

The Battalion

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"Serving Texas A&M Since 1893"

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Fraternity receives fine, sanctions

By REAGON CLAMON

Reporter of THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M chapter of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity was hit with a \$1,000 fine and other sanctions Thursday evening after responding to charges of racism in front of an eight member judicial board.

These sanctions still must be approved by University administrators including Dr. John J. Koldus, Texas A&M's vice president for student services.

The Texas A&M chapter of Sigma Alpha Epsilon was found guilty by the Interfraternity judicial board of violating section 72.1(e) of the Texas A&M University regulations—which states that a student organization must act in a manner that reflects the highest ideals of the University — by holding a "jungle" theme party where some members wore black makeup on their faces.

Mike Hebert, president of SAE, said he was satisfied with the board's conclusions.

"I think action definitely had to happen," Hebert said. "In all honesty, I do think this was fair."

Hebert said he was apprehensive about what the board could have done to the chapter, but he wanted the fraternity's side of the story to be told.

"We tried to go in and present just the facts," he said.

Clinton Sam, a member of C P Time Players, an African-American performing arts association, who testified at the hearing, felt the sanctions were adequate, but emphasized that

the issue wasn't closed.

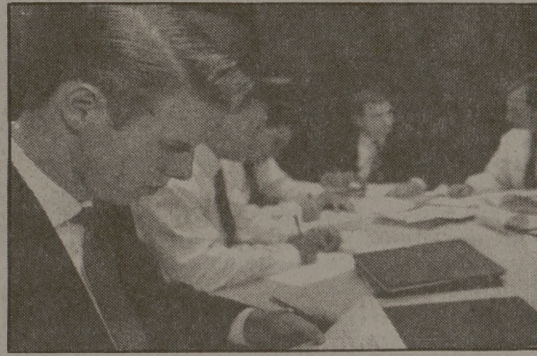
"The key is what is going to happen next," Sam said. "The idea is that they made the commitment to avoid other fraternities and sororities making the same mistake. It's a positive start."

The board recommended the fraternity be put on disciplinary probation until the end of the spring 1994 semester. A recommendation was also made to have the fraternity's social

"Not only will it change the behavior of all the Greek organizations, but hopefully a change in attitude will occur on the whole campus, so two or three months from now we're not back to square one."

— Dr. Mike Leese, coordinator of Greek affairs

parties with sororities, or "mixers," canceled for the spring and fall semesters of 1993. A review and reappraisal of the chapter's operating structure and pledge education program by the University's Greek adviser was requested. The board also proposed future IFC regulation of party themes for all fraternities and sororities. The board directed that the \$1,000 fine be put toward a seminar on cultural sensitivity, approved by the department of multicultural



DARRIN HILL/The Battalion

Interfraternity Council justice Todd Fisk, left, prepares for the hearing of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity Thursday night.

services and that all SAE executives and committee chairmen participate in the next University Awareness for Cultural Togetherness (U-ACT) retreat.

Dr. Mike Leese, coordinator of Greek affairs in the department of student activities, said the board's decision would help educate the University about cultural sensitivity. Leese said that after all of the events of the last four days, something positive had to happen.

"I hope when all is said and done, we come out ahead . . . and don't get a black eye from it," Leese said. "Obviously, there is a need for cultural awareness."

See IFC/Page 3

Students take steps to smooth tensions

By JULIE CHELKOWSKI

Reporter of THE BATTALION

While the Interfraternity Council Judicial Board was determining the fate of Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity last night, a diverse group of students waited outside the closed doors trying to smooth racial tensions that have bewildered generations of Americans.

About 45 minutes after the hearing began, representatives from African-American campus groups, members of SAE and other students found themselves in the midst of heated debates. They discussed racism — what constitutes it, why a party with a jungle theme is guilty of it, and how to solve it. The discussions lasted more than three hours, but could have gone on for many more.

Many of the participants said the informal debates were effective and opened doors to learning about multicultural diversity.

Jamie Webster, president of A&M's Interfraternity Council, said he was impressed by the talks, but was disappointed that

they could not happen more often.

"We've gotten more accomplished here tonight than we have in years, but no one will talk unless something blows up."

— Jamie Webster, president of A&M's IFC

blows up," he said. "If people would do this (discuss issues) without having it started by some incident, we wouldn't have this stuff. But when it's organized like a seminar, no one shows up because there is no fire to light it."

Joel Corvin, a member of Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity, said he thought the representatives were most productive when they broke off into the smaller groups to discuss the issue at hand.

"Before, we were standing against each other, we were all on the defensive," he said. "Once you talk to a person as an individual, you learn more about that person and see them as an equal."

A SAE member who requested to remain anonymous said they had decent discussions. He said they all had different views, but some issues were resolved.

Some participants, such as Candice Manning, vice president of Delta Sigma Theta, came away from the discussions with different views. She said that before she spoke to people with conflicting opinions, she thought that the SAE charter should be revoked.

But afterwards, she changed her mind.

"Now, I don't want them to get their chapter taken away," she said.

Almost everyone agreed that a lack of awareness was the main problem. Manning said people on campus should be educated on what offends others.

"There is not enough awareness on this campus, in general, about black issues," she said. "But I still don't think that's an excuse for behavior like this. We all know about racism, but we try to pretend that it doesn't happen here. If you want to wear the costumes because you appreciate that culture that's fine, but not when you start making a mockery of it."

Clinton Sam, a member of the C P Time Players, said costumes at the SAE jungle party did not bother him as much as its ethnic undertones.

"I'm not really offended because they're dressed in certain ways," he said. "I'm more offended because they used an ethnic category as a theme for a party. These things should come out. This organization should be used as an example — that doesn't make them a negative example."

Sam said any lack of knowledge on the part of the SAE members and actives concerning racism should "be shifted towards Texas A&M."

He said a proposed class focusing on multicultural issues could solve problems before they start. The class would be required for all students, in an effort to increase communication and racial tolerance in America on certain issues. However, Sam said A&M President William Mobley did not think the class was necessary.

"It's all a matter of what is important to Texas A&M," Sam said. "They (A&M) has to accelerate the process — you can't do it overnight."

Mobley said a multicultural class might not have prevented the incident. Problems involving racism can not be solved by a single class, he said, though leadership classes do offer a variety of learning experiences.

"We clearly have more work to do," Mobley said. "Our challenge is there and we have to take care of it. It's a matter of judgment, awareness and being competent of your actions."



DARRIN HILL/The Battalion

Joseph Gourrier, left, president of the local chapter of the NAACP, debates with David Stenfenagel, middle, a pledge of Sigma Alpha Epsilon, and Mike Panozzo, a member of SAE, while the Interfraternity Council Judicial Board met Thursday night.

Candidates raise issues in open forum

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RICHMOND, Va. — President Bush and Bill Clinton argued over taxes and character Thursday night in free-flowing debate with Ross Perot. Clinton said he wanted the wealthy to pay their "fair share" in higher taxes, while the president said he was opposed to any tax hikes.

Bush was more aggressive than he had been in Sunday night's first debate, criticizing Clinton for trying to come down on more than one side of an issue. "You can't turn the White House into the Waffle House," he said.

Clinton replied that he has been "disturbed by the tone and tenor of this campaign. I'm not not interested in his character. I'm interested in changing the character of the presidency."

The 90-minute debate at the University of Richmond was held under unprecedented groundrules in which members of a live audience asked questions.

The questioner suggested that the candidates were steered by "your political spin doctors," prompting Clinton and Perot to protest that the thoughts they uttered were their own, and not drilled into them by aides.

The candidates gave their remedies for the huge federal deficit, and Perot said scathingly that neither Republicans nor Democrats were willing to take blame for the nation's huge debt. "Somewhere out there is an extraterrestrial who's doing this to us," he said.

Rather than standing behind the customary wooden podiums, Bush, Clinton and Perot sat on chairs and were free to move about. They fielded questions from an audience of 209 independent voters, rather than from journalists. Carole Simpson of ABC News served as moderator for the 90-minute session.

The Arkansas governor was quick to take advan-

tage of the format, moving away from his chair and closer to the audience in responding to the first question.

Perot came out as feisty as ever, punctuating his points with hand gestures and references to the audience.

The tax and deficit discussion came early, when one questioner asked whether the three men would agree to not seek re-election if they could not wipe out the deficit in four years.

Clinton replied, "no, and I'll tell you why," explaining that eliminating the deficit would require tax increase and cuts in benefit programs so large that it could "make the economy worse." Instead, he said he would "bring it down by 50 percent and grow the economy." He said he would ask the "wealthy and foreign corporations to pay their fair share."

Bush did not address the question of not seeking re-election. But he swiftly questioned Clinton's proposals. "I don't see how you can grow the deficit down by raising taxes," he said. He said Clinton wants a \$150 billion tax hike and \$220 billion in more federal spending.

Bush called for a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution, a line item veto to permit him to bar individual projects and a plan to allow taxpayers to earmark a portion of their taxes to reduce the deficit.

Perot stepped in with his usual attack on both political parties. He said the nation's debt would rise by \$50 million by the time the debate had ended.

Perot said he planned to be a one-term president who wouldn't spend one minute of one day worrying about re-election. He said he wouldn't take any pay for the job.

Bush endorsed term limits that would restrict

See Debate/Page 3

B-CS political supporters agree on success of talk show format

By MARK EVANS

Staff Writer of THE BATTALION

The informal, flexible format of the presidential debate Thursday evening won the praises of local candidate supporters, but that's about the only thing they agreed upon.

"I thought Bill Clinton did his usual good job of hitting the issues while Bush once again skirted the issues," said Mike Brannon, a member of the Aggie Democrats debate team. "How can George Bush defend the worst economic recession since the Great Depression? He can't."

People perceive the economy as being worse than it really is, said Phil Meuret, president of the College Republicans. A recession is just part of the natural course of any economy, he said.

Meuret said he would have liked to have seen more time donated to the discussion of foreign policy.

"Clinton offers nothing different from the Carter administration," he said. "All of a sudden because you've had a recession in the economy people want to go

back to the Carter years."

Meanwhile, Ross Perot spends all of his time discussing the problems in America, but offers no solutions, Meuret said.

Lou Zaeske, a local leader of the Ross Perot petition drive, disagreed.

"It was clear to me that Ross Perot had the best answers and the best approach to things," he said. "He's going to get in there and work with the Congress to get them to stop bashing one another and start them working together, not as Democrats or Republicans, but as Americans."

Perot's responses to questions demonstrated a clear understanding of the issues facing the country, Zaeske said.

"The American people need to be told that they're going to have to make some sacrifices to turn this country around," he said. "Ross Perot just needs to keep on being Ross Perot and tell it like it is because that's what the American people want to hear."

Zaeske enjoyed the talk show-like format of the debate because

See Local/Page 3



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