



## Eight-year prof deserves more than just visiting lecturer status

### Computer science teacher in danger of deportation

**Timm Doolen**  
Columnist

Dr. Salih Yurttas teaches computer science as a "visiting" professor from Turkey. I put visiting in quotes because although that is his official title, I don't consider someone who has been teaching here for eight years, and doing a good job at it, "visiting."

Unfortunately, he may soon be losing even his visiting professor status. It is a complicated story, but one that needs to be told.

Yurttas' H-1 work visa expires in January and he will not be allowed to work if he remains in this country. His wife has a baby due a week after the visa expires, and for a time, they thought they would have to go back to Turkey before Lale Yurttas delivers her baby. Luckily, he recently found out that they can remain in the country on her visa for many more months before they may have to leave. But without the proper visa, he won't be able to work while he stays in the country.

Dr. Yurttas told me he would be allowed to stay in the country if the computer science department would work to upgrade his status from visiting professor. With the new status, he could apply for a green card and stay in the country indefinitely. Yet despite knowing of Yurttas' situation, the computer science department has been hesitant to ask the College of Engineering to begin the somewhat lengthy process to upgrade Yurttas' status.

In the past eight years of Yurttas' teaching, he has done an amazing job. He has taught 56 courses over those eight

years (seven per year) and has taught 15 different courses. According to Dr. Yurttas, as long as he's been here, only a handful of other computer science professors have taught more than a few different courses.

He told me he has always taught over 100 students a semester, usually around 150, teaching three or four sections per semester. And he teaches 300 and 400 level classes almost exclusively. But because of his visiting professor status, he is paid less than many other professors in the University who teach fewer classes.

Over a year ago, he informed the computer science department head, Richard Volz, that he could no longer work here if the department did not upgrade his status. Volz did not reply for several months about the issue. The issue was further delayed until November. Yurttas received a memo from the department that said by such a late date as November, it was really too late to do much, and the department would not try to help him out of his trouble.

One of the things holding Yurttas back from being given an upgraded status is his lack of publishing, Yurttas told me. Yet he has had several articles published over the past eight years, in addition to his heavy teaching workload.

Yurttas said he is losing because he tries to be a good teacher. Instead of trying to outdo other professors in the department, he concentrated on teaching his students. He says if given the chance, he will publish more than ever before. He doesn't mind keeping his same pay and his heavy workload, as long as they give him the upgraded status so he can have an income for his 11-year-old daughter and his future child.

If he must leave, he will be sorely

missed by his students and the department. He will be missed not only because he taught so many courses and is committed to involvement with graduate students, research projects and several committees, but also because he's a good teacher.

Just this Wednesday, the department head told him that they would try to do anything they could to save his job and keep him in the country. It is a late offer (let's hope it's not too late), and it remains to be seen whether they will follow through with their offer. With luck, the department and college will recognize the great service Yurttas has done for this school and start the process to get him an upgraded status. With support from students, faculty, the department, the college and the University, there is a good chance he may keep his job and stay in the country.

Yurttas is trying other means to try to delay his departure, but the only hope for his staying on a permanent basis is if he achieves an upgraded status from the College of Engineering.

Dr. Yurttas' story seems a product of our misguided attitude toward teaching versus research and publishing at this University and others. Yurttas showed me a quote of President Mobley's that said we must not forget that education and research are co-equal at this University. Yurttas said that despite the rhetoric, it was not the truth, definitely not in his case.

After hearing Dr. Yurttas' plight, I wonder if similar things are happening in this University in other departments. Dr. Yurttas' department was slow in responding to his pleas for help. The department needs him more than many other professors in the department, because of his teaching ability, but, according to Yurttas, the department did little to save him because of his lack of published work.

It is obvious that the Department of Computer Science, College of Engineering and the University need to change their attitudes. The computer science department, as well as other departments, need to have more interaction with their faculty and be more responsive to the faculty's needs. The College of Engineering and the University need to realize that we need to be as concerned with putting out quality students as we are with putting out quality journal articles.

If those attitudes about teaching versus research were different, Yurttas would be considered one of the top professors in the University, and he would not be in the trouble he is in now. The problems will not and can not be solved overnight, but with good professors like Dr. Yurttas at the University, there is always hope that quality education will continue. I and many other of his students hope he can remain teaching for a long time.

**Timm Doolen is a junior computer science major and a columnist for The Battalion.**

## Mail Call

### Matthew's drug column off base

EDITOR:

Another Matthew's column in Wednesday's *Battalion* (Legalization: A better way to wage war against drugs) was one of the most ridiculous essays I have ever read. It was like advising the government to make murder legal so we wouldn't have to spend time arresting murderers.

First of all, he said that criminals could be eliminated from the drug industry through legalization. The crime lords would love to be legal and still get away with murder. Do you think they will automatically become nice guys if selling drugs was legal? I doubt it.

One thing Mr. Matthew forgot was that drug users also become criminals, stealing or worse to obtain money to buy drugs. Legalizing drugs would not solve that problem. Besides, if drugs were legally sold in the United States, every government official would be a drug dealer. Think about that. What's wrong is wrong, legal or not.

Todd Primm '92

### Matthew's drug column right on target

EDITOR:

BRAVO! Your article on the legalization of drugs summarizes exactly what I feel about this issue. I'm so surprised to hear this from a fellow Aggie.

So many people simply scoff at the idea of legalization without seriously considering the reasons why. As you said, drugs will never be eliminated from our society and I firmly believe that legalization would not cause an increase in drug use.

Also, I think that crime, especially with young people, would so drastically go down that we wouldn't know what to do. Look at what happened in Colombia today — that could easily be the United States! We'll never get rid of drugs, crime, death and ravaged lives not only here, but other countries too (namely, the cocaine growing countries). But we can sure do something to reduce all these evils to a manageable level — and that's legalization. It won't happen until people get off this "prohibitive" kick and we get some legislators with guts. Come on, America, just say no to more idealistic dreaming. You know, the other day someone told me they heard that George Schultz was all for legalization...

Peter Pearson '92

### Faculty member example of good advisor

EDITOR:

I am writing in support of Wednesday's article criticizing Timm Doolen's article on academic advising. I am aware that there are problems with advising on our campus and that many people, both students and faculty, are painfully aware of these problems. However, I want to take this opportunity to say that at least one department at this University has an excellent advising program — the chemistry department.

The undergraduate advisor (yes, there's only one) in chemistry is Dr. John L. Hogg. He has been the undergraduate advisor since the summer of 1985. In 1988, he received an honor he well deserved: the Association of Former Students Distinguished Faculty Award for Student Relations.

Dr. Hogg exhibits his concern for students in many different ways. He takes snapshots of all chemistry majors as they come into the department and he learns each student's name. He puts together an undergraduate newsletter each month, in which he lets us know about scholarships and job opportunities as well as what's going on with others in our department. He shows his interest in us as total persons, not just as chemistry majors. Most importantly, Dr. Hogg's door is always open.

We in the chemistry department are fortunate to have such a dedicated person as Dr. Hogg for our advisor. Those who are not as fortunate should remember that a student/advisor relationship, like any other relationship, is a two-way street. You've got to make some effort in order to expect anything in return.

Christie Gunter '90

### What's in a name? A regent

EDITOR:

Good old-fashioned politics. That's right — log rolling, back-scratching politics. No, not in a smoke filled room in some seedy, dirty city; but right here in College Station.

Well, not actually in College Station, not in city hall or in a back room. Where then? Why no where else than the respected and hallowed chambers of the Texas A&M Board of Regents.

"What is this?" you may ask? While students busily went about their academic endeavors, hampered by a lack of parking and outrageous fees for normal items (like using a building), the Board of Regents has hurriedly hatched a plan to rename the entire campus after current and recently departed Regents.

Texas A&M has a practice of naming buildings after distinguished alumni, faculty and friends of the University. These people have proved themselves through years of service to be an invaluable asset to A&M. The decision to name a building is surely a difficult process, with many qualified and deserving candidates. Now, the regents have supplanted this traditional honor, with its own desire for recognition and egoistic needs.

Not that the board members so honored aren't deserving — they probably are. However, the principle involved here is what matters. The Board casts a deciding vote in the naming of buildings, and it seems highly improper that current or recently departed members should have an influence on their own selection as an honoree.

Most honored positions are given after both an illustrious career of dedicated service and after a significant time period has passed since the person was actively involved in this service.

I would certainly hope that we here at A&M (students, faculty, administrators and Regents) can rise above egoistic attitudes and avoid ethically compromising situations such as the current Board of Regents now finds itself in.

Grant W. Neeley '89

### Aggie Parents say 'Happy Holidays!'

EDITOR:

With finals, graduation and the holiday season upon us, we would like to take this opportunity to extend our best wishes to the students taking finals, our congratulations to the graduating seniors, and our hopes for a happy and safe holiday to each of you. God bless you and keep you; Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Mom and Dad Hubert  
1989-90 Aggie Parents of the Year

### Have an opinion? Express it!

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 classification, address and telephone number of the writer. All letters may be brought to 216 Reed McDonald, or sent to Campus Mail Stop 1111.

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