

Council to discuss theology committee

By CATHIE ANDERSON
Staff Writer

The Memorial Student Center Council will discuss a proposed MSC Theology Committee during its 6:30 p.m. meeting Monday.

The group also will be reviewing the nominations for several positions on the council and the MSC committees. The newly elected representatives will take over the 36th MSC Council and its committees April 20.

Dr. John J. Koldus, vice president of student services, asked a Texas A&M attorney if recognition of a theology committee could cause problems for the University. He was assured if A&M could allow funding for such an organization.

Colleen Jennings Batchelor, Texas A&M senior staff attorney, told Koldus in a Nov. 12 memorandum that the University would have to fulfill three criteria required by the United States Supreme Court if a theology committee was to be recognized.

- It must not involve excessive entanglement between church and state.
- It must neither advance nor inhibit religion.
- It must have a secular purpose.

Batchelor also said that such an organization could pose some legal problems to the University:

"To the extent we can encourage these various groups to remain in their status as student organizations, we will be in a much better position both legally and administratively to rebuff any attacks by individuals representing different schools of thought," Batchelor said.

The supporters of the proposed committee say the group's purpose is not to hinder or facilitate any particular theological view but to enrich all individuals' knowledge and awareness of different theological views and organizations at the University.

Free movie passes boost school funds

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Houston school officials for one month last year offered free movie tickets to students with perfect attendance. They increased daily attendance by 2,500 and boosted state funding by more than \$4 million.

The program will be offered again this year to about 40,000 (students) at a cost of \$280,000, officials said.

"These movie passes were a big incentive," said Forest Henry, principal at Wheatley High School, where attendance soared to 93 percent. "It just seemed to be something that spurred them to come."

Officials of the Houston Independent School District admitted the unorthodox plan was an attempt to increase state funding, which is based largely on daily student attendance in the month of October.

Other Houston-area school districts like Pasadena and Baytown followed with incentives. But some principals labeled the technique

bribery and questioned whether students really learn anything.

"This places the wrong emphasis on education," said Texas City Superintendent Paul Manning. "I don't intend to offer any incentives other than getting a good education. We're not playing a game."

HISD Superintendent Billy Reagan was surprised by the criticism. But he said he makes no excuses for offering rewards to get students to attend classes.

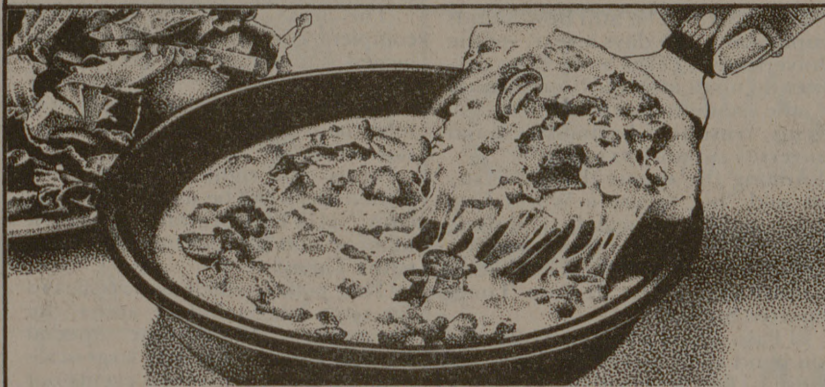
"The day is probably past when negative incentives are going to have the kind of results that perhaps they had 30 or 40 years ago, when discipline was a very fundamental function of the home and was carried out by the home," Reagan said.

According to attendance figures released last week, about 150,000 district students, or more than 75 percent, qualified for free movie passes, which cost the district about \$400,000.

The offer was part of a program begun in 1979.

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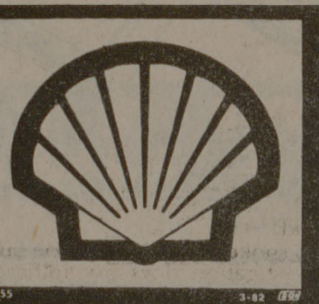
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