

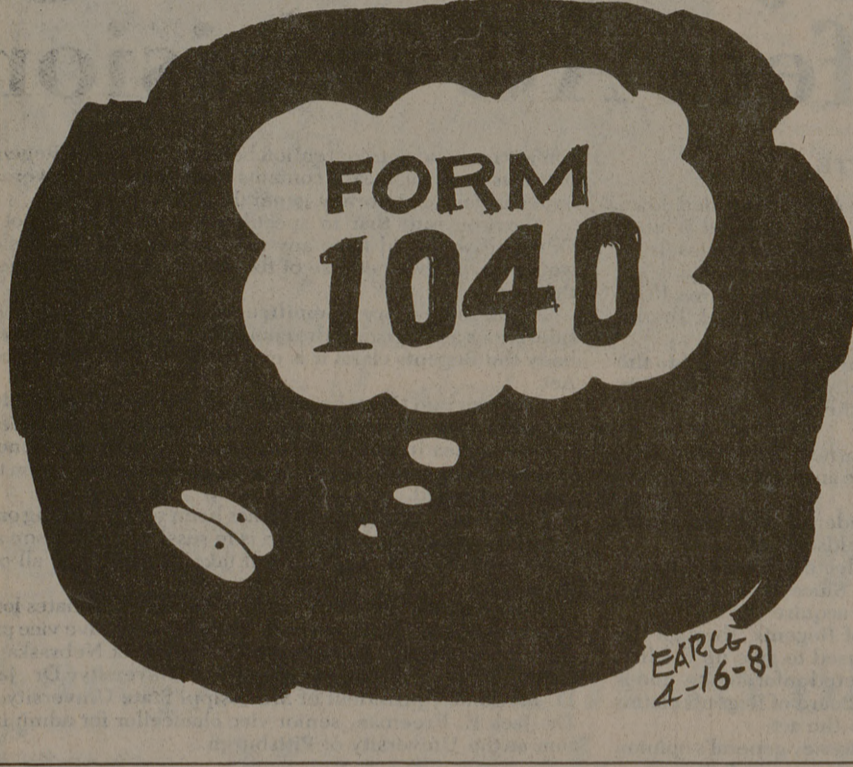
VIEWPOINT

THE BATTALION
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

THURSDAY
APRIL 16, 1981

Slouch

By Jim Earle



Successful schools offer broad education

By PATRICIA McCORMACK
United Press International

The colleges doing best by students these days are those which wave a "general education" banner, says a new report from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

The payoff for students, say the report's authors, is schooling that enables grads "to understand themselves, their society and the world in which they live." Lifelong.

So what's general education? Nothing new. It was squeezed out in the 1960s and 1970s as education for the job market or a scholarly love alone became the top priorities for those in the stampede for a college diploma.

General education actually is something extra on top of required courses for majors. It puts breadth in the college education, says Ernst L. Boyer, foundation president, former U.S. Commissioner of Education and co-author of the report entitled "A Quest for Common Learning."

More and more colleges, the report said, are trying to inject general education into the curriculum. Here's why: there are certain basic topics that all students should be required to investigate regardless of their individual interest or ultimate area of specialization.

Boyer and Dr. Arthur Levine, senior fellow at the foundation, tell in the report how colleges can speed a rebirth of general education.

Their plan, "more a guide than a blueprint," encompasses six study areas, and here are examples from each category:

— Shared use of symbols: "All students should ... understand how language has evolved, how feelings and ideas are conveyed, how numeracy is a symbol system, and how we communicate not only verbally but non-verbally through dance, music and the visual arts. The language of computers merits study, too. Every generally educated student should learn about this pervasive signal system that increasingly controls our day-to-day transactions."

— Shared membership in groups and institutions: "The life of everyone is touched, in one way or another by government, business, school, church, marriage and family. General education means understanding how these institutions originate, how they evolved, grow strong, become weak and sometimes die. The (institutions) provide the essential arrangements through which

transactions are conducted and social structure maintained."

— Shared activities of consumption and production: "Students should understand that everyone produces and consumes and that, through this process, we are dependent on each other. This is an essential part of common learning. We propose a general education program that explores the significance of work in the lives of individuals."

— Shared relationships with nature: "No education is complete without an understanding of the ordered nature of the universe, the fundamental laws that cannot be altered and to which we all conform. General education should clarify ... how all life forms on our planet are inextricably interlocked."

— Shared sense of time, past, present, future: "It is essential that the human race remember where it has been and how ... it got to be where it is. An understanding of this past from which all of us spring should be required of all students. It need not be either a breathless dash through history, an eclectic muddle, or a study, of one isolated period devoid of its connections to the present."

— Shared values and beliefs: "All students should engage in frank and searching discussion about the choices people make individually and collectively. Such a study should bring students into contact with people outside the university with explicit ideals who can talk thoughtfully about their own commitments, about how values are formed, when values should change, when partisanship should be revised. The study of values should be viewed as the cornerstone to common learning."

The report from the Washington-based Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching was presented at a two-day colloquium on "Common Learning." Some 200 scholars and academicians from colleges attended the event at the University of Chicago.

The university remained committed to the idea of a balanced education through an integrated four-year program, even through the 1960s and 1970s when other colleges were experimenting with various curriculum changes that emphasized early specialization.

The report is the first product of a Carnegie Foundation "long-term commitment to clarify the purposes and quality of higher education ..."

Time isn't on The Eagle's side

The ongoing tug-of-war between the Texas A&M System and the Bryan Eagle over a list of 20 candidates for the A&M presidency may soon end without a fair fight.

The Bryan newspaper has thus far been unsuccessful in its attempts to act as a public servant by making those candidates known to the public. And if the attorney general and his opinion committee do a good job of taking their sweet time in ruling on the dispute, it may well be that a new president will be chosen before the public even knows who was being considered.

Twenty finalists were chosen from some 400 being considered for the post and when in February the Eagle tried to obtain the list, the System, through its legal personnel, refused to give it up.

At that time, the attorney general's opinion committee was asked to rule on whether or not the list was fair game for publication under the Texas Open Records Act.

Understandably, the Eagle says it is and the regents say it isn't.

The Eagle is basing its case in part on a previous decision handed down in October which concerned a similar situation.

That decision in part read: "A member of the public has a strong interest in being apprised of the names of persons being considered for important public positions, so that, prior to selection, he may attempt to influence the choice,

Staff notebook

By Bernie Fette

and, after selection, he may evaluate the wisdom of the choice."

The Eagle says the regents have told them that many of those on the list may not know they are being considered and to reveal their names would be embarrassing.

On the contrary, it seems that many people would be honored by such an embarrassment.

The System's legal team, however, says that the list in question comes under an exception of the Open Records Act and is therefore not public information.

Another reason being given to support the System's position is that the employers of those being considered may know nothing of the matter and that those on the list may lose their jobs as a result. It seems highly unlikely that merely being considered for a position such as this would result in the loss of a job.

Even if this were to happen, a choice still must be made. Is more harm done by the possible but unlikely loss of a few jobs or the eminent loss of the public's right to know?

It's true that the first draft of the opinion has been completed but it still must be

reviewed by the entire committee and will be at least two weeks before the attorney general will see it and begin to act on it. At least two weeks. That is, of course, the attorney general can fit it into his schedule when he does finally see it.

"How long it will take will depend mostly on his (the attorney general's) schedule," the chairman of the opinion committee said.

The chairman also said she has no idea what his schedule will be like amid traveling, speeches, and other public appearances.

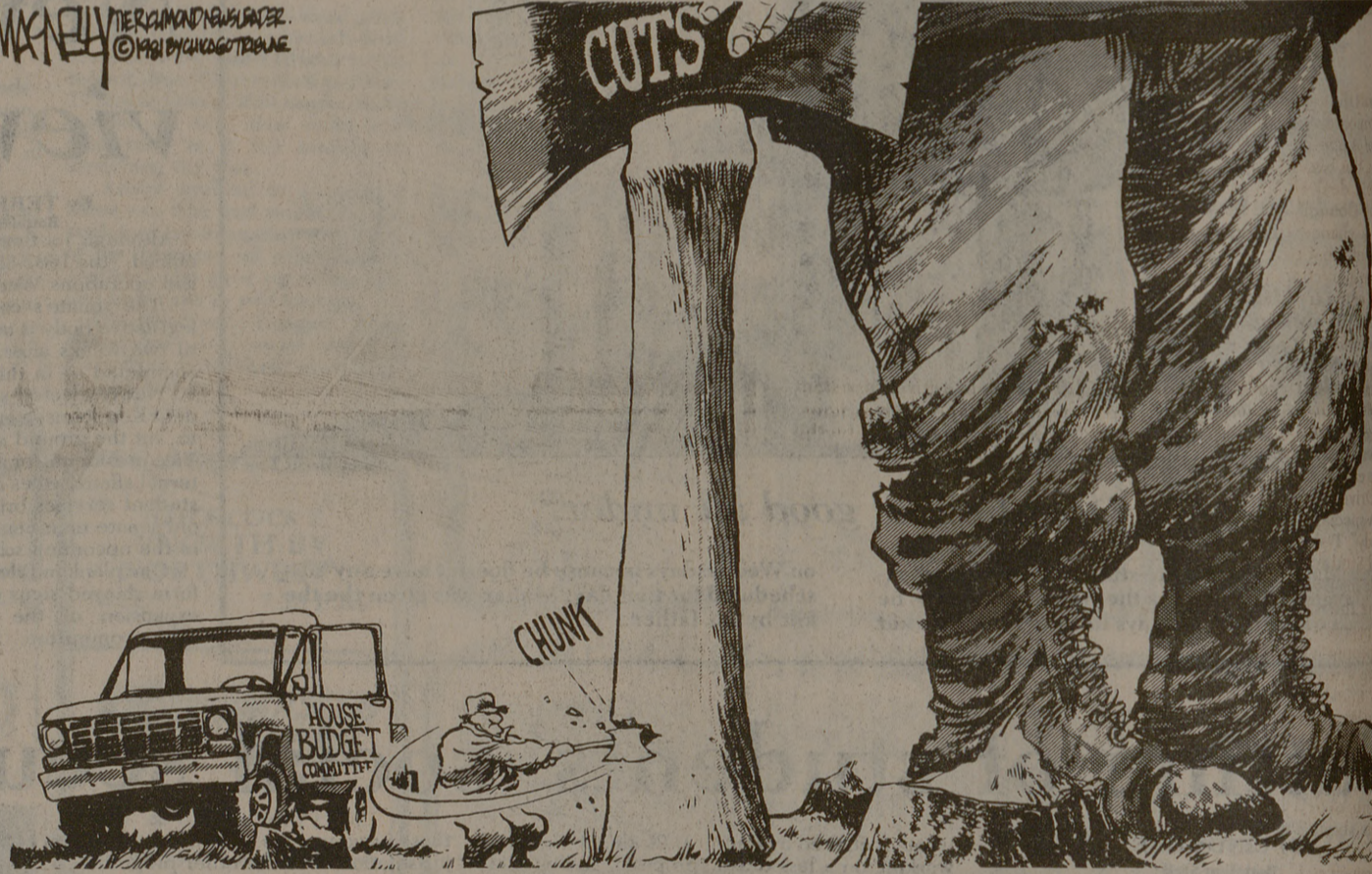
Time is a very important factor in the dispute and even though the law seems to be on the Eagle's side, they lose another segment of the battle with each passing day.

Time is definitely on the regents' side. They know it will be some time before the attorney general rules on this issue, and they work fast enough, they can choose a new president before they are forced to reveal their secretive game.

Probably no one will care who was being considered after a final choice is made anyway.

The fight will soon be over and the administration obviously has the bureaucratic upper hand in this one. It's a pity that the representatives of First Amendment rights are forced to play the game at such a disadvantage when the stakes involved are the rights of the public as well as the press.

McKENNEN
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It's your turn

\$10.83 per month isn't too much

Editor:

The state Legislature is trying to raise our tuition (taxes?). Great! It's about time. The tuition has been at \$4 per hour for years. It would be much more than the proposed \$8 per hour if it had been rising with the rate of inflation over the years. Students have been receiving their education for a small fraction of the cost. Guess who pays the greatest portion. That's right — the state. And where does the state get its money? That's right — the taxpayers.

I don't see raising our tuition as "unfair" or as "raising taxes" for students. It's merely letting students pay for a larger part of their education, instead of it being given to them for next to nothing. Many of the taxpayers of this state have never received a college education. Why should they have to pay for our education? Is that not unfair?

In real numbers, the additional cost of getting your college degree (130 semester

hours), if the tuition is raised to \$8 per hour, is only \$520. Over four years that breaks down to \$130 per year or \$10.83 per month. In today's (April 14) Battalion, there are over twenty classified ads from business looking for full- or part-time employees. To make \$10.83 per month doesn't take much work or imagination. Well what about the poor or the people who are already working? The special committee that proposed the tuition increase also recommended that 10 percent of the additional revenues be distributed to those that are most affected.

I agree with David Stockman in his disagreement with the concept that any service should be provided, financed by the government as a matter of basic right. The

state is not "picking" on students. Instead they are helping the taxpayers and not too soon.

Steven Andrews

Correction

A line in Tuesday's Battalion incorrectly said that Dr. Lee Whitt, assistant professor of mathematics, was not granted tenure because of a lack of research.

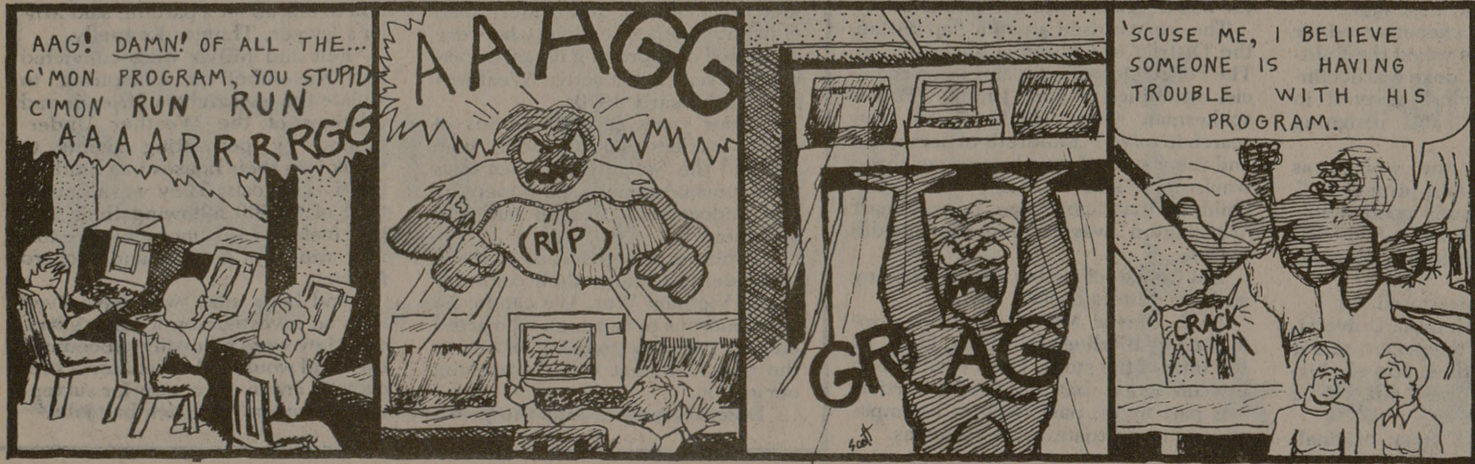
Dr. Whitt resigned his post because he felt that, based on his past reviews, he would not receive tenure when he became eligible for tenure review next year.

The Battalion regrets the error.

THE BATTALION

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Warped



By Scott McCullar

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