

OPINION



Supplementary funding needed

A&M can't be a first-class school without good library

Greatness, like beauty, may well be in the eye or mind of the beholder. There are many things about Texas A&M University which are great.

Charles R. Schultz
Guest Columnist

students changed this. Unfortunately, the library has never overcome this original neglect.

Aside from the expected regular and frequent eloquent pleas by library directors for adequate funding for the library during the past eleven decades, there have been, as the professor of chemistry surmised, several impressive reports in which support for the library has been recommended.

In 1942, the Library Committee of the A&M chapter of the American Association of University Professors compared the A&M library with the libraries at four other land grant institutions. The committee found the A&M library inadequate and recommended the library's funding be increased substantially until its holding reached the size of the libraries at the other institutions. There is no record of any supplementary funding.

In 1949-50, the University Administration brought in two consultants from land grant libraries to study the A&M library. Among the several recommendations they made was that there should be substantial increases in the library budget.

The Board of Regents appropriated \$100,000 immediately for the purchase of materials, but no additional funds were ever provided.

In 1961, the Administration established the Century Study Council and the Faculty-Staff-Student Study Committee on Aspirations, both of which looked at the library and made recommendations for improvement. Included were suggestions for increased funding, but there is no record of such activity.

At almost the same time Texas A&M, including its library, was evaluated by the Southern Association of Colleges

and Schools in connection with re-accreditation.

The library representative on the re-accrediting team noted that "library consciousness...does not exist here" and concluded that the A&M "Administration must act to improve the climate for an atmosphere that is in keeping with the other American Research Libraries."

He then went on to remind the Administration that the library is "the heart of the university for study, teaching, and research. No college or university can achieve excellence until the library has achieved excellence."

There is no record of any substantial increase in funding as a result of this report.

In 1964 the Library Committee of the College of Arts and Sciences Advisory Council made a report on the library in which it found some notable weaknesses and made recommendations for improvement. The weaknesses included lack of awareness by the Administration of what is meant by a good library, an inadequate collection of books and journals, a staff that was too small and not always sufficiently qualified, and salaries that were well below the levels needed to attract and retain competent personnel.

Recommendations included expanding the facility to two million volumes by 1976 (the library actually reached half that number), giving a high priority to library improvement by the Administration, upgrading the staff and raising large sums of money to fund the other three. Some slight improvements can be seen over time, but there was no real evidence of a positive commitment by the Administration to improve the library.

In 1971-72, A&M once again went through the self-study process for re-accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The Library Council, which served as the committee to report on the library, recommended modest annual increases in funding for the library to fill some of the most notable gaps in holdings. Some increases were provided, but they were very modest.

In 1974, the Administration appointed a committee to recommend a plan for expansion of the facility and improvement of the collections of the library. This committee recommended supplementing the library budget by over \$2 million a year for five years to acquire materials and expand services. An additional amount was suggested to expand the building.

In one year the Administration provided \$400,000 to purchase books so that the collection could reach one million volumes during 1976. The Administration provided \$12 million for an addition to the building, but that was only about half of what was really needed to construct a facility to house an excellent collection of library materials and to provide the services needed by a first class university.

Easy answers to tax reform questions

By ART BUCHWALD
Columnist for The Los Angeles Times Syndicate

The mail has been pouring in on tax reform:

Dear Sir,

I keep reading in the newspaper that the only people who will benefit from tax reform are the very rich and the very poor. How can the very poor benefit from a change in the tax laws?

Larry of Lafayette Park

Dear Larry,

The very poor will gain in this way. Their capital gains taxes will be cut from 20 percent to 17.5. So, for example, if a poor person sells a piece of investment real estate or a block of stock he will profit tremendously from the reduced rates. Secondly, while poor people may not be able to subtract the interest on their vacation homes, they will still be able to deduct the interest on their principal residences. Thirdly, even though poor people will be limited on deducting business travel and entertainment allowances, they will be able to keep more of their minimum \$3.50-an-hour income.

Dear Sir,

My company makes computer chips. We have a sky box for the Dallas Cowboys home games where we entertain our customers. Under the new tax bill we will not be able to deduct the cost of the box. How can we sell chips if we can't take our clients to watch the Cowboys play?

Horatio Alger IV

Dear Horatio,

For starters you might make a computer chip that works.

Dear Sir,

Why is the President so insistent that state and local taxes no longer be deducted from your federal taxes? He keeps referring to my state as a wasteful spender.

Worried New Yorker

Dear Worried New Yorker,

The President doesn't like your state because you have a Democratic

governor, and if Mr. Reagan can make life miserable for him, Mr. Cuomo won't be able to get his party's nomination in 1988.

Dear Sir,

How much revenue will President Reagan's tax reform bill bring into the Treasury?

Just Curious

Dear Just,

The President's tax simplification is "revenue neutral," which means that by the time the lobbyists and Congress get through with it, there will be a lot less money coming in and the deficit will grow even larger than it is now.

Dear Sir,

Then why is he doing it?

Just Curious

Dear Just,

You already wrote in a question. Let someone else have a chance.

Dear Sir,

Why doesn't President Reagan in his tax reform speeches mention that the real reason people are so mad at the present system is because the IRS computers don't work, and the people who work for the Internal Revenue System are always trying to scare the hell out of us.

Frightened Silly

Dear Silly,

When the President talks about the tax abuse he never likes to point the finger of blame at anybody. It's just not his style.

Dear Sir,

My brother and I are two people who believe that the more complicated the IRS tax forms are the better it is for the American people. We say Washington should keep their cotton-picking hands off the 1040 form. Could you please pass on this message to Mr. Reagan and the Congress?

H&R Block

Dear H&R,

It's done.

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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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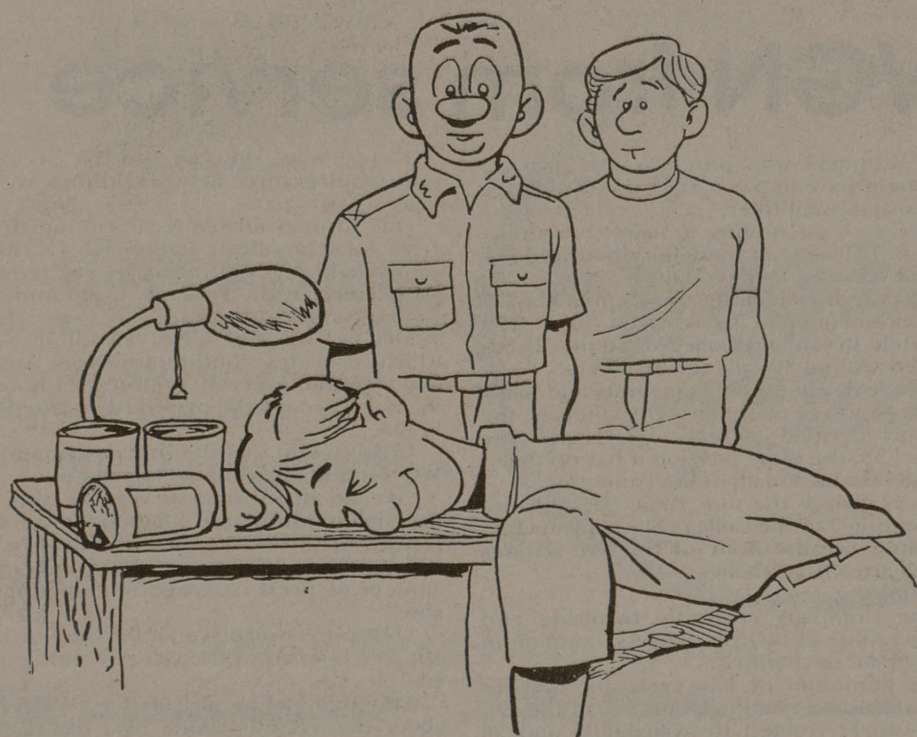
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Slouch

By Jim Earle



"I don't agree with his method, but you gotta admit he has whipped the problem of sissies."