

THE BATTALION Editorial Board

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Total Quality Management hits A&M University looks to place emphasis on caliber of service

With the recent passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement through Congress, there has been a lot of discussion about America's ability to compete successfully in the world market.



ELIOT WILLIAMS
Columnist

Regardless of your feelings about NAFTA, the fact remains that it is here to stay. In light of this fact, it's important to examine how America will vie in the new system.

Post-World War II Japan was in shambles. The few businesses that existed were devoted to the war effort, and any products that Japan did ship to the rest of the world after the war were very cheap and notoriously awful. Beaten and floundering, Japanese officials sought help in rebuilding their economy. The man they turned to was W. Edwards Deming.

Deming brought to Japan a new paradigm for management. Called Total Quality Management, or TQM, the Deming method emphasizes quality rather than price.

"Quality," according to Deming, "has no meaning except as defined by the desires and needs of the customer."

TQM is more than just doing things right; it is doing the right things. Managers must know what the customers want and what they value, then use this knowledge to build a successful system to produce that product or service.

It doesn't take a business major to realize how successful Deming's model was in trans-

forming Japan. Today, Japan rules the electronics industry. Sony, Magnavox and Toshiba are just a few of the companies that have basically driven America out of the industry.

Some argue that Japan's success is due to their cutthroat pricing in America, but — all nationalism aside and given the choice — who wouldn't pick a Japanese stereo over an American one?

This dichotomy is changing. American business are realizing Deming was right. Consumers in today's market are shopping for quality, not the lowest price. More and more American companies are adopting TQM and reaping the rewards.

"The track record of these companies [that have adopted TQM] speaks for itself," Business Credit magazine reported this May. "A higher level of customer satisfaction, a reduction in the cost of making and distributing products, and more employee participation as well as increased cooperation and gratification are just a few of the byproducts of TQM."

It appears that TQM is the wave of the future, and Texas A&M is joining the rush to implement the new paradigm.

The campus program started with the establishment of the quality council. This council consists of A&M's president, vice president, executive director of strategic planning and two TQM facilitators who spend a majority of their time helping any organization on campus adopt the Deming model.

Mary Miller, assistant vice president for finance and administration and one of the two co-facilitators on campus says the program is "still gearing up," but already many of the Academic Colleges, the Physical Plant, Food Services and PTIS have begun studying how to implement the new management style.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of TQM on campus is the Memorial Student Center's student run Quality Council. This organization is devoted to adapting the principals of quality management to the MSC.

The MSC surveyed its structure and highlighted three problem areas. The council is now trying to adopt the model to such areas as program review, training and transitions, and MSC structure as a whole.

Jennifer Green, facilitator and vice president of continuing improvement, says the new system is focusing on "empowering students and offering more student development," but warns "it is difficult to change something [as large as the MSC] overnight."

The mere existence of the quality council is a great idea. It will offer students at A&M an opportunity to learn about TQM and see how it can be implemented.

At a university which claims to produce world class scholars, certainly TQM stands out as an extremely important part of that education. It is also very comforting to see the administration adopting the new system.

Although Mary Miller warns that adopting Total Quality Management "takes a lot of patience because you can work a very long time before you can see any results," it is certainly a great relief to know that we are beginning to focus on quality.

As the concept of quality becomes a part of our lives here at A&M, we will be able to take that understanding into the work force and use it to propel American business far ahead in the world economy.

Eliot Williams is a sophomore industrial engineering student



EDITORIAL

Respect the dead Keep Elephant Walk solemn

Upperclassmen participating in Elephant Walk tomorrow must keep the Spirit of Aggie in mind and prevent the violence and vandalism that have marred the event. Don't let mud and rocks trash the tradition.

One of the Corps of Cadets "campusologies" defines the Elephant Walk tradition.

"Before the Bonfire each year, the seniors gather in front

of the flagpole on Military Walk and wander aimlessly about the campus like old elephants about to die. This symbolizes the fact that the seniors will graduate the following spring and will be of no further use to the Twelfth Man."

The original solemn ritual has given way to an annual event in which juniors harass the dying senior "elephants" with shaving cream, water, eggs and mud. Extensive damage to landscaping and buildings — along with numerous injuries to students — is a common occurrence at recent Elephant Walks.

Students, advisors and organizers for the event are working to avoid a repeat of the damage this year. If students cannot restore some solemnity to the tradition, they endanger the future of Elephant Walk.

Elephants and juniors alike should be responsible for themselves and their classmates. Don't try to kill each other. Remember, the traditions exist to promote unity and spirit, not civil war.

This special tradition is an important part of Aggie life. Students should think of its purpose; to offer the seniors a chance to join together and remember

old times. The tradition deserves respect as part of the Twelfth Man tradition.

Every year, Texas A&M administrators ask students to clean up the E-Walk activities. The 1992 Elephant Walk was a step in the right direction. The campus and students suffered little damage compared to previous years.

Make a difference this year and keep the campus clean. Don't let Elephant Walk die with this year's zips.



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

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The Battalion encourages letters to the editor and will print as many as space allows. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class, and phone number.

We reserve the right to edit letters and guest columns for length, style, and accuracy.

Contact the opinion editor for information on submitting guest columns.

Address letters to:
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Service fraternity strives to make community a better place

In a world where so many things are falling apart and going wrong and need urgently to be addressed, we often overlook the positive things that are still being done.



TRACEY JONES
Columnist

We tend to become so enmeshed in the bad that is so plentiful and easy to see, that the few and far-between positive goods often escape our attention. I am very guilty of this myself.

Some young men challenged me (and justifiably so) to highlight some of the positive things that go on in the world in general and the black community in particular.

One of those good things is the history of humane deeds of young men in the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity. A well-educated, vehement social and religious activist was once inducted into the organization

at Morehouse College. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the fraternity's most distinguished member, lived his life in the true spirit of the fraternity: brotherhood, scholarship, leadership and service.

The concept of brotherhood in this organization transcends the immediate aspect of just its members. "Brotherhood" encompasses all races of people, whether rich or poor, and strives for the peaceful harmony of all those races residing together.

The men of Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity carry on the tradition today of giving back to the community. They wish to foster self-respect and determination in young blacks.

The fraternity was created in 1906 at Cornell University by seven young men to combat the racial prejudice on that campus. This close bond would act as a support group to its members and at the same time encourage maintaining high academic achievement and social progress. The Texas A&M University Pi Omicron chapter, instituted in 1985, acts in the same upstanding capacity as its forefathers.

Since its inception, the group has created programs that allow its members to

change and grow with the volatile American society.

For example, a program at the forefront of the social unrest in many black communities is Project Alpha. This nationwide project educates young black males about their roles and responsibilities in preventing unwanted pregnancies.

This is a highly significant program since black teens are disproportionately

represented in teenage pregnancy rates and as welfare recipients. Furthermore, an active alliance with the Boy Scouts of America offers opportunities for the fraternity to reach and help develop self-confidence and pride in many more young men.

Stepping is also an intricate part of fraternity and sorority life. Each fraternity

has its own style of dance, even though this practice stems from the African culture of old. The Alphas' style of stepping is deeply rooted in African chants and tribal dances.

Another program that constitutes a large part of the members' time is the "Go to High School, Go to College" program. This project, which takes place every October, brings in 12- to 18-year-olds to the campus to take active parts in various workshops. These workshops include instruction in such areas as goal-setting and constructive problem solving methods.

The Pi Omicron chapter also serves in political capacity, conducting voter registration campaigns for the black community. A "Voteless People is a Hopeless People" attempts to convey to blacks the importance of the vote in changing social circumstances.

Black representation in polls have slacked markedly, especially in communities where the drastically poor and uneducated reside. It is important that people living in a democratic society participate in its processes in order to shape and guide policies that best work to their benefit.

Special projects unique to the fraternity include the Miss Black and Gold Scholarship pageant. Ten young women are selected during each fall semester to compete in talent events for three scholarships totaling \$900. This forum allows each participant to present particular areas of their multi-faceted personalities.

Miss Black and Gold is incorporated into the ideals of the fraternity, serving in service capacities, and creating and implementing innovative service projects.

The fraternity also encourages its academically outstanding undergraduate young men and women by picking up membership costs of the major collegiate honor societies of Alpha Kappa Mu, Alpha Chi, Tau Beta Pi, Phi Kappa Phi and Phi Beta Kappa.

The fraternity also works in conjunction with such notable non-profit organizations as the American Cancer Society, the Sickle Cell Anemia Foundation, the United Way, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and the American Heart Association. These young men give valuable time and effort as well as finances to these human causes in the true spirit of what the fraternity was based upon.

Controversial issues are the most challenging to address in a writing class such as English 104. The challenge came in rationally stating (and at times defending) one's position. Current events cannot be "silenced."

One cannot discuss the present if the reality is ignored, and certainly current events cannot be written about if they are not acknowledged.

Joy Castro's English 104 class (spring 1993)

Stephanie Chenault
Class of '96

Accompanied by eight signatures

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