantha Sherwood](#), who'd be happy to talk with you about it.

Not much in the mailbag lately. Does this mean I've already answered your questions? Solved your problems? Or do you just not have many these days? Are you all just plain happy to be here?

But there are a couple. **Emily** wants to know what happened to the bus schedule signs that used to be on all the bus stops, which were pretty helpful. Janet Freniere, head of the shuttle system, responded:

We received the first ten of the signs from the Carpentry Shop last week. There was a delay in submitting the work order because we were researching the pre-made ones made by a company in Canada (the ones we had before). After finding that the company had increased their prices very dramatically, we asked the campus carpenters if they could make them and they are doing so right now. We have bought the brackets and are just about ready to hang them up; probably this weekend at the latest. We agree that they are very useful when the students are waiting for buses and have in turn ordered enough to cover a lot more stops than were covered before. The ones that were up before were all taken down because they were broken and in some cases had a lot of jagged edges and broken glass.

So hopefully, that's resolved. **Joe** wrote in on behalf of the his club soccer team, which has grown weary of playing on a field (the CLAS field) in worse condition than a vacant lot on Staten Island. He suggested that some of the athletic fields around campus could perhaps be put to better use by letting club teams use them. A couple of things in response: some teams play at the Depot Field, and we are working to improve that, and are, in fact, creating a second field out there. This improvement is being paid for by student fees and priority will go to club sports, as this field is under the purview of Student Activities. However, as you can imagine, that renovation is taking some time, so we may not see it completed till next year. I know that doesn't help much now, but at least it gives us something to dream about. A field of dreams, I guess.

The fields under the management of the Division of Athletics are prioritized with, obviously, our varsity teams at the top of the list. Next in line: intramural activities. So club sports are unlikely to get that space very often. But we are trying to negotiate some use. Maintaining quality fields means, however, that they can't be used constantly. When they're used constantly, well, they start to look like a vacant lot in the Bronx (sorry, but I'm a Jersey girl, so I'm genetically predisposed to pick on New York).

If you know of some wealthy alum who would like to help us build really nice fields for club sports, please let me know. The demand is incredible, and it pains me to see frustrated students who just want to play games with their friends, represent the University and stay fit. I know we have clubs practicing at ridiculous times just to get some field time, and I wish there was more I could do.

**Katy** wrote on behalf of a faculty member who has told her how frustrated he is that there are no lecterns in Monteith where he teaches. I asked Keith Barker, Director of the Institute for

Teaching and Learning. He told me something kind of interesting. "It seems," he said in his charming Scottish lilt, "that faculty take the lecterns with them and keep them in their offices because they're afraid they won't be there when they need them." So if I've got this straight, the lecterns are missing because they are taken by people who are afraid they'll go missing. If there's a better example of a self-fulfilling prophecy on the shores of Mirror Lake, I don't know what it is. But hey, what do I know? Keith is working on this, and hopefully some new, bolted-down lecterns will appear in Monteith, probably about a week before it's demolished.

Here's a question from **Richie** about our complicated technology:

On the student web page we're able to access Huskymail and PeopleSoft by just entering in our information on the Student home page, but in order to access HuskyCT, we have to click on a link to go to that home page, and then type in our information. I know that they had the link last year because of the two different systems (WebCT and Vista), but is it possible to change it back, so we can just enter our information on the Student home page, and get directly logged into HuskyCT?

As someone who has to use *five* different IDs and passwords for various functions of my job, I can sympathize. To find an answer, I turned to Mark Roy, Student Homepage Czar, and Kim Chambers, the only person I know who can answer every Vista question I have. Turns out they've actually been talking about this very topic. Here's Kim's response:

UConn is moving toward "single sign on" which means you can log in once, with your NetID, then navigate among applications like PeopleSoft, HuskyCT, ePortfolio, etc. without having to log in each time. Some of these applications, like logging into library resources and HuskyCT already work with single sign on, while others do not. The biggest hang up is that single sign on still does not work with PeopleSoft so you have a separate ID for PeopleSoft instead of your NetID. Soon you will be able to log in at one place and navigate between applications that work using single sign on. Staff are meeting now to determine how that will work off the student home page.

On a related note, **Kristina** asked about the increase in spam on Huskymail. I don't even need to ask the experts about this. Every time a new spam filter is installed, spam morphs and evades the new filter. It's insidious and may be what causes the final downfall of civilization. Not global warming. Not nuclear war. One day spam will cause our computers to become self-aware, and they will destroy us.

Well, you've done it again: wasted another perfectly good fifteen minutes or so reading an installment of the Almanac. As your reward, I'm inviting the first six folks who [email me](#) to have lunch at Chuck and Augie's on Wednesday, October 24 at noon. No formal agenda, just a chance for me to hear from you in person.

Hope to see you at either the Homecoming Royalty Pageant, a field hockey match, Union Street Market, or the ballroom dance competition on Saturday, October 13, starting at 8 am (!) at the E.O. Smith gym (next door to the Fine Arts complex on 195).

Study hard and stay safe, Huskies.