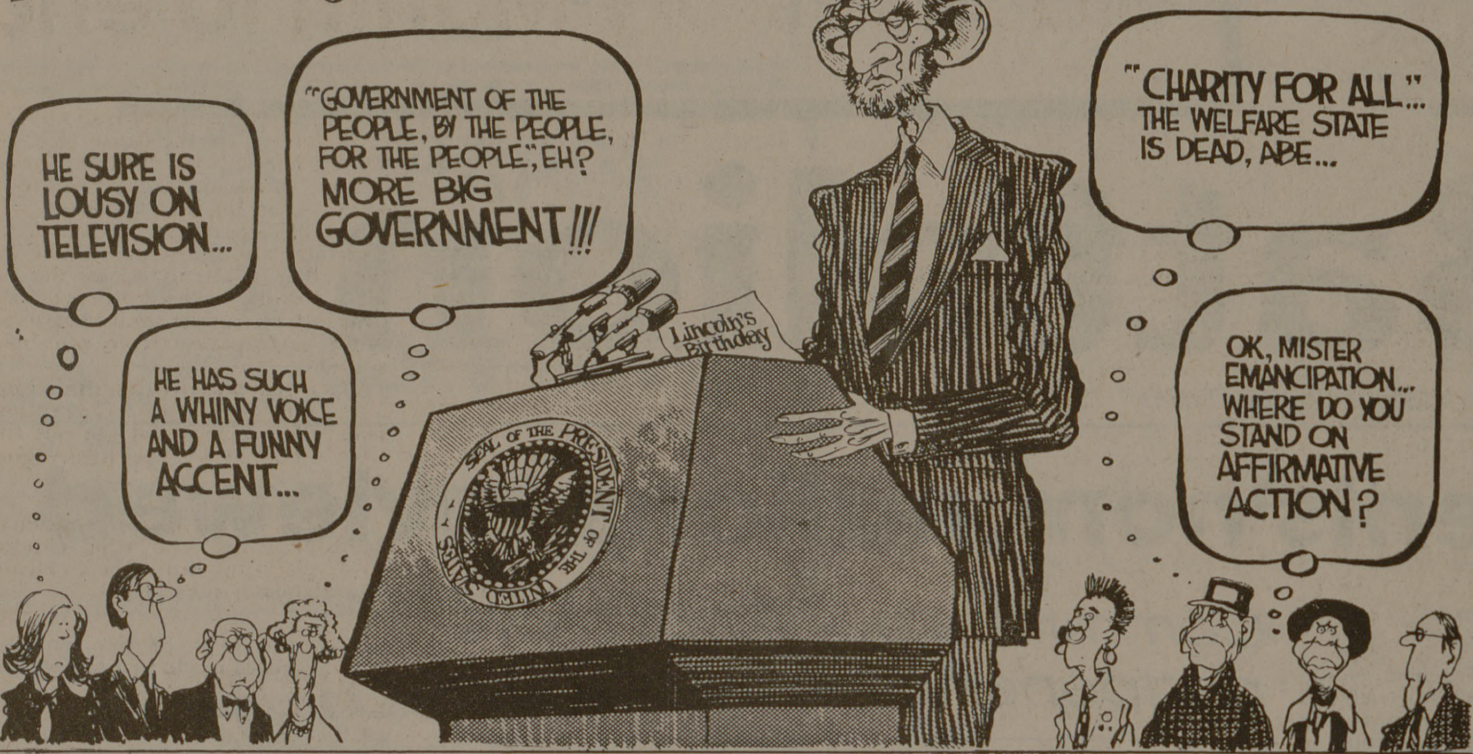


OPINION

If Abe Lincoln were president today...



A&M officials continuing to deny free speech on University campus

"We hope the resolution will make the Board (Texas A&M's Board of Regents) look beyond their own bigotries and accept GSS."



Kevin Inda

Tom Urban made that statement after the A&M Student Senate passed a resolution supporting the GSS. Evidently, someone didn't like it. Urban was placed on conduct probation by the University on Nov. 27.

Urban was informed in a letter from Brent Paterson, Judicial Affairs Supervisor for Student Services, that he was placed on conduct probation for accumulating "an excessive number of unpaid parking violations" and failure to "register the vehicle with the U.P.D."

Urban received 16 parking tickets during the fall semester but paid them on Nov. 7 and bought a parking sticker on Nov. 14. But, during the 1984 spring semester Urban received — and paid — 12 parking tickets and no disciplinary action was taken against him.

Bob Wiatt, director of Security and Traffic, said having more than nine parking tickets is excessive.

But, does that constitute conduct pro-

batation? Few A&M students have been put on conduct probation for having too many parking tickets. Being considered a candidate for conduct probation depends on the way you interpret University regulations.

According to the Texas A&M University Regulations Handbook, conduct probation is defined as follows:

• An official warning that the student's conduct is in violation of Texas A&M University Regulations "Basic Policy", or the Penal Code of the State of Texas but is not sufficiently serious to warrant expulsion, dismissal or suspension. A student of conduct probation is deemed "not in good standing" with the University, which includes certain restrictions.

One restriction affects Urban more than the others. That restriction is the ineligibility to hold an office in any student organization recognized by the University or to hold any elected or appointed office of the University.

Urban was forced by the probation to resign his position in Student Government on Jan. 23, but a federal restraining order issued Feb. 6 enabled him to retain his position.

You might ask what constitutes conduct probation under that definition — well, just about anything the University wants.

Student Body President David Alders said he hopes the University doesn't deny a student his civil rights but he also said government interference in the University's internal affairs could set a dangerous precedent.

"It would set a dangerous precedent if the government reversed the University's decision because a student disagreed with the decision. The University needs to be able to maintain its independence," Alders said.

I guess it doesn't matter to Alders if the University is denying someone his First Amendment rights. By no means should we let the government mingle in University affairs. Just because the University Disciplinary Appeals Panel upheld the University's decision doesn't mean the University was right in putting Urban on conduct probation.

This is an obvious attempt to shut someone up. Officials won't admit it — but that's what they wanted to do. It seems as if the regents like to deny people their constitutional rights (remember the GSS and women in the band?).

I hope the regents, the University, or anybody directly involved in putting Tom Urban on conduct probation will look beyond their own bigotries and accept free speech — this is getting old.

Kevin S. Inda is a senior journalism major and a weekly columnist for *The Battalion*.

Students can work to prevent budget cuts

Editor's Note: This is the second of a two-part series on the effects of the proposed budget cuts on Texas A&M.

Reader's Forum
Reader's Forum
Reader's Forum

In light of the severe effects which would be felt at Texas A&M in the event of any reduction in state allocations, concentrated efforts are underway which are intended to prevent these budget cuts. These efforts have been given a high priority by the System Chancellor's office, the Board of Regents and President Vandiver. Student Government has also become involved in these endeavors, gathering information and making the students' voices heard in Austin.

President Vandiver's efforts aimed at avoiding severe cuts in the University budget have recently received a great deal of attention in the media. Dr. Vandiver has begun a large-scale attempt to inform the people of Texas (as well as the students of A&M) of the impacts of budget cuts such as were discussed in yesterday's article. Although he has sometimes been criticized for these efforts, he has succeeded in making many people aware of the gravity of the budgetary problem facing higher education. Perhaps most importantly, the press in the state has begun to address these problems, in part due to Dr. Vandiver's vehement opposition to cuts in University funding.

The Board of Regents has also undertaken efforts to prevent these cutbacks. The Board's Executive Secretary, Bill Presnal (who also serves as the System Vice-Chancellor for State Affairs), has been actively involved with pleading the University's case in Austin. As the former chairman of the powerful House Appropriations Committee — which will eventually decide upon the levels of higher education funding, Mr. Presnal is in a unique position to be our advocate in the State Legislature.

Also representing the interests of Texas A&M in Austin are Representative Richard Smith and Senator Kent Caperton, both of whom represent Brazos County in the Legislature. Both of these men are committed to avoiding the proposed budget cuts in higher education because they recognize the impact that these cuts would have on their constituencies. Rep. Smith states that since the start of the session the size of the proposed cuts have been reduced from 26 percent to between five and

eight percent and that he will continue to work to reduce the impact of cuts. Texas A&M. Senator Caperton has endorsed a plan proposed by Lt. Gov. Hobby which would result in a cut of only six percent from the higher education budget. Both men state that they will work toward the complete restoration of funding to higher education at Texas A&M.

Another organization which is working to represent the interests of Texas A&M is Student Government. Through the efforts of the Legislative Student Group (LSG), Student Government is working to lessen the economic impact that budget cuts and tuition increases would have on the students of Texas A&M. Michael O'Quinn, Administrative Director of LSG, says that another concern is the implementation of a tuition increase. Presently, money raised for university tuition is not provided directly to universities as funding. LSG is working to ensure that any tuition increase would be used to fund increases in higher education for the restoration of any budget cuts. Thus, any adverse economic impact on students caused by a tuition increase would have the effect of improving the quality of education.

A final mention must be made of a powerful, untapped resource which could be used to help prevent the implementation of budget cuts to higher education. This resource consists of the students and former students of Texas A&M. A number of former students, including Rep. Smith and Sen. Caperton are working to persuade their legislators in Austin that the university budgets should not be cut. Each and every student and former student should be involved in this process — for it is the very future of our University which is at stake. Take the time to write, call, or send a mailgram to legislators who represent your hometown, and express to them your feelings on university funding. Write a letter to the editor of your hometown newspaper expressing your concerns. Have your parents and their friends do the same and the end result will be an increased awareness of the effects of budget cuts for both the people of Texas and the State Legislature. Many University agencies are working to preserve the long-term future of Texas A&M — any assistance provided by students, former students and Aggie families throughout Texas would be invaluable.

Mike Kelley is the Student Government vice president for finance.

LETTERS:

Bicycling should be encouraged at A&M

EDITOR:

The so-called "parking problem" (Battalion, Feb. 14) here at the University is one primarily of semantics. It's not a "parking problem" but a "car problem." There are just too many of the damn things on campus. Instead of giving more tickets, and building more parking lots, why are we not encouraging more alternative transportation? Specifically, bicycles.

Sure, bicycles in themselves are a problem and I will not defend my fellow cyclists' skills or judgement in traffic, but bikes are quiet, pollution free, provide exercise, and don't require the 60-plus square feet of parking space of a automobile. So what has been done by the University and city of College Station to encourage bicycle commuters?

Bikes routes have been set up, which is to be commended, but they are too restricted and not respected by motorists. How many cyclists out there have found themselves face to face with an impatient S.O.B. tearing down the bike lane on Jersey during rush hour.

Some suggestions to improve conditions for cyclists:

1) a sidewalk should be constructed extending from Zachry Engineering, east around the polo grounds, continuing parallel to Texas on the east side of the polo grounds and golf course, to the running track. This sidewalk could be used by joggers, pedestrians, as well as cyclists.

2) a sidewalk could also be constructed on the west side of Wellborn

road to allow bicycle travel in that direction.

3) all future road repairs and construction should be initiated with the realization that College Station is a college town and not Houston. Attempts should be made to expand the shoulder areas of roads whenever possible.

Finally,

4) if cyclists are required to think and act as motorized vehicles on campus (we often don't), then motorists should be penalized when they don't treat cyclists as such.

(Try acting like a car at a four way stop while on a bike, some time.)

Robert Jones
College Station

Why was Chinese ambassador at A&M?

EDITOR:

I question the propriety of bringing to A&M that ambassador from Communist China. The government there holds the all time world record for mass murder. (See Guinness Book of World Records, Bantam Books, 1983, page 430.) The Red Chinese make Adolph Hitler look like a small time punk.

Furthermore, they continue to practice genocide against Tibet and have turned their own country into a gigantic slave labor camp from which people can escape only at risk of their lives.

It is hard to understand why Texas A&M or any other institution which values human life or any sort of decency would provide a forum for a representative of that government to propagate

its views. What was the point of bringing such a person here? To hear what the Red Chinese have to say?

Why bother with what they say; just look at what they do!

Al Dobey

Staff writer just too perfect for words

EDITOR:

In response to Patti Flint's ignorant assumptions about "most of the students" she probably doesn't even know:

Thank you Patti, for so miraculously reading my mind and probably the minds of "most of the students" at Texas A&M.

Please Patti, tell us something we don't hear every day. Your remark about students believing in God because our parents told us to, wins the award for "the most overused cop-out in the world."

How shallow of you to assume something about people you don't know.

As far as I know, the essence of life should be something that fulfills each person differently, so if you don't mind, I'll read my own mind from now on — Thanks!

As far as materialism goes, has it ever occurred to you that instead of criticizing people for earning money, you could encourage them to spend money planting trees so we can all watch the movement of the sunlight through the trees (if you can be sure we don't notice these things).

I am happy for you, though, that you are so far-removed from "most of the

students" that I'm sure there is a chance of even a trace of materialism in your lifestyle. Thank you for being bold as to admit your perfection.

Sherry Tofte
Class of '87

Too many football fan whiners at A&M

EDITOR:

Dear Dick:

In response to your letter on Feb. 17 I would like to point out that you are very little about coaching football — especially at A&M. Don't try to place your over-wrought frustrations on the shoulders of Jackie Sherrill. Sure, he's not paid and his teams haven't performed consistently well, but in no way does that prove your point that he's a poor coach.

Just because the Dallas Cowboys didn't go to the NFL playoffs this year do you believe that Tom Landry is a lousy coach? "Bear" Bryant had some not-so-good seasons here at A&M, however, it was the narrow-minded coaches of Aggies like you that sent him to Alabama. Do you think he was a poor coach? Right.

If Jackie and the Aggies fail to break their 6-5 record of last fall, I'm sure there will be even more whiners out there now. But, please, stop complaining and take a hard look at the performance of teams in the SWC. Any team on a given day can beat any other team.

Besides, I do believe there is a "Better Football." I hope that A&M will be the remainder of the Class of '87 same thing.

Kevin Henderson
Class of '88

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Opinions expressed in The Battalion are those of the Editorial Board or the author, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Texas A&M administrators, faculty or the Board of Regents.
The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography classes within the Department of Communications.

Letters Policy
Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must be signed and must include the address and telephone number of the writer.
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