

## A New Look At Excellence Read Battalion Classifieds Daily

**Editor's Note:** The following guest column was written by William T. Dowden, a senior English major.

Since Texas A&M has begun its pursuit of academic excellence, the standards for the perfect university, as presented by Morris Bishop of Cornell in this month's Atlantic, should be reviewed by our well-meaning administration. Although Texas A&M has made many changes in the last few years, it should be remembered that A&M is still far from being the perfect University. Perhaps Mr. Bishop's article could present some new ideas of the standards of excellence.

Mr. Bishop's first principle of the perfect university is that "It will build character in its students. Since character is built by the surmounting of difficulties, it will provide difficulties for the students to surmount." I am confident that the faculty and administration are doing their best to implement this principle. Mr. Bishop must have directed some of his remarks directly at Texas A&M because so many of his comments indicate faults in our yet imperfect university, if it can be called a university. He has this to say of coeducation in the perfect university. "Since the presence of young women on the campus is upsetting to young men, the perfect university will admit men only." Of course the administration is following the principle of providing difficulties for the students by permitting all those unsettling coeds on campus, but too much emphasis upon one principle may be prejudicial to others, equally important.

Mr. Bishop is certainly aware of the novelty of his ideas. His defense is sharply ironic, but direct:

"The exclusion of women students from the university will no doubt evoke sharp criticism. It will be charged that we are reverting to medievalism, that we are rejecting the principle of coeducation, now universally accepted, that we are depriving young men and women of the opportunity to grow up together, to experience youthful romance, to marry and begat. Certainly, and a very good thing too." Someone may inquire about the quality of the graduates of the

perfect university. Many critics would doubt that students who are not required to attend classes, or to abstain from drinking, or to maintain a Christian atmosphere could ever become great. These things were not required of the men of eighteenth-century Oxford and Cambridge, two universities which Mr. Bishop considers as approximates of his perfect university. What became of those graduates? "They made the British Empire. Long years after, under the pressures of grubby modernity, Oxford resolved to be practical, to fit itself to the modern world. In 1920 Oxford abolished compulsory Greek. And look what happened to the British Empire."

How is the graduate of the Perfect University different from those of lesser universities? He is curious; he is original; he is not afraid to be critical nor to be criticized. He knows when to rebuke authority and when to accept rebuke. "The graduate of the perfect university will possess the graceful and unconscious arrogance of superiority, the quality of the world's master." A&M in the past has produced leaders, but not masters of the world. We have failed in our

threefold goal of producing soldier-statesman-knightly gentlemen, each factor balanced in relationship with the others. Our administration hopes to produce a better balance by introducing coeds instead of a school of music or fine arts. They bring us better communications systems while continuing to resist contacts between the faculty and students.

These days many things are proclaimed in the name of Progress. There will be complaints that Mr. Bishop's university is neither perfect nor progressive. In the final paragraph of his article, Mr. Bishop leaves us with this parting shot:

"You protest that this perfect university is sadly imperfect, that it is backward-looking, not forward looking. Is then forward morally superior to backward? You complain that this scheme expresses the obsolete, undemocratic ideal of the education of a gentleman. Egad, boy, you are quite right."

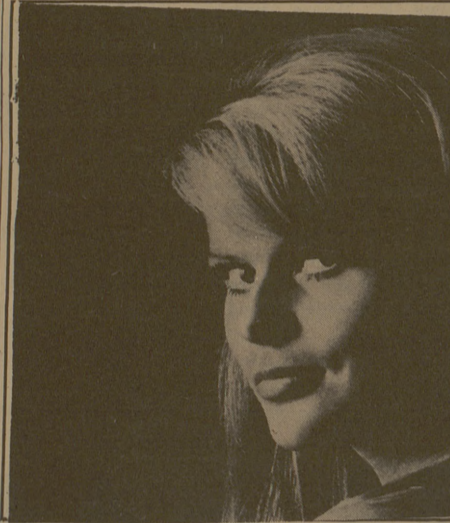
Mr. Bishop might have asked if a competitively progressive university is perfect or even excellent. I would like to think of an excellent university as one that balances all the interests of

the institution toward the ever-present idea of striving to communicate knowledge from the teacher and the university environment to the student, in class and out, without destroying the student's desire to learn as demonstrated by his first coming to college.



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### — Sound Off —

**Editor, The Battalion:**

I have read your editorials and comments for more years than most Aggies and, in the past, I agreed with many of your ideas. I cannot go along with your editorial of May 5, 1966.

You state that "no one sings" the proper (yes, I said proper,) words to the "Spirit of Aggieland." For your information, the Singing Cadets of Texas A&M University have been singing these words since their adoption three years ago. Also, unplug your ears sometime at Muster. There were fifty strong voices of men whose names may be called at that ceremony in the future who were singing the official words.

I recall an explanation that to use the last of the AMC patches the letter C would stand for Corps. Are most Aggies today singing a song for the Corps? This is not a bad idea, but don't call it the school song.

The Singing Cadets have performed from Beaumont to El Paso and San Antonio to Dallas singing these words for multitudes of former students without a complaint. Yet, this December in the MSC during a performance by the Singing Cadets for SCONA, a Corps senior hissed his own school song. This was hardly the right impression to give the young lady from another school who was with him.

It may be years before the majority comes around, but they will. The singing of the new words hasn't hurt the Muster tradition nearly as much as the showing of a film immediately afterwards.

By the way, Mr. Editor, since you haven't heard the official words, you might drop by Guion Hall at 8 p.m. on May 13. It might not sound so terrible to hear someone sing about your school, Texas A&M University.

John B. Beckham Jr. '67



To a motorist who still hasn't put a Tiger in his tank.



Here's that Tiger.

You're a skeptic. Good. Then you're going to be a good customer, if we can ever win you. We showed you proof on television that High-energy Enco Extra cleans your carburetor while you drive.

(Probably you said, "So what? My car still runs.")

We told you it improves firing power, helps

prevent hot spots and misfiring and gives you the high octane to help you take off like a cat.

(You drove right on by.)

It's frustrating to develop a gasoline that gives this kind of performance and then not even have you try it.

Did you know new High-energy Enco Extra is more powerful than aviation gasoline of just a few years ago?

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So why not "Put a Tiger in Your Tank?" "Happy Motoring!"

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### PEANUTS

By Charles M. Schulz

5-9

5-10

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