



Taking sides:

Should Texas raise tuition rates for students with more than 158 hours?



ROBERT VASQUEZ
Columnist

The Texas legislature is considering a bill which would raise tuition costs for students who accumulate more than 158 credit hours without earning a degree. The bill is designed to encourage students to graduate in a timely manner and to prevent the waste of precious tax money which subsidizes

A proposed Texas House bill that would require undergraduate students who have amassed 158 or more college credit hours to pay out-of-state tuition rate at Texas schools will become an intrusive and potentially disastrous burden on many citizens of this state.

Though 158 hours might seem to be extreme, the load is easily obtainable, and the tuition hike would hit as many as 1,000 Aggies in the current senior class.

The only thing that the bill would accomplish would be to drive students from the rolls of state universities. The earning power of an individual with a college education far outstrips that of someone with no degree and that translates directly into college graduates making better taxpayers. The small earnings that could come from higher tuition rates would be false profit as the state forfeits the right to tax people with much higher future incomes.

One has to doubt whether state legislators have the temperament to act on the 158 hour limit at the same time that government seems to be infringing on the rights and liberties of its citizens more than anytime in the last decade.

A dangerous precedent will be set if the state is allowed to intrude on the private choices that an individual makes in pursuing an education.

While getting rid of some students may fall under someone's interpretation of the "public good," how long will it be before excluding larger blocs of students falls under the same political catchword?

The state would be better served if legislators would come up with a solution to the higher education budget debacle instead of engaging in political grandstanding against a small and unorganized faction of young Texans.

A friend of mine went over the 158 hour limit when he decided that he did not want to be an engineer for the rest of his life. After completing over 175 hours, he graduated and is today a doctoral candidate in social psychology at Northwestern University.

Supposedly he would have fallen under an exemption of the 158 hour limit because he had changed colleges, and many such exemptions would apply, but do any of us want to leave our financial fates up to a bureaucrat in an office tower? And do any of us need the pursuit of a college degree to be any more confusing or time consuming than it already is?

As for assertions that "career" students are taking up space that could be used by someone else, well, that dog won't hunt, as a certain governor likes to say. No citizen of the state of Texas can be excluded from attending a state university as long as he or she meets the entrance requirements of that institution.

Davis is a senior journalism major, who is not currently enrolled.



K. LEE DAVIS
Guest Columnist

Touch that parking spot and DIE

Students risk life and limb for paltry parking privilege

I'll try to be brief and get straight to the point. There are three unavoidable evils in life: death, taxes and parking. Now, death doesn't seem so bad when compared to other things, like finals week and trips to t.u. And taxes don't scare me because Clinton is going to tax only the rich, which leaves me way, way, WAY out of the picture. Yeah, I wish. But parking... Well, parking on this campus is like all three rolled into one. It taxes your nerves until you're either ready to die, or you at least want to kill someone.

Don't get me wrong. I am grateful that parking has been supplied for students who don't mind rising at three each morning and rushing to school in time to fight thousands of other drivers who think they're Mario Andretti. Of course, these Mario Andretti wannabes have more lead in their feet and more of a mission to kill as many people as possible without actually looking at their victims. But it's the fact that those sprawling parking lots — which cover more acreage than most northeastern states — are so far from our classrooms.

This means that students must not only pack a lunch, but they must also bring rain gear, matches, and a bottle for sending messages, should they get lost and end up on the shore of some uncharted desert isle.

It can happen. Just wait for the rain. Have you seen the size of the puddles that form in those parking lots? They don't call 'em "fish lot" and "mud lot" for nothing. You may not know this, but many of those puddles are maintained and protected by the National Parks and Wildlife Agency. We should be honored. Not many schools are located in the middle of a rainforest.

Given our unique meteorological and oceanographic circumstances, the engineers who designed the parking lots have prepared for such inclement weather — fearfully known as "monsoon season" on less hardy continents. Yes, rain is welcome on our parking lots, which are strategically engineered to form the shape of a bowl in order to catch as much water as possible without actually letting it escape until summer — when the sun burns



ROBERT VASQUEZ
Columnist

all surface water into a steam which rises slowly and then hovers at just below armpit level.

There's really no reason to be afraid of these puddles. They're actually quite safe when the tide is out, and most are manned by experienced lifeguards who have certificates validating entire minutes of training in life-saving techniques.

You can avoid most puddles simply by watching for the proper signs, which are big and yellow and say something like "Pedestrian" or "Crosswalk." In case you can't read — having transferred from that little school in Austin — just watch the road for broad, white lines painted across the pavement. These lines are placed there for your safety and usually indicate the more dangerous flood zones in your area.

Parking in the rain, however, is nowhere near as frustrating as encountering the demons that lie in wait for a space at the other end of the parking lot.

What I'm about to describe to you is heinous. All children should leave the room. I'm convinced that the perpetrators of this crime must be longhorns because I know that no true Aggie would do this. On more than one occasion, after sitting patiently for countless hours in the BLARING, HOT SUN, waiting for a space, someone has actually — close your eyes if you have a weak stomach — STOLEN MY PARKING SPACE.

OK, Jeffrey Dahmer deserves to die. And, yes, Charles Manson deserves to die. But these people who dart into my space — no, my name isn't on it, YOU ID-IOT, but I have waited, since before sunrise, for that parking space — deserve a fate far worse than death; say, maybe like being forced to watch twelve straight hours of Beverly Hills 90210, or being forced to look at my picture twice in one day.

How these people feel safe to leave their cars — with such nice paint jobs — in a space which, by divine order, does not belong to them, I will never know. No, I don't scratch their eyes out. No, I don't even scratch their paint. I just sit there gnashing my teeth wondering how Aggies can do this to each other.

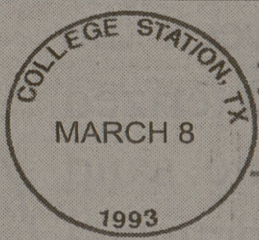
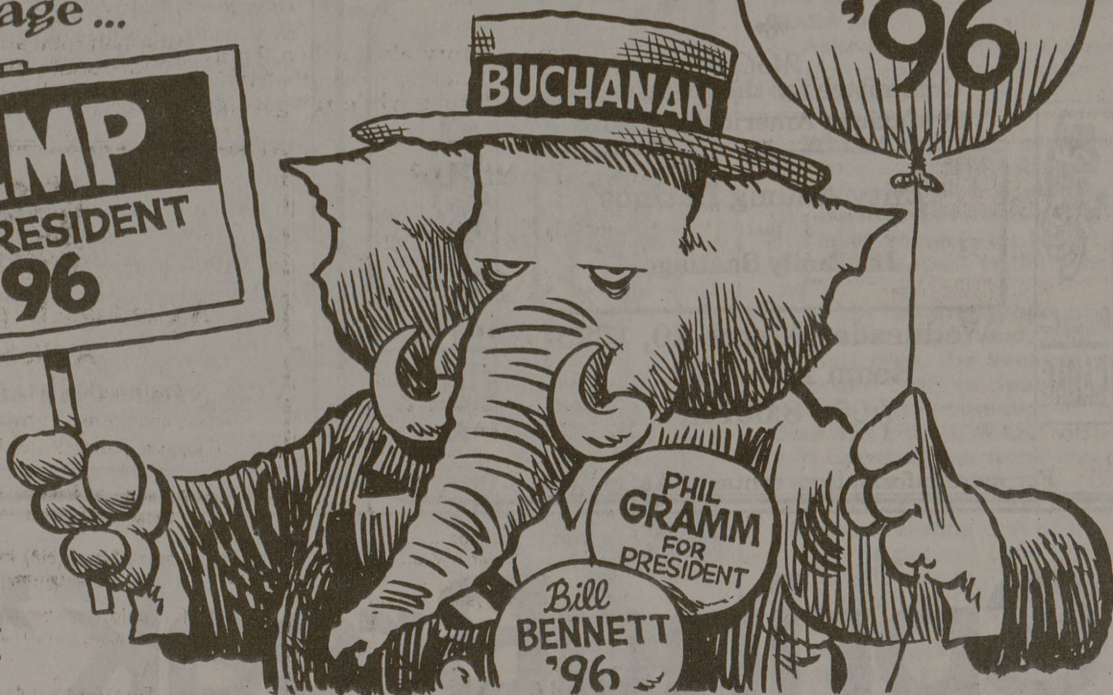
Which brings me to my point. Don't steal parking spaces. It's just not right.

Vasquez is a senior journalism major.

...and now, the Republican response to President Clinton's economic message ...



MARGULIES
©1993 THE RECORD
NEW JERSEY



MAIL CALL

International Week, national rivalries

Originally I had the intention of writing an upbeat, hospitable article about the recent International Week at MSC. Unfortunately, the current political fiasco that is occurring between the Palestinians and Israelis also appears to exist at A&M.

The Israelis have the keen ability to manipulate and distort every legitimate and worthy cause as they have manipulated and distorted the Palestinian homeland with their bulldozers. They seem to believe that their right of passage given to them in 1948 also applies to every situation they deem necessary to apply it to in this country.

As they have made a mockery out of the peace conference, they have reduced the International Week to a political forum where they can shovel their propaganda.

It all started with the radical and terrorizing attitude that they exhibited by initiating a complaint about the Palestin-

ian map being identical to the map of "The Occupied Land of Palestine," now known as Israel. However, with A&M students becoming more aware of the Israeli intentions, they wholeheartedly support the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to represent their country during the International Week.

Failing to get their complaint noticed, the Israeli students tried to provoke us by attempting to force us out of the International Week theater — similar to the way they forced out of the Palestinian people of their homeland.

As a Palestinian hoping always for peace and freedom through justice, I feel very sad to know that this self-serving behavior is the nature of the Israeli club at A&M. However, the Palestinians' forgiving nature and sportsmanship, for which we were complimented by visitors, participating countries and above all the International Student Services, fueled our minds to continue our participation the next day.

Esam T. Kharbat
Graduate Student

Ecosystem approach is best for our health

I am a little concerned with how uninformed people are about our environment. A lot of people do not think where it all goes.

When you throw something away, do you wonder where it will end up? Chances are it is going to end up in someone's water or food.

Trash has a way of showing up in our oceans and in our air when it's incinerated.

When people like Bruce Babbitt stand up to protect our natural resources, we should applaud him and not say that we are pleased with status quo.

Side effects of protecting the ecosystem will be tremendous, but not in a negative way as the Feb. 25 editorial suggested ("Broader act could make big trouble").

Indeed there are always two sides to every coin, but not in this case. Everyone needs to wake up and understand that our health relies on a clean and safe ecosystem.

One doesn't have to live in Tennessee like Al Gore to know that there are health hazards in the air. We can't silence people who care about our environment because that would be ignorant and uneducated.

Sandra Beck
Class of '94

Editorials appearing in The Battalion reflect the views of the editorial board only. They do not necessarily reflect the opinions of other Battalion staff members, the Texas A&M student body, regents, administration, faculty or staff.

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 the author's name, class, and phone number.

Due to space restrictions, guest columns will not be accepted unless the author contacts the opinion page for prior approval before submitting columns.

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