

State and Local

Final vote at A&M debate gives nod to English in official-language issue



Photo by Dean Saito

Slawomir Wasiluk presents his case for an official language.

By Melanie Perkins
Staff Writer

The official vote was 176 for and 82 against English being the official language of the United States. The event, held Wednesday night in the Memorial Student Center, was a parliamentary debate sponsored by the Texas A&M Debate Society.

The debate opened with the pro speaker, Slawomir "Swavick" Wasiluk, a graduate business student from Bialystock, Poland, who said that without an official language, integrity of our cultural system, our educational system and our political system is threatened.

He said in the past, immigrants wanted to learn English, because they realized it was an essential tool for success in American society. But many more recent immigrants are not learning English.

"This creates conditions for cultural collapse, because we don't have a melting pot anymore — what we have is a salad bowl," Wasiluk said.

He said elimination of bilingual education and bilingual ballots would cause people to learn to speak English faster and get into the mainstream of American life faster. He added that a constitutional amendment making English the official language would not abolish bilingual health services and would not apply to private businesses.

Roberto Interiano, a senior computer science major from San Salvador, El Salvador, took the con side.

"Adopting English as the official language is turning our backs to

many social problems — not solving them," he said.

The United States should not adopt English as the official language, Interiano said, because there are many non-English speaking Americans, and because encouraging people to speak more than one language is beneficial.

He said it is important to remember that California and Texas were once part of Mexico, and Spanish traditions, including the language, have been handed down from generation to generation.

The debate then was opened to the audience, who attacked the subject with gusto.

"There is nothing better than all of us being able to communicate with each other," one pro speaker said.

A con speaker said making English the official language would be like leaving people who could not understand English stranded, or like putting them in concentration camps, as the Nazis did to the Jews.

A pro speaker said having an official language does not preclude speaking or knowing other languages.

"We have an official flower in our state — it's called the bluebonnet," she said. "But does that eradicate the Indian Paint? Does that get rid of all the zinnias and roses? No, it does not."

A con speaker said he didn't understand what everyone was arguing about.

"I don't see a problem here," he said. "English is unofficially the official language of America."

2 Dunn residents get opposite decisions from Judicial Board

By Curtis L. Culbertson
Staff Writer

Residence Halls Judicial Board found one Dunn resident guilty of possessing stolen property and another innocent of being an accessory in a closed session after the two students marched out in the middle of hearing proceedings.

Supervisor of Student Judicial Affairs Brent G. Paterson said immediately after the March 10 hearing that he wasn't sure what action would be taken against the two students, who said they probably would file a lawsuit before prematurely leaving the hearing. Paterson added that he probably would consult with the University's system attorneys before taking further action.

However, Judicial Board members went into a closed session after the hearing and found Donald Stroud guilty of knowingly possessing stolen door signs, memo boards and pens from Krueger and Mosher halls, and Joseph Skladal innocent of being an accessory to possession of stolen property.

Paterson said, "After talking to my supervisors and reviewing procedures from past situations, we felt the most appropriate thing to do was to follow the decision of the Judicial Board."

Stroud was given the choice of hall probation for next fall's semester or a written reprimand and 20 hours of community service. He said that although his grades have dropped sharply because of the situation, he has filed for an appeal.

For Skladal, the six-week-long ordeal is over. Skladal and Stroud both were found innocent of damages and vandalism to Mosher and Krueger halls at a Feb. 10 judicial board hearing. Both students said they were shocked and angered when they received letters on Feb. 24 stating new charges for the same incident.

Skladal said recharging them was double jeopardy because they had been found innocent at the original

hearing and given a verbal reprimand for not turning in sooner the items that Stroud had found. Skladal also said there was vagueness in the charges and said he was singled out from other students who also knew Stroud had possession of the items.

Skladal attempted to address these issues at the March 10 hearing but repeatedly was told by the chairman that a judicial board hearing was the wrong forum for these issues. Skladal and Stroud then walked out of the hearing without directly defending the possession and accessory charges.

Stroud said in the first hearing that he found the door signs, memo boards, and pens in a bag marked, "Courtesy of Aston" while studying in the Commons. He said it was unjust to be recharged and retried for something he had admitted to.

"We were guilty until proven guilty," Stroud said. But Stroud was surprised that he was found guilty while Skladal wasn't.

"It's ironic because I thought they were trying to get at Joe (Skladal) through me," he said.

Skladal said his hiring a lawyer and the publicity the case got may be why he was found innocent.

Paterson said, "Those things would have no effect on a judicial board decision."

Rick Turnbow, assistant south-side area coordinator, said his office was satisfied with the way the judicial board handled the situation.

Stroud said he would base his appeal on double jeopardy and selectivity of the possession charge. He said some of the items were in the possession of a Krueger resident and then were taken to a room in Dunn.

Paterson said a student can file an appeal either because he feels he is innocent, he feels the punishment is too harsh, or he feels due process of law was violated. Paterson said the appeal would be the proper time to air allegations of double jeopardy and vagueness and selectivity of charges.

Student Senate OKs bills affirming traditions

By Christi Daugherty
Staff Writer

At the final meeting of the spring semester, the Student Senate passed two bills relating to Texas A&M traditions and one bill to improve lounge and dining facilities for the students and faculty in the College of Veterinary Medicine.

The first bill deals with enforcing faculty observance of two specific traditions, Silver Taps and Muster.

The bill stated that since traditions like Silver Taps are usually scheduled for weeknights, and since it's becoming increasingly popular for professors to schedule night exams, it's necessary to take steps to protect these traditions.

Therefore, the bill recommends that faculty members refrain from scheduling exams on the same night as Muster and Silver Taps.

The other tradition bill passed formalizes the

Senate's recognition of maroon and white as A&M's official colors.

Susan Pollard authored this bill and said that though some found it unimportant, extensive research had disclosed no formal recognition of the colors.

The Senate also unanimously approved a bill supporting the Veterinary College's request for more extensive lounge and dining facilities in order to adequately serve its students and faculty.

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