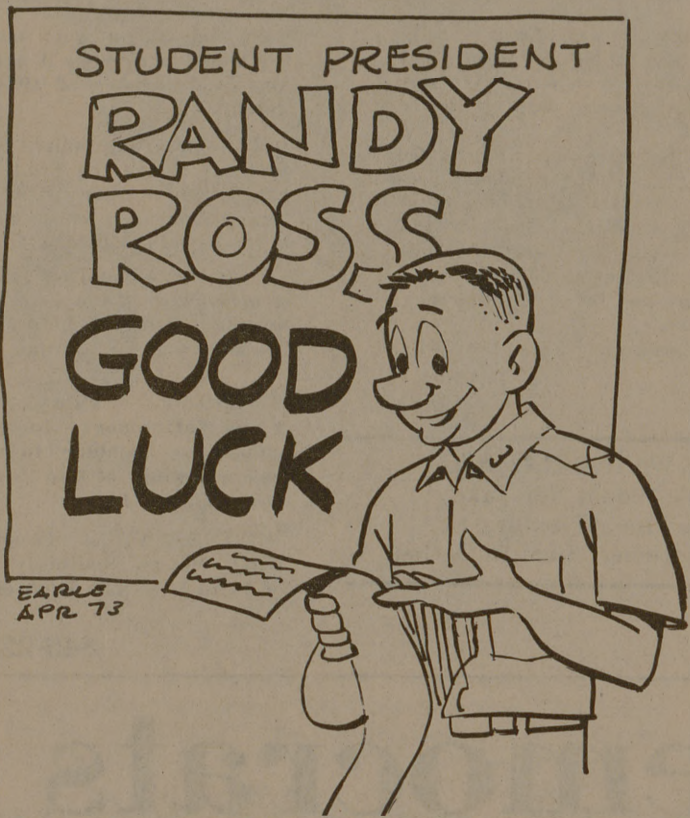


CADET SLOUCH by Jim Earle



"Now, about these campaign promises . . ."

About Those Fees

The Student Senate had a perfect chance to change its image Thursday night when considering student services fees for next year. Instead, it kept its track record intact by voting to effectively raise the amount students have to pay.

With the administration wanting to charge students \$15 a semester for the University Hospital and the Senate asking for an \$18 Services Fee charge per semester, students will now be able to get for \$66 what they were getting for \$60 this year.

One can fully understand the feelings expressed by an incoming senator for 1973-74, "I'm going to destroy the Student Senate!"

We're sure that the Senate, in its constant striving for equality and fairness of representation, never bothered to ask the student body (supposedly its constituency) whether it wanted a higher fee, lower one or middle-of-the-road.

For some reason each year, the Senate comes to believe it owes its allegiance to the department which rarely pulls through in the final clutch, the Texas A&M Athletic Department. The Athletic Department, likewise, expresses its allegiance to the Senate at this time when allocations are being divided up — a complete reversal of its usual considerations.

The Senate took the time to draw up at least six elaborate plans for dividing the Services Fee kitty — each centered around athletics — but it never took into consideration that students might have wanted to put a student lawyer or intramurals on an optional or user fee funded program.

A user fee or optional system would have been the most satisfactory for all concerned, since those not wishing to take part in athletic programming would not have had to pay for its existence and be "forced" to enjoy it.

We have no reason to think the Senate will lower the amount next year, with inflation the way it is. To the contrary, with \$12 of the \$30 per semester limit still unspoken for, the Senate in its true colors probably won't be able to resist asking for students to spend it.

But the Board of Directors has the final say in this matter, not the Senate. We urge the Board NOT to approve this proposal, but to take a lower fee plan. The 37-29 Senate vote was not representative of the student body.

Editor:

It is with a heavy heart that I must report that in the matter of Student Service Fees, the Student Senate has culminated a worthwhile year in an absolute acme of absurdity. The Battalion apparently did not feel that the arguments advanced to justify the final decision were worth the paper it would waste to print them, an opinion I would share did I not feel that it might be of more than trivial interest to everyone to know why they will be paying \$6 more in compulsory fees next year. Therefore, to drive home the full force of that fiasco, I present a somewhat abbreviated account of the discussion.

The plan recommended by the Services Fees Allocation Committee would leave the level of total fees the same and put a \$2 per ticket charge on home football games. Then the people who benefit from athletics pay a larger share of its support. (It should be pointed out that a compromise proposal using a user fee and raising fees by \$2 per year was also presented.) Initially, the major argument against these schemes was consistency-user fees were not included for other programs in the budget, so they should not be included for athletics. Paul Turner, however, quickly pointed out that, even though not included in the budget, user fees are utilized by virtually every program except athletics. Strangely enough, consistency immediately ceased to be a major issue.

Next, the argument arose that the user fee would only benefit the minority of students who do not attend games while penalizing those who do. To begin with, it is a sizable minority indeed who do not attend games (around 40 per cent per game). Secondly, since when is it considered a penalty in a free market to make YOU pay for services that benefit you? I don't know, and apparently neither did anyone else at the meeting, since this issue was never answered.

It was also argued by one of our resident economic whizzes that a fee would shift the demand curve, so fewer people would go to games. Now that is a truly profound observation — that if you have to pay an incremental cost for a service, fewer people will use it. From an economic viewpoint, however, all this proves is that people prefer to do something else with their money. So what this REALLY says is "Since some people do not think it's worth their money, we'll raise the compulsory fee and make them pay anyway." Furthermore, with questions being raised as to how much emphasis would be placed on ath-

letics, a small charge per ticket would provide some indication of how students feel about the matter.

It was on the basis of such logic(?) that fees were raised by \$6. Consequently, I hope that everyone will look up his new senator now while the subject is still fresh and say what they think so that next year will not see a repeat performance. Whatever fee plan does pass next year, I hope it will be by popular demand, not popular default.

John Nash

Editor:

We wish to clear up some misconceptions brought on by Friday's article in The Battalion about the Thursday night Senate meeting.

The cost of education was not raised solely by those Senate actions. The hospital fee was previously \$12 out of the \$30 maximum service fee as set by state law. The Senate in a previous meeting endorsed the state legislature action that would take out the hospital fee from service fees and raise it to \$15. This measure was designed to help pay for the new hospital facilities. In a friendly amendment, the Senate provided that the hospital could not in the future ask for any more money from Student Services Fees.

Thus was the Services Fee left at the previous level of \$18, being the difference between the \$30 and the \$12 hospital part of the old fee. The level of this fee is to provide for the additional programming brought on by the addition of some 100 organizations to the new MSC complex, as well as paying for a student lawyer and the shuttle bus system. It also provided for additional funding needed to improve the intramural program and to increase the reserve fund, which finances programs to cover new needs which arise during the

Services Fee Hit, Praised

year.

For those who complain that the present budget gives altogether too much emphasis to athletics, the so-called "Miori" plan gives less money to that department than would the user fee proposal offered Thursday night. We also considered that the \$18 plan as approved by the Senate allows all students to attend football games free, while the other proposed plan would charge each student \$2 per game. Thus, attendance at only two games would exceed the total cost of paying the all-inclusive \$18 fee. And, it was noted that 9,000 out of 14,000 students who pay services fees go to at least one football game — a sizeable majority. Also, it is not fair to make the entire athletic program suffer because of football, since the seven other recognized sports depend almost entirely on income brought in by football.

We also feel that the article

did not fairly reflect the attitude of the Student Senate in its giving each proposal careful consideration, including the car care center and the coed housing resolution.

Jackie Heyman
Carol Moore
Off-campus senators

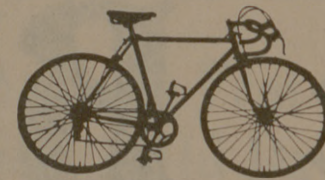
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