

University Change: An Educational Journey to 1984

Dear Redaer T-Tab,

I arrived here from H-Tron as part of the "Earth Dig Team" 6 parsecs ago to analyze records discovered in a region that its former inhabitants called "America," and my special assignment was to discover the causes of the decline and disappearance of the American civilization. I do believe I have found a clue, if not the clue, and as Chief Edufixer of Dnal Eiggs I believe you will be interested.

It may be found in tracing the history of the student-teacher relationship in American universities. Inspired by a folk-hero they called, "Socrates," Americans persisted throughout recorded history in believing the ideal relationship between student and teacher to be a "dialogue," the nature of which one "Mark Hopkins" described as, "one pupil, one teacher; seated on opposite ends of a log." They believed this to be ideal because they defined education as "a process of drawing out the unique potential excellence of each individual."

A teacher, then, had to know each student as an individual and have time to find those ways by which each student's talents could be awakened and developed. But, teachers in America embraced the notion, based on the sayings of another folk-hero, "Jeffer's Son," that maximum education for every individual was essential to realize their political ideal, called, "democracy." They soon discovered that there was not available for every American child a Socrates—or even a Mark Hopkins.

So the American teacher, unwilling to abandon completely either ideal—the Socratic method or the dream of universal education—proposed and tried a variety of student-teacher relationships in the hope that one of them would provide a optimum balance between education for the individual and education for the masses. In this quest the teachers were not without guidance and direction from non-teachers. In a democracy, it seems, every

person was considered to be an expert.

They were directed by fellow citizens to examine other civilizations for a model and from Germany and England drew inspiration for the original Ivy League institutions. They soon discovered that in such universities the student-teacher relationship was not a dialogue and graduates were too class-conscious and too few to provide even a distant promise of universal education. After this brief flirtation with "elitism," as they called it later, the majority of Americans were ready to listen to the advice of the folk-heroes of the mid-19th century, who were called corporation executives. The problem of providing universal education, they counseled, was no different than the problem of making manufactured goods available to everyone; all it takes is proper organization. Thus, the state universities, "land-grant" and "hippie" alike, which emerged were careful copies of the prevailing corporate organizations. At the top of a pyramidal hierarchy was a "Board of Directors;" next, administrators ranging from the plant superintendent, called "President," down to foreman called "Department Chairmen;" and at the bottom, the workers, called, "Profs." The students were viewed as raw material to be gathered, processed and shipped out. (Some sources have it "shaped up.")

This factory-model university pleased everyone at first because it was efficient and less expensive than the elitist model. Its design guaranteed uniformity of education, now believed necessary to prevent democracy from giving birth to sporadic revolutions. They believed, contrary to Jeffer's Son, that one revolution was enough.

To understand how this university worked, it might be helpful to describe how a factory of this period worked. In a canning factory, for example, empty, unlabeled cans without tops were conveyed in endless

single file lines past tables where pre-measured and uniform amounts of vegetable matter were dropped into each. They were passed through tanks of shallow, steaming water which forced out any lingering bubbles. Next they passed through a capper that swiftly clamped a lid on each and stamped it with symbols for contents and the grade thereof. Finally, the cans rolled into a boiler tank and after being completely sterilized, they were labeled and boxed for shipping. Literally thousands of cans could be processed in a short time by such methods and only a few workers were needed. Only an expert could tell the difference between the contents of one can and another.

Of course, in a canning factory it was difficult for the workers to be personally concerned about each individual can. Sometimes a bit of "foreign matter" got into a can of food and occasionally one burst at the seams in the boiler, but considering how difficult it was then for individuals to grow their own food, no doubt much time and money was saved by this process.

This explains why the student-teacher relationship in the factory-university was quite different from both the Socratic dialogue and the parent-child relationship of the elitist universities. It was a professor-raw material relationship; the ideal professor was required

to be impersonal, efficient and single-minded while the ideal raw material was passive, receptive, and simple-minded.

The teachers were first to resent their roles in this relationship and did so for economic reasons. They saw the educational managers receiving much larger salaries without having to endure long, monotonous hours on the production line. They threatened to unionize and some suggested taking over the factory; but management calmed most of the rebellious teachers by employing rather admirable tactics.

They began to promote to management posts from the ranks of the teachers themselves, beginning with the leaders of potential revolt and promised the rest that they could earn relief from the production line if they would present, in publishable form, acceptable proposals for making the educational process more efficient.

Management realized, of course, that very few teachers would have the energy or inclination to engage in such research in their off hours, so they proclaimed the inactive majority to be "professionals," in all respects the same as the physicians and lawyers.

The teachers embraced this title, which served American education well when the students in the mid-20th century began to protest that they were not the products of

the factory, but the consumers.

The teachers were able now to see that the students were clients rather than consumers. No client would presume a physician what treatment to present; no student should presume to tell a teacher how to educate. The students, pleased with elevation from raw material to client, remained tranquil for almost a generation.

Then came a troubled period in the 1960's, stimulated to a large extent by student belief that the professional relationship was nothing but a fancy for a master-slave relationship. This grew out of the involvement of the student in what was called civil rights. This full form of activity had to do with the apparently many students thought were being treated like "blacks" in "mega-versities" of California and New York. The fact that their consequences were met by conscription, jail or even served to confirm this belief for some. It has been the responses to earlier "black" risings.

Some sympathetic teachers later responded to the charge that they were like slavemasters by attempting to establish a "buddy-buddy" relationship. It is interesting that this resulted in students trying to determine curricula and criteria for the promotion and tenure of teachers. The suspect that educational management and even encouraged this, but this cost the teachers that equality with students impossible and undesirable.

I have found no records with date recent than 1984, and these suggest after rejecting the "buddy-buddy" relationship, most teachers reverted to one of the earlier modes of relation. This gets a classic loss of nerve which is reason for the disappearance of many civilizations in this particular galaxy. You will be extremely skeptical in using these conclusions, but in this strange things have happened.

Megrig,
Trop Novad

Dr. Manuel Davenport (Trop Novad) professor and head of the TAMU Philosophy Dept. since 1967. He received his M.A. in philosophy at Bethany Nazarene College; M.A. in philosophy and religion from Colorado College; and Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Illinois.

Batt Commentary

Selective Booze

"Selective enforcement" are the words here in liquor policy. The policy has been unofficially in effect, but is official now.

President Jack Williams said yesterday that students would not be in jeopardy for possessing liquor in dorm rooms unless they caused trouble. The TAMU System Board of Directors has refused to change the "house" rule barring alcohol from the campus.

Williams has unofficially been given approval by Board members for a selective enforcement procedure and has passed the word to hall resident advisors and company commanders to overlook liquor in rooms, if no trouble is caused.

His announcement is timely because the Student Senate is currently studying a resolution which would petition the Board on the matter. The bill, sponsored by Clint Hackney, says: "... Student dormitory rooms and apartments are considered the private and personal domain of the students residing in them ... (and) ... whereas, the private consumption of alcoholic beverages by students at other Texas State supported institutions has been shown to be manageable ... BE IT RESOLVED, that ... alcoholic beverages (be) permitted in all campus housing facilities so long as the person in possession is of legal age (eighteen years) ..."

The resolution continues asking that students be prohibited from buying liquor or beer on campus and be subject to University discipline and possible civil charges in the event of disruption of hall life.

Opponents of the bill say that since the rule is not being enforced, there is no need to change it. Why beg the Board to enforce it? Other opponents (so Hackney says) say it would be detrimental to Corps life and cause more injuries and problems at yell practices.

Students endorsing the change agree that it would put an end to possible selective enforcement for revenge purposes. This could happen with dorm advisors and commanders, they say. However, Dr. Williams has indicated that this type of enforcement will result in removal from these positions.

Others have looked at the existence of the current liquor policy and say the rule shouldn't exist if TAMU officials choose not to enforce it.

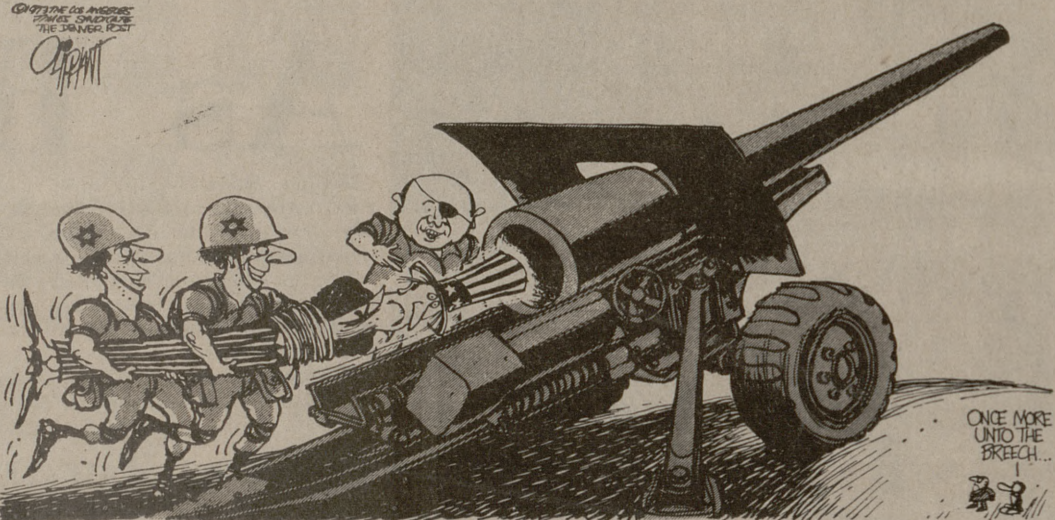
Although students like to think their rooms are private (their contents are), it seems hard to believe the rooms are really private if students share showers, walls, and hallways. This is the way the administration views it.

There are two areas with which the Board has no quarrel: married student housing and the on-campus homes of Dr. Williams and Executive Vice President Gen. A. R. Luedeck. Alcohol in these are exceptions. Not being very specific, Williams has said that the apartment areas are "just different," since they are operated on a landlord basis.

We don't fault the administration for hesitancy at allowing full drinking rights in exchange for a regulation that was passed a little over 10 years ago. The administration should be praised for its move to selective enforcement, as it is a cautious step in a more liberal direction.

We believe the Senate resolution should be approved by the Senate and forwarded to the Board, not with pressure in mind, but in the interest of keeping the Board informed of student opinion.

Students meanwhile, should prove to administrators they can be treated like adults with alcohol.



Listen Up—

Let's Keep Our Cool Under Control

Editor:
With the shortage of energy prevalent in our times, conservation wherever possible is important. Therefore, there is no need for the Krueger-Dunn Commons to be freezing cold. One's blood practically freezes in his veins when passing through the commons.

By raising the control a few notches and leaving it there constantly, the temperature would still be comfortable all the time. In addition, the energy conserved could be saved for the energy-demanding winter months. The shortage that prevails during the winter could be helped considerably if better conservation practices were performed.

Although raising the temperature in the Commons a few degrees would not solve some of our now precious energy. Let's all keep our cool—but keep it under control.

Debbie Marek, '76

Editor:
I would like to congratulate the Food Services Dept. for its exceptional and efficient handling of the steak at Sbsa Dining Hall on October 10, 1973, since they have not had many opportunities this year for serving steak. A bonus in pay is entitled to the innovator of the new system of checking IDs. The rate of checking IDs has increased because only the last four numbers of your ID are copied down instead of all six as in the past. I assume the recording of ID numbers is to keep students from returning through the line to get the steak they did not get the week before.

And when Sbsa checks out the recorded ID numbers and finds two or more the same, what will be the policy on apprehending the criminals since there are at least two other students with the same four last numbers.

Keep up the good work, Old

Army Sbsa and someday you will get a compliment.
Bob Barker '74
★ ★ ★

Editor:
It's high time something is said about the management of the married students apartments of TAMU. I've been living in the "barracks" since December of 1972. Since that time my wife and I have been walked in on by workers, almost kicked out for having a cat in our apartment, got a ticket on a vehicle I drive that belongs to the Bryan Eagle for not having a parking sticker on it, not to mention numerous other incidents we've experienced. It's bad enough having to put up with the condition of the apartment itself but all the other hassle we get is really too much.

The thing that really bugged me was the time my wife and I almost got kicked out for having a cat. It seems that somewhere in the contract, in the fine print,

it says no pets allowed. I see maybe not allowing Bernards in the apartment in 1973 there's hardly enough room for two people, but a small cat, what's the harm in it? (They (the management) nice enough to give us whole days to get rid of it. Even if we had been kicked we would have had to pay de-fleaing fee. The bad about it is that they're gear down the College apartments in a few years what possible harm could be in having pets now?

My question is why can't management allow people have pets to pay a pet deposit other apartments in College? A fee is paid to cover damage which is made by the pet and is then returned at the person moves out, if no age is done. Something to be done.

Steve Bales

The Battalion

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Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words and are subject to being cut to that length or less if longer. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit such letters and does not guarantee to publish any letter. Each letter must be signed and show the address of the writer.

Address correspondence to Listen Up, The Battalion, Room 217, Services Building, College Station, Texas 77843.

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Represented nationally by National Educational Advertising Services, Inc. New York City, Chicago and Los Angeles.

The Battalion, a student newspaper at Texas A&M, is published in College Station, Texas, daily except Saturday, Sunday, Monday, and holiday periods, September through May, and once a week during summer school.

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The Associated Press, Texas Press Association

Mail subscriptions are \$3.50 per semester; \$6 per school year; \$6.50 per full year. All subscriptions subject to 5% sales tax. Advertising rate furnished on request. Address: The Battalion, Room 217, Services Building, College Station, Texas 77843.

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