

Penn State Students Fret Over Future

Angry and upset fans that filled the streets after Alabama lost to LSU thought nothing could feel as bad as that, until the scandal at Pennsylvania State University came out. While Alabama students were worrying about the football team's chances at a 14th national championship, Penn State students were stuck in the middle of supporting their legendary football coach and supporting the victims of the alleged sexual abuse. Upon Joe Paterno's firing, some of the students participated in riots protesting his forced exit. Many people viewed this as disrespectful to those who claimed they were abused by former assistant football coach Jerry Sandusky.

The recent allegations have led PSU students to worry about their futures after graduation. Students who do not want their degree to appear "tainted" to businesses are hoping that companies will not discriminate against them because they went to Penn State. The worry started after Penn State's opened their student run newspaper, the Daily Collegian, and saw that businessman Gregory White from Austin, Texas had written in disgust over the way students had handled the situation.

"Anyone who went to Penn State will have their final checks waiting for them Monday morning and no one from Penn State will ever be hired by any company I run in the future," he said.

That caused many students to go to their career center and their colleges to see what the allegations will cost them in the future.

“With the BCS skipping Penn State for bigger bowl games I am worried that employers will skip over us for a job as well,” a senior at Penn State said.

Last year, The Wall Street Journal ranked Penn State as the No. 1 university in the country causing there to be many recruiters at Penn State looking for future employees. The Dean of Penn State’s Smeal College of Business, Dr. James B. Thomas sent a letter to students telling them not to worry about companies discriminating against them.

“Penn State Career Services has not seen any reduction or cancellations in recruiting as a result of recent events,” Thomas said. “In fact, Penn State is seeing increases in fall semester employer recruiting activity compared to the past several years.”

Penn State’s Career Services helps students find internships and jobs throughout their college career and helps find them a job after graduation. Career Services said students may be asked about the scandal while being interviewed. They gave said that the students should highlight the things they learned at Penn State and show what they can contribute to the company. They should not however, go into detail about the Sandusky allegations.

“Students may acknowledge that they are primarily concerned for the victims and also concerned for Penn State in these unsettling times,” Career Services said. “Students should note that they can only take personal responsibility for their individual actions.”

The Career Services Center at the University of Alabama does the same for students as they do at Penn State by aiding students in finding employment. Amy Bramlett is a career consultant at the UA Center. She said she does not think that a scandal like the one at Penn State would influence whether employers would look towards hiring students from the University of Alabama. Her opinion is similar to that of the Career Services at Penn State.

“Student’s qualifications are what should matter,” Bramlett said. “There are way more things that contribute to the good reputation (of the students) than would ruin it.”

There have not been many companies that have expressed any disinterest in Penn State students like Gregory White did. In fact, many have said nothing will change. Stephen Reilly is the founder of the Annapolis, Md. based Global Experiences, a company who frequently looks to Penn State to hire students.

“We decided it’s business as usual,” Reilly said. “We are going to keep pushing Penn State Students.”

It does not appear that the alleged scandal at Penn State will affect students when searching for a job. The school is known for being one of the best in the country and that reputation seems like it will stay put.

“I think it is unlikely that businesses would refuse to hire me because I am a Penn State student,” another senior student said. “The scandal did not involve the graduating students so there is no reason not to get hired.”