

EDITORIALS

Setting things straight A&M heavily recruits minorities

While Texas A&M bristles under the magnifying glass of sensitive scrutiny, a strong record on minority recruitment and retention speaks for itself in defense against much unfounded criticism. Last week State Rep. Senfronia Thompson, D-Houston, sent a letter to President Mobley calling for his resignation so that he may be replaced by "someone with a sensitivity for the educational dynamics of the 21st century and a clearer vision of the New Texas." Unfortunately, in the drafting of this letter, the great advances made in minority representation at A&M since Mobley first took office have been largely ignored.

According to an Office of Planning and Institutional Analysis report, A&M has increased minority enrollment 89 percent since 1985. A&M leads the Southwest Conference in minority retention, with 63.6 percent of all African-American students and 56.1 percent of all Hispanic students graduating. Contrary to accusations in Rep. Thompson's letter, A&M does have a strong minority recruitment program run by the Office of Admissions and Counseling. A&M recruits minority students at Texas high schools and junior colleges and then provides support services for the students when they arrive. While A&M may have some distance to travel before achieving the goals of cultural diversity and multicultural understanding that define "world class" universities, statistical evidence proves that A&M is in fact the leader in minority recruitment and enrollment among Texas universities — and it is evidence that cannot be ignored regardless of one's elected office or position.

Corporate corruption Inadequate auditing permits abuse

As if legislators gobbling millions of dollars out of the public tax trough for pork-barrel spending was not bad enough, corporations have been cashing in on the great governmental graft giveaway. A lack of federal oversight of contracts given to businesses to perform services for the government has allowed many of these businesses to bill Uncle Sam for golfing, liquor, and vacations. Such billing is unauthorized, sometimes illegal, and certainly unethical. However, penalties for such behavior by corporations have been very light, often amounting to no more than a refund of the misappropriated funds to the government. Furthermore, while the number

of contracts awarded to private industries to take over government duties has increased, funding and staffing of federal offices which supervise such contracts has decreased, heightening the potential for abuse. The failure of the federal government to exercise increased vigilance in the face of unmitigated corporate greed does little to bolster the conservative argument that the money can be saved by transferring government tasks to the private sector. The days of \$900 toilet seats and \$400 hammers seem, sadly enough, far from over. Taxpayers deserve to have a more watchful eye kept focused on the ways in which their money is spent. They should accept no less.

Final exams: hazy shade of sanity Strange behavior accompanies hectic semester end

Imagine this scenario: you have the world's longest term paper due in two days. This would be the term paper for which you were supposed to have begun research in late September, completed a bibliography in October, and finished a rough draft by November. You remember that paper, right?

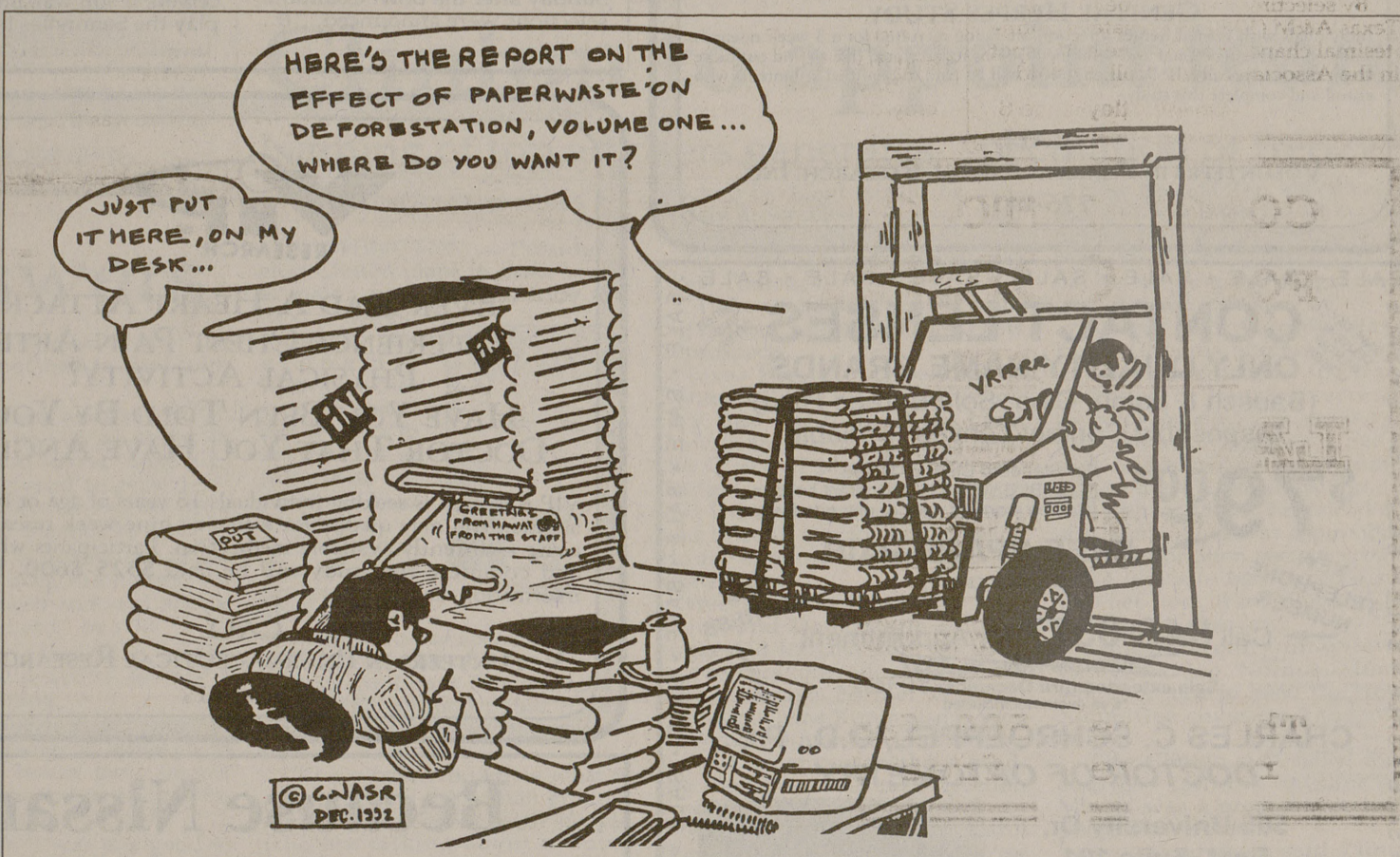


SHAWN RALSTON
Columnist

So, the paper is due in two days, and you have a pile of books that you are "reading" for it; unfortunately those books have slipped off your night stand, have hidden under piles of dirty clothes, and finally have made their way to limbo under your bed. You've been thinking that maybe now would be a good time to write an outline or something. Ah, the joys of semester's end. Or, for those of you who aren't writing term papers this semester, I know what you will be doing. You've been watching that chemistry or psychology book gather dust on your kitchen table for the past two months as you kept saying, "if I'd have just read it, I would've aced that last test." Now, after you've watched your average take ten-point dives after each consecutive exam, you're telling yourself that you'll catch up on all that reading and blow that final out the water for a last minute "A." Ah, the joys of finals. I also know what your house, dorm, or apartment will begin to look like. When you open the door, you'll notice piles of unread books and newspapers that have somehow arranged themselves into an excellent nesting place for relatively large rodents. You'll have one path cleared through the wreckage between desk, refrigerator and bed, but the rest of the house will be an uncharted territory of athletic socks and taco wrappers. One of the cockroaches who recently moved in will go down in cockroach history as the first explorer to negotiate the northwest passage between the bathroom sink and the refrigerator. You'll begin reading that biology book again, this time paying a little more attention to the parts on old beliefs about spontaneous generation of rats from old rags in corners, eying that pile of dish towels on the floor all the while. Then one day while you're digging around for your

favorite shirt in that pile of debris in the corner, you'll discover a cat, weakened and nearly suffocated from the clothes avalanche under which it had been pinned for the past three days. But, sadly, you won't be able to remember ever having owned a cat. Finally, you'll just pack a suitcase and live out of a bathroom on the fifth floor of the library — after all, it's cleaner. I also have a pretty good idea what you'll be eating and wearing in the near future. For this last week of school you'll be on the relatively nutritional steady diet of white bread, crunchy peanut butter and Diet Coke. But, next week, you'll probably swear off of solid food altogether and just exist on the nutrients you can leach from chewing tobacco or coffee grounds. Then, after that first final, you'll give yourself a little reward and recharge those drained little brain cells with all the pizza and beer your shrunken stomach can hold before they throw you out of Double Dave's. Or, maybe, the morning before your next final, you'll remember your mom's admonishing voice telling you to eat that oatmeal she made you before you took your SATs. You'll run by McDonald's and pick up a sausage, egg, and cheese biscuit for sustenance. People will begin to stare after about the fifth day wearing the same gray A&M sweats. Or, those jeans that are stuck to your body will start to give up little clouds of dust every time you sit down. Or, the worst case scenario, you'll hear someone in the row in front of you say just after you sit down beside them, "Hey, where did that disgusting mildew smell come from?" Then, finally, when you are so shaky from coffee or Viarmin that people are trying to check you into rehab because they're sure that you're in withdrawal; or, your hands are crippled up with carpal tunnel syndrome from typing four consecutive term papers in one 24-hour period, 67.5 pages in all; or, you are just so delirious from constant memorization of useless minutiae that you accidentally reproduce the entire ingredients list from your box of Courfit Chocula on your organic chemistry final (you'll get a "C," but the professor will be impressed nevertheless) then, it will be all over. Choirs of angels will drop from the sky singing Hallelujah, provided, of course, that you go to your church Christmas pageant. And, you will have survived another semester's finals. Good luck. Hope you live!

Ralston is a graduate student in English



MAIL CALL

Shrewd politics, but faulty reasoning

I must say that it was an absolutely brilliant political move for Rep. Wilson to bring brother Quanell X and "friends" with him. What a photo opportunity! Milk the movie, Malcolm X, for all you can get. Why else would he bring a racist to a forum about denouncing racism? I almost forgot. Brother Quanell X and the group he represents believe that black people can't be racist because that's a word created by a white man. I suppose we can't lie, cheat, steal, or manipulate either. What do his "friends" call what they believe in? For all of you who aren't here, you need to do your homework, because we have enough problems here without inviting more. They believe in a segregated society, not a multicultural one. They also believe that Christians are misguided fools. I call it discrimination. What do all of you Christians

that were carrying on in the audience with your "amens" and "that's rights" call it? Brother Quanell X was a very dynamic, captivating speaker, as is every representative of the Nation of Islam. They always have been. They are well rehearsed in priming their black audiences. This is why Rep. Wilson and many other black leaders use them. The lecture hasn't changed a bit, right down to the circumference of the earth. It still catches the audiences like it used to. I heard Wilson say that it is going to take all cultures working together to heal the sores of racism, yet I saw him taunt every white person that asked a question. And I saw him supporting his "friends" who believe in only one culture. Actions speak louder than words, Rep. Wilson. Those of you waiting for an apology, don't hold your breath! Brother Quanell X meant exactly what he said and Wilson meant to cut him off before he said any more. I'm tired of the political hypocrisies and half-truths. I'm especially tired of those who are supposed to be trying to represent my interests as an African-American doing such a half-assed job of it. We don't need the Wilsons and "friends" of this world to protect us. We, as young educated individuals, need to stop dancing to just any beat. Stop and listen to what the words mean. All of the words are important, not just those that sound good to us. If we listen to all of them we just might be

able to filter out those that keep this sore growing and help it to exist. Desiree Sabari-Lancaster Class of '93 Sports columnist ignored the facts The real disgrace to Texas A&M is not the Fightin' Texas Aggie Band, but K. Lee Davis. I thought that newspaper reporters were supposed to gather the facts and get both sides of the story. Davis, you feel that it is just fine to condemn an organization before asking some Aggies what happened, not t-sips. You also condemn the entire Aggie Band for the actions of seven. This is like me condemning the Batt for your asinine article, but I'm a good Ag, and would never do that. The seven members could have picked a better time to go back to the stands, but their act was not "disgraceful, without honor and cowardly." At least they did what they believed in. To this Aggie, they are no disgrace, you are. You also slammed some of our football players for dancing on the field in celebration after the game was over. It is obvious that you never played sports at an extremely competitive level. If you had you would understand the emotional high of beating the hell out of your rival school. They did not disgrace this fine University.

One other thing Davis — you failed to mention that the t-sip band came to our midnight yell, and played "Texas Fight." They do not have more class than we, when they come to provoke the Ags. The Aggie band is not a bunch of "idiots," but are the "Pulse of Aggieland." You have proven yourself to be the idiot by not getting all of the facts, thus disgracing the Batt and the student body of Texas A&M. Lisa Hammerbacher Class of '94 K. Lee Davis was second team all-region right tackle for his third-ranked 5A high school football team in 1983. —Editor Why stop at cutting subscriptions? Here are some more ways to put Texan money to use for Texans, to add to the list provided by Chris Cisneros in his Nov. 25 letter: (1) Carry out a survey of disciplines that have an unnatural proportion of foreigners, and cut funding to those programs as they are obviously not needed. Use the money to bring over our friends from San Antonio. (2) Fire the staff of International Student Services and dismantle the organization. After all, what true-blooded Texan has ever set foot on the third

floor of Bizzell? (3) Turn KAMU-FM into a country music station. Who needs that foreign-sounding music anyway? Give me Reba Mcintyre any day. (4) Cancel subscriptions to all newspapers except the Bryan-College Station Eagle. What business does a Texan have reading news written in foreign lands like New York and Washington? (5) No more foreign language course offerings. The money saved should be used to fund a scholarship for a student with a New York accent. After all, we do support foreign languages, you know. Mandar Jayawant Graduate Student Editorials appearing in The Battalion reflect the views of the opinion page staff and editor in chief only. They do not represent, in any way, the opinions of reporters, staff, or editors of other sections of the newspaper. Columns, guest columns, and Mail Call items express the opinions of the authors only. The Battalion encourages letters to the editor and will print as many as space allows in the Mail Call section. Letters must be 300 words or less and include author's name, Social Security number, class, and phone number. We reserve the right to edit letters for length, style, and accuracy. Letters should be addressed to: The Battalion - Mail Call 013 Reed McDonald (Mail stop 1111) Texas A&M University College Station, TX 77843