

## Nittany Nation: More Than Just Football

November 16, 2011

Loyalty To An Institution:  
Nittany Nation – More Than Just Football

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With just one month to go in my final semester as a Penn State student, I am in disbelief. To a large extent, my disbelief has to do with the predatory individual whose actions were criminally heinous. To a smaller extent, I can no longer define my connection to Penn State in the same way I did before the scandal that is now and forever connected to us all. The permanent effects of these events are yet to be known, but they will be far-reaching, and far deeper than anyone can possibly fathom. My thoughts and prayers are with the victims and their families, first and foremost. Introspectively, there are other considerations, which have weighed heavily for me in terms of personal loyalty to my PSU family, and to the institution itself.

One month from now, I will receive my degree in Organizational Leadership, with a minor in Labor Studies and Employment Relations. The person who was to confer these credentials to me is no longer the President of our beloved Penn State.

One month from now, I will be earning a Paterno Fellows Certificate for Excellence in Communication. The person this certificate program was named for is no longer the icon he once was, and no longer a part of the academic program he made possible. But my connection to Penn State goes so much deeper than the Paterno factor.

One month from now, my life will take a new turn. I will carry forward all the knowledge, wisdom, and fortitude I gained during my tenure here. I will carry forward a sense of great pride in what I have accomplished, with even greater pride in who we are – A Nittany Nation. This is our Penn State Pride. Penn State Pride is not some new catch phrase created in reaction to recent events. It is symbolic of the Penn State experience, and of what we've all felt from the very beginning.

Penn Staters are a unique breed. There is no place we'd rather be than spending our days in Happy Valley. Perhaps the rest of the world may not fully comprehend our affinity to this institution. It is a legacy we live, and the fact is, we will grow old bleeding and breathing blue. This place we call Penn State has been my home in heart and mind for over 30 years; first as an undergrad student, then as a family supporter, and now again as a student. There are three generations of Penn Staters in my own family, starting with my dad, who taught me the value of appreciating my education.

The recent course of events has been shocking, appalling and tragic. What I offer here comes from my gut. I am with heavy heart and profound sadness over what has befallen my University, and how it has been tarnished with this scandal. Hopefully time will help ease the pain and renew everyone's faith. In the meantime, let's begin the healing by remembering Penn State's three-part mission: teaching, research, and public service. I know this much to be true, as evidenced in Penn State's Land Grant Tradition Statement:

"This mission continues to guide the University in all that it does for Pennsylvania, the nation, and humankind."

WE ARE PENN STATE

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