

## THE UNSCALPABLES



## EDITORIALS

### Promises, promises Campaign's over, so is change?

With President-elect Clinton's inauguration looming in the headlines, great attention will be paid to the promises made during the campaign.

Unfortunately, some of the issues which proved most important to the electorate already seem to be in danger of being compromised. The meteoric rise of Ross Perot spotlighted the key issue in this year's election: the budget deficit. President-elect Clinton promised to achieve significant reductions in the deficit by the end of his term.

Even before his inauguration, Clinton and his advisers have begun to broadcast disturbing signals that indicate doubts about their

ability — or desire — to accomplish such reductions. At the same time, Clinton also seems to be waffling on his promise to enact a tax cut for the middle class.

Campaign promises are campaign promises, and claims that cannot be delivered will always be made in the heat of the fray. However, President-elect Clinton portrayed himself as a candidate of change during the campaign. It is incredibly important that he stick to the spirit of these promises — even if he is unable to implement every detail.

The American people voted for a change, and they deserve to see the valid expression of their wishes.

### Ticket scalping laws Cost too high for state taxpayers

State Rep. Betty Denton, D-Waco, has proposed legislation prohibiting so-called ticket scalping. The proposed legislation is a bad idea.

Aside from the fact that our state legislators need to attend to more pressing matters, the proposed legislation would likely exacerbate problems. Sanctions against ticket scalpers would increase the cost of tickets because the risk of apprehension would be added to the final ticket cost. No one is being forced to buy scalped tickets, which makes it unlikely that the costs of enforcing anti-scalping laws are justified.

Questions regarding the perpetrators of this supposed crime also arise: Who will be punished? The scalper who would have otherwise been left with a worthless ticket because of conflicting engagements? Or the event-goer who may not have planned ahead or somehow missed out on buying tickets? Sellers can recoup the cost of their tick-

ets; latecomers can attend the event.

Granted, a number of people earn a substantial income from purchasing blocks of premium tickets and then selling them at 200 to 300 percent increases on the night of the event. But this legislation does not cover ticket brokers who are legally able to buy up blocks of tickets over the telephone lines. Such groups act as ticket agents for those who can afford to pay high prices but cannot afford to spend the time waiting in long lines.

Some concert halls and arenas have already taken measures to prohibit on-site scalping by staffing the area with local law enforcement officials. Allowing the entertainment industry and city and county agencies to enforce anti-scalping measures in similar manners if they so choose proves much more efficient and effective than burdening the state with yet another toothless law.

GUEST COLUMNIST

ROBERT HONIGMAN

As sort of a hobby, I've collected 10 common paradoxes in the university.

1. We can't find enough qualified African-Americans to recruit to our campus, but somehow our coaches always manage to recruit qualified African-Americans who are also outstanding athletes. We can't explain how.
2. The majority of our students are happy with the way we run things. But we can't have majority rule in the university because students, by definition, don't know what's good for them.
3. When students question our decisions, we tell them we are operating the university for their benefit. But when students are unhappy, we tell them that the university doesn't exist for them.
4. We hire the finest research faculty in the world for our students. But for some reason, the more famous the faculty are, the less contact they

want with the students.

5. Students already have enough power as consumers to determine who shall teach and what shall be taught. For some reason, however, the most popular teachers never get tenure, and the most popular courses are discontinued.
6. We can't allow students to select our faculty because the students would be fleeced by charlatans offering glamour and entertainment without educational substance. But since our students are attracted to our campus by our professors, they will just have to take our word for it that, "We, the faculty and administrators, are not charlatans."
7. We tell students that they must grow up and accept responsibility for their own education while they are at the university. Then we tell students that they are not competent to sit on committees that select their courses, curriculum and professors.
8. Academic freedom means that no one can dictate to faculty what research projects they must undertake. But by sheer coincidence, our faculty want to research just what the federal sponsors want them to research.
9. The university is training the future leaders of a democratic society. But for some reason our

graduates want to rule without being elected.

10. The American university is the world's foremost institution of higher education. But for reasons we can't explain, we have no one on our staff whom we can identify as an educator — i.e., someone who is responsible to students alone.

The above paradoxes illustrate an institution that does not know itself. All hierarchical institutions operate best in ignorance.

The university has sort of a knee-jerk regard for the truth that runs approximately as follows: "We try so hard to stay ahead of our competitors, and we invest so much in trying to win public approval that anything negative has to be denied, hushed up or ignored if we are to keep our place in national rankings."

The criteria of policy is not truthfulness or service, but success and survival. Of course the modern university is a common garden variety of institution — it tries to gain as much from its environment in return for as little as possible. But what can never be admitted, even at 3 a.m., is that students are a part of that environment. Think of it — the world's greatest experts on everything populate the university. Could they help you if they wanted to? Probably. It's just that everyone is powerless.

Lack of power to meet human needs is not an accident. The deepest and most tragic paradox in the modern university is that to succeed as an institution, no one must think beyond his or her narrow concerns or feel anything for others. Students must be numb. Faculty must be overspecialized. And leadership must be obsessed with naive boosterism. It is essential that everyone must believe the official lies. The survival and success of the institution come ahead of all other concerns.

In other words, paradox as it may be, the modern university succeeds by becoming stupid.

Honigman is an attorney from Birmingham, Mich. He has recently completed a book entitled, "The Unconscious University and the Destruction of the Student Community in America."

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## College scenes, 'welfare queens' Government redistribution offers cash crops for all

This is a pretty conservative university. If you listen to conversations between students on campus, most of the comments that you'll hear have a fair amount of rightward lean to them. I tend to agree with the gist of most of these comments, but every time that I hear someone gripe about "people that would take welfare," or "welfare queens," I think about a story I once heard.



DAVID BROOKS  
Columnist

This story was about a guy named Joe. Joe graduated from high school and sat down to decide what he wanted to do with his life. He was a bright kid, and he had a lot of options. However, only one choice really stood out from the beginning: Joe decided that he wanted to grow himself a money tree. There were lots of advantages to growing such a tree. For one thing, money trees were very prestigious. If you had one, you were assumed to possess certain intelligence, skills, and abilities that placed you in the upper half of society. At the same time, the money tree obviously provided a means to an income.

There were some caveats that Joe had to consider when making the decision to grow his money tree. Each tree took four or five years to mature. If you wanted to grow a tree, you had to perform all the necessary labor yourself. The labor itself was intensive, at least during the growing season, September through May. The job involved several hours of work each day and considerable preparation each night. Once the tree was grown, only the owner could reap the harvest: money trees were owner-specific. Finally, growing a money tree took a considerable monetary investment.

After he had made his decision to grow a money tree, Joe had to make one further choice: what kind of tree to grow. There were all kinds of trees — ones with burnt-orange leaves, or crimson leaves, or blue and white leaves. Each type of tree had different advantages and disadvantages. Some trees cost much more to grow, but produced more money when they matured. Some cost less, but produced money at a slower rate.

The choice really wasn't very difficult for Joe. His grandfather and both of his parents had grown a particular type of

tree. Joe loved everything about this tree, from its maroon and white leaves on down. However, Joe's decision became even easier when he discovered an amazing fact: If he decided to grow the tree of his choice, the state government would pay for over half the cost of growing it. When he first made this discovery, Joe was amazed, but it was true: Another type of tree of equal quality would cost more than twice as much. Once this fact became clear, it didn't make much sense to choose any other tree.

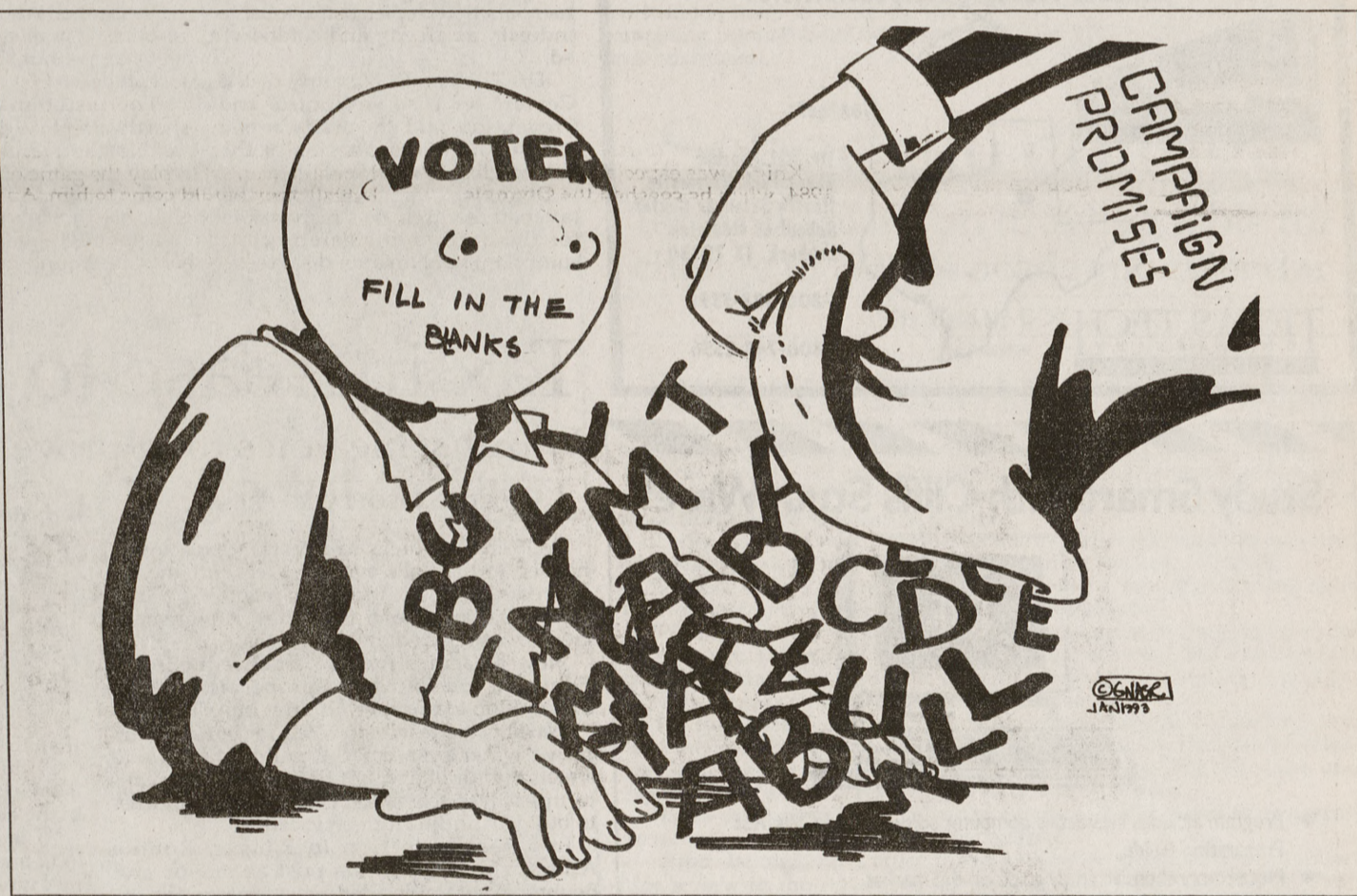
As is probably obvious by now, Joe's money tree was a college diploma. There are a lot more considerations involved with a college education than just money, but money — or future prosperity — is by far the most compelling reason that most people attend college. When a state government funds a university, this support is a plain and simple redistribution of income from one group of people to another. In this case, the redistribution is from families that do not have members attending college to those who do. What we usually think of as "welfare" is just a redistribution from those with higher incomes to those with lower incomes.

Various arguments can be made supporting the state funding of universities. College graduates increase the gross national product with their expanded productivity, but each graduate reaps the benefits of that increase in the form of salary and other compensations.

Other arguments can be made concerning the positive external benefits of state universities. For example, such universities produce a well-educated work force that is already located within the state. However, these arguments only hold water if college education would not exist within a state without government funding — which is obviously not true in Texas, at least.

Personally, I am in favor of state funding for higher education, but I question whether the average Aggie recognizes the extent to which they are subsidized by the state. As far as I am concerned, I feel that enough of my income is redistributed through programs that provide no benefit to me, so I don't mind some government pork coming my way. However, it does seem important to recognize the fact that all of us Aggies are feeding at the government trough like everyone else — even the "welfare queens."

Brooks is a senior economics major.



## Attorney explores paradoxes of the university system Institutions of higher learning succeed in becoming stupid, commit intellectual suicide