



The Battalion Editorial Board

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Time trials

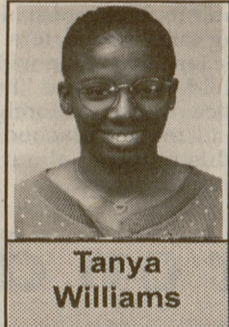
Has the extra 20 minutes between classes helped students out?

PRO



Brian Boney

CON



Tanya Williams

I remember way back in junior high school, when I had a quaint little three minutes to pass from class to class. Students balked at the administration

Ah, the tranquility of it all. A full 20 minutes to get from one class to another is one of the best things this University could have started this semester.

No longer must students literally run across the huge expanse we know as the Texas A&M campus to make it to their classes. They can adhere to a more leisurely pace, gingerly strolling to their next lecture or lab without fearing they will be late. They can stop for a minute or two to chat with a friend or classmate. They can pause briefly to notice the beauty of the campus. They actually have time to use the bathroom.

Yet, some students hate the new 20-minute break. They say it screws up their schedules. They say the meeting times, 10:20 a.m. for example, confuse them. They want to go back to the old, hurried system of 10 minutes between classes. They don't like having to sit for 20 minutes if they have two classes in the same building.

First of all, as college students, we should be able to figure out a time schedule even though the classes may not all start at the top of the hour.

Secondly, some of your fellow students really need the time.

Think of all the students who have physical education classes. With only a 10-minute break, they sometimes had to skip showers or sprint to make their next class. They had to sit through class sweaty, sticky and smelly. Those who had the misfortune of sitting next to them had to sit through class with them being sweaty, sticky and smelly.

Also, some faculty just don't get it. They think a 50-minute class means they can keep their students anywhere from 30 minutes to a full hour. They have no concept that their students must attend a second class immediately following the first. They have no concept that students are taking classes other than the one that faculty member teaches.

If I didn't have 20 minutes to make it to one of my classes, I'd be tardy everyday because the professor in the previous class continually keeps us three or four minutes late.

And on a personal note, I enjoy having time to spend talking to my friends. It's rather rude to converse during class, but with 20 minutes, I can talk about school, life and romance without feeling a huge burden to dash to my next class.

Think of the increase in tardies we would have if we went back to the 10-minute-break system. There are far too many as it is. They disrupt class, break everyone's concentration and interrupt the teacher. We certainly don't need more of them.

Give everyone a break — a 20-minute break. Life doesn't go by so fast that we need to speed to class.

because we thought we didn't have time to make it to class at a comfortable pace.

Granted, most of us were just walking from room 102 to room 103 right across the hall. What we were really complaining about was the fact that we didn't have time to lollygag in the hall and hold meaningless junior high conversations with our friends about the guy or girl we liked.

Reluctantly, the administration granted us whiny kids the luxury of a full five minutes to get from class to class.

With the addition of two minutes to our time between classes came an addition of approximately 30 minutes added to the end of our school day. Needless to say, the students balked once more.

The administration just laughed and told us to deal with it.

Now, we're in college and we've gotten what we asked for, 20 minutes to pass from class to class.

Most of the students feel that this was one of the most ingenious things that the administration could have employed.

But, others of us balk at this waste of valuable time.

Sure, it allows us to get to class at a time that is prescribed to us in the schedules, but if you notice, there are a great many of us that still seem to run late.

Those of you that consistently run late to class, even with 20 minutes to get there, it might be smart of you to consider attending a more compact university.

I think a number of questions can be raised about the need of 20 minutes to get to class, not to mention questions about the disadvantages of a full 20 minutes.

Have you ever wondered how many classes were destroyed just so that we could have 20 minutes to arrive to our class and sit?

The budget has already cut the number of sections available. Why can't we get our lazy tail ends to moving and get to class in 10 minutes?

Not only did they probably cut classes, they probably extended evening classes which is really a pain. I can say this because I have one.

For those of you that have a physical education class, you have the opportunity to plan your schedule before registering, allowing extra time afterwards for showering and changing clothes. If you can't help but schedule a class after athletics, let the person next to you in class deal with the sweat; you're not in class to snag a husband or wife anyway, right?

Deal with it!

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MARGULIES
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 NEW JERSEY



When more becomes less...

Generous politicians fail to address America's education crisis

Count on a politician . . . when you care enough to spend the very best.

My cute little statement, though of questionable grammatical accuracy, serves two very important purposes. First, it shamelessly mimics the slogan of a national greeting card company.

Secondly, it summarizes in a few words the perception in the halls of our various legislatures that one must be busily throwing money at a problem in order to prove one's concern about it. The more money, the more concern; no more money, no concern at all. In the lingo of these odd people, the question "How much have you spent on [the environment, the homeless, AIDS, etc.]" means the same thing as "What have you done for [the environment, the homeless, AIDS, etc.]" This is an expensive fallacy. It is also especially true in the area of education.

It is a well-known fact that the education of America's youth has been in steady decline. Hordes of researchers have done countless studies for endless numbers of commissions which all lend substantive support to this idea. Today's American students have not mastered the skills that their parents learned, and they cannot compete with students from other industrialized nations such as Japan and Germany.

Naturally, the conventional wisdom holds that our problem lies in funding for our nation's schools — namely that we are not spending enough. It is quite popular for politicians to lament the lack of money allocated to our institutions of learning and to assure their

constituents that they will reverse the downward trend in student achievement by spending more. In fact, this would amount to gross mismanagement of our tax dollars.

This spending has already increased greatly. According to Ralph Scott, author of a 1984 article on the education system, public funding for education increased 800 percent from 1957 to 1977. In the eighties, despite the Reagan reputation for crippling our domestic programs, Department of Education spending increased 12 percent in inflation-adjusted dollars between 1980 and 1989. Here in Texas, education budget increases amounted to 89 percent between 1970 and 1980, and 33 percent between 1980 and 1985, after adjustments for inflation.

The logic behind throwing this money around is utterly defied by the facts. The additional money failed to achieve the desired improvements. In Bill Norris' "School System Failing to Provide 'Bang for Bucks'", he assesses comments of the National Council on Competitiveness. "Its report says bluntly that despite record spending, America is getting a diminishing return on its investment in education."

A frequently cited measure of the performance of our schools is the use of average Scholastic Aptitude Test scores obtained by high school students each year. A look over these figures proves sobering. They show rapid and substantial drops in the early 1970's followed by a long period of further declines or near-stagnation.

It would not be unreasonable to ask where our money has gone and to what ends it has been spent. It has been spent on bureaucracy. It has been spent on refurbishing offices for administration and for counselors and for those who do not teach. It has been spent on AstroTurf and on new football stadiums. It has been spent on textbooks with shiny new covers and little else that is new in between them. It has even been stolen.

A Houston paper last Thursday reported that "investigators have uncovered 'a long pattern of misuse of public funds'" in the Houston Independent School District, according to superintendent Frank Petruziello. It seems that employees of HISD have been engaged in widespread abuses, including falsifying time sheets, misappropriating funds and stealing materials. The district was unable to maintain any oversight over its own resources. It is probable, however, that they will have little problem telling district residents of the need for a property tax increase sometime in the near future.

Just as important as what the money has been spent on is what the money has not been spent on. It has not been spent on hiring enough teachers to make meaningful improvements in teacher-pupil ratios. It has not been spent for the kind of teacher pay raises that will attract the best and the brightest to the profession and keep them there.

If there is anyone reading this that now expects to see written on this page the comprehensive prescription for our ailing public schools, some quick solution, look no further. It isn't here.

The problem likely involves a complex set of factors which others can more successfully pretend to understand. If, however, those in power can be made to realize that it is not for lack of a few dollars that the system suffers, perhaps those factors can be addressed. In the meantime, though, it would be the height of folly to measure our commitment to the cause by our property tax rates, and because of our delusions, unwittingly rob our students of the educations they deserve.

Loughman is a senior journalism major



Jason Loughman

Mail Call

Rape victim recalls pain

My sincerest thanks to Brian Boney for his exceptionally sensitive article "For Cindy," which accurately touches on the effects of rape on a woman's life. I know because I was raped just before spring break by an unknown assailant. Indeed, we do "throw the word 'rape' around casually"; we are all aware of what it is, but not necessarily what it means to a rape survivor and those in her community. Long after the outward "understanding" of others wears off, the crime lingers, as it will to an extent for a lifetime. I cannot adequately describe how a rape can shatter one's world — living with the fear of someone I never even saw but who is free to strike again; never feeling safe even in groups; disgust, anger, and humiliation at being violated; and, yes, utter disbelief at society's indifference.

As Boney points out, the rapist takes

something away from his "victim" that can never be regained and leaves in its place indescribable pain.

We all know it happens. But take it from me — rape doesn't happen only to those who "ask for it," it is not exclusive to women whose dates have had a little too much to drink, or to those who roam dark alleys alone in the middle of the night — RAPE DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE. (I was raped at 6 a.m. inside a church building in which I felt perfectly safe.) Admittedly, one can never fully relate to rape without actually experiencing it. However, one can acknowledge that its effects are devastating and try to respond with sensitivity toward the survivor, not to mention outrage at the rapist. The fact that it happens all too frequently does not justify a blasé attitude. Furthermore, the rapist should be persecuted, not the "victim." Rape happens not just to the "victim" but to all of us, and it should not be tolerated!

L.S. (name withheld at writer's request)
 Class of '92

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Letters must be signed and must include classification, address and a daytime phone number for verification purposes. Anonymous letters will not be published.

The Battalion reserves the right to edit all letters for length, style and accuracy. There is no guarantee that letters will appear.

Letters may be brought to 013 Reed McDonald, sent to Campus Mail Stop 1111 or can be faxed to 845-2647.

