Ryan Bagwell is not a politician, the CEO of a major company or a prestigious donor with ties to the so-called “good ol’ boys’ club.” He’s a former journalist with a record of fighting for accountability and the commitment to change the culture of the Board of Trustees. A Web developer and proud lifetime member of the Penn State Alumni Association, Ryan earned degrees in music and journalism in 2002. After graduation, he wrote for newspapers in Pennsylvania and Maryland before building his own local news Web site devoted to holding public officials accountable.

As The (Annapolis) Capital’s education reporter, Ryan won accolades for investigating lax school security, which led to an immediate overhaul of safety procedures. He also uncovered a scheme that allowed school employees to collect public pensions while on the job, and was a driving force behind the paper’s coverage of the stark educational and economic disparity between Annapolis’ white and black communities.

Ryan is an experienced budget analyst, having spent countless hours reviewing public spending plans and writing about their potential impacts. His journalism career also helped him develop an in-depth knowledge of the deliberative process and how proposals come to fruition.

As an undergraduate, he was the founding director of the Penn State Jazz Festival, a student-produced event that is still held annually. Today, he continues to show his devotion to the Penn State family by being an active member of the local alumni chapter and a proud football season ticket holder.

Relying on my experience with ethics, transparency and budget matters, I’ve proposed plans to create a culture of openness at Penn State, halt runaway tuition hikes and help restore trust in the Board of Trustees. They include:

1. Allow trustees to serve no more than two consecutive three-year terms. Today, most can serve five terms, while others can serve indefinitely.
2. Remove board rules that prohibit trustees from acting independently and conducting their own inquiries into university practices.
3. Require all trustees to file annual financial disclosures and divulge conflicts of interest.
4. Allow public access to most university documents, including records of police and internal investigations, which Pennsylvania’s open records law keeps secret.
5. Replace the “Business and Industry” trustees with those elected by the alumni, and end the corrupt practice of board members reappointing each other.