Editorial: WebAdvisor update fails

I nobody likes registering for classes. It's a hassle, it requires a great deal of preparation and it's incredibly important. So you would think that the University would go out of its way to make this process as painless as possible, right? Wrong. WebAdvisor, the school's online registration system, has been making the act of registering even more of a headache this semester.

Previously, the WebAdvisor system did not pre-recognize prerequisite courses and several students were able to register for classes that they were not qualified for. As a result, changes have been made to the program allowing it to recognize these differences. While this is a good idea, it was not carried out properly and students now have to suffer the results.

First of all, a change of this magnitude should have been completed and bug tested over the winter break or during the summer. There were bound to be a few mistakes in the program's new coding, but nothing that couldn't have been corrected before students began to register. However, this was not the case. Problems did indeed rear their ugly heads and the University was forced to scramble to fix them while students tried, in vain, to select their courses at the same time.

The error messages received by students as they attempted to register could be used to form a comedy book. One person received five different error messages after attempting to register, only one of which was actually correct. Another was told that he was not registered as a Journalism major, despite the fact that he had been taking Journalism-only courses for the previous three years. It's good to see that a system has been put in place that knows people's majors better than they do.

Furthermore, WebAdvisor has allowed some students to register for courses that they should not be able to. One student was able to register for a Baccalaureate Honors Program (BHP) seminar that required a signed permission slip permission to enter. This goes to show the sheer abundance of errors in the new programming of WebAdvisor. The update has failed to fix the problem it was meant to address in the first place and has caused many more in the process.

Those who weren't able to get into the classes they wanted were sent on a wild goose chase upon entering the Registrar's Office. Students who were taking a pre-req course during the current semester were forced to obtain signatures from both their instructor and their dean ensuring that they would pass the course before being allowed to register. At a time when classes are quickly filling up, the delay this causes is unacceptable. It's one thing to force a person to change their schedule because he or she registers late but quite another to do it because of a computer problem.

However, those who work in the Registrar's Office are only doing their jobs and have capably handled the overflow of students that have entered their doors. The WebAdvisor problem is not as easy on them as it is on students. The office has been overrun by angry students, yet still the clerks remain attentive. Many of them have gone out of their way to help students obtain the classes that they want and should be commended for their efforts.

The current problems with WebAdvisor could have been easily avoided. By completing the programming and bug testing over winter break or by waiting until summer, the original pre-requisite issue could have been addressed and other problems avoided. As it stands now however, students are in for a huge headache this semester.

This weekly editorial expresses the majority opinion of The Rider News editorial board and is written by the Opinion editor.

Letters to the Editor: The Rider News welcomes letters on all subjects of interest to the campus community. Letters must be typed and include the name, address, phone number and signature of the author for verification. Send to The Rider News via e-mail (ridernews@rider.edu), campus mail, or hand deliver to Rider House. All letters must be received by midnight Monday preceding publication. The Rider News reserves the right to edit all letters for space and clarity.

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Tales From Africa:
Poverty can’t dampen spirits

Time has flown by! I have already been in Ghana for two months and have about a month until I return to the States.

In my short time here, I have experienced more than I probably would have in years of living in New Jersey. My eyes have been completely opened by some of the lessons I have learned here, some lessons that I never wished to learn. Living in a third world country is a completely different experience. Walking through complete and utter poverty daily has taken its toll on me, but I am still amazed to see how happy the Ghanaians are, no matter how little they have. I genuinely believe that we as Americans can learn a lot from Africans and others in developing nations.

Recently, I have traveled around Ghana a good deal. I have traversed a canopy high in the sky that lies in a beautiful and well-protected rainforest, called Kakum National Rainforest, which is about a half-hour north of my village. A few weekends ago, some of our Ghanaian companions, another volunteer and I visited Kumasi, a bustling city rich in traditional Ashanti culture. There we saw the King’s Palace, Western Africa’s largest market, as well as the Cultural Center. We also traveled to several smaller villages on the outskirts of Kumasi where Kente cloth is woven and Andicra stamping originated. I have also been to the capital, Accra, several times.

To Ghanaians, Accra represents the most apparent rich and poor is that I never wished to learn. Living in a third world country is a completely different experience. Walking through complete and utter poverty daily has taken its toll on me, but I am still amazed to see how happy the Ghanaians are, no matter how little they have. I genuinely believe that we as Americans can learn a lot from Africans and others in developing nations.

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