

# Grade policy for repeated courses needs changing

On March 9, the Student Senate will vote on Bill 94(F) 23 — the "Course Repetition/Grade Replacement" bill. As the author of the bill, I would like to explain some of its main points to the A&M student body.

**ERIN FITZGERALD**  
GUEST COLUMNIST

Currently, if a student retakes a class, the grades from both classes are averaged into that student's grade point ratio.

For example, if you take a class and receive a "D" and then retake it and receive a "B," both grades will be averaged together, giving you a "C." The bill proposes that this policy be changed so that when a student retakes a course, only the grade of the last attempt will be used for computing the GPR. If a student decides to or must repeat a course, then they will be agreeing to give up the grade received the first time under all circumstances.

In other words, a student will run the risk of having a lower grade computed into their GPR if they do not receive a better grade the next time.

Most grades will still remain on the transcript; only an "R" will be placed next to the previous attempts.

Also, a "Q" will not replace a previous grade received so that students will not be able to abuse the system by Q-dropping a course to get out of a bad

grade being averaged into their GPR.

In a 1992 study on grading policies conducted by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, 65% of the 1,601 schools responding either use the grade of the last attempt or the highest grade for computing student GPRs. State representative Kubiak has authored House Bill 31, which calls for all Texas schools to use one of these two systems, but the bill has yet to be voted on.

A&M's current grading system is not consistent with their definition of what grades represent.

The 1994-95 Undergraduate Catalog states that grades are "an indication of the proficiency of their endeavors," and that "students attend a college or university to extend their education."

Averaging grades is a misrepresentation of the amount of knowledge a student has learned by the time of their graduation.

This bill was written with the idea that students retake courses to learn material they formerly did not understand, not to inflate their GPR. If the bill was written purely to inflate GPRs, then the grades from the previous attempts would not be left on the transcript.

When an employer or graduate school looks at an A&M transcript, the GPR is not even on there. Therefore, if the policy is changed, a student who fails classes and has to repeat them will not have an

edge over someone who received the same grade the first time around.

If grades represent the amount of knowledge a student acquires during their college career, then the system should be changed. If grades are not an indication of this, then A&M should change its definition of what grades represent.

This system change is for the average student who is here to master their area of study. It is not for abusers of the system. S

ome have an unrealistic fear that students who continually fail classes will be here for umpteen

## A&M's current grading system is not consistent with its definition of what grades represent.

years, repeating courses until they have a 4.0.

In response to this, if a student doesn't take their grades seriously, then it is doubtful they will want to be at A&M any longer than they possible have to.

Yes, this system will help students who have screwed-up, but I think that most of us have been in at least one class where we got in over our heads and wish we'd done better.

There should be no discouragements for wanting to retake a course and no penalization for wanting to "extend our education."

Overwhelming responses against this bill have been voiced from students who feel this will hurt them. However, this is only a very small portion of the student body. As I mentioned before, this is for the average Joe Aggie.

If Kubiak's bill passes, our University will be forced to adopt one of the two options. Right now we have the chance to express our opinions before anything happens. Please, if you have any questions about statistics, ask.

Student senators cannot express your opinions if they don't know them.

The student government office is on the first floor of the Koldus Building across from the MSC. Every senator has a mail box, and phone numbers are available upon request.

Do not allow the Senate to vote on this issue without commenting on how you feel about changing the grading policy.

It is crucial that the Senate vote in the best interest of the student body. Democracy only works when ideas are communicated.

*Erin Fitzgerald is a junior political science and English major*

### THE BATTALION

Established in 1893

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. Columns, guest columns, cartoons and letters express the opinions of the authors. Contact the opinion editor for information on submitting guest columns.

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## EDITORIAL

### SYSTEM EXPANSION

The A&M System should use caution when acquiring new schools.

Last Friday, the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents gave Chancellor Barry Thompson permission to file for legislation needed to acquire the East Texas State University Complex.

This is the second institution this year to receive the Board's approval for merger into the A&M System.

Board member Billy Clayton predicted that in the future, there will only be two university systems in the state. Board Chairman Mary Nan West agreed, stating that A&M "better get the schools we want."

These and other statements seemed to imply that the Texas A&M System and the University of Texas System are in a race to acquire new schools.

When considering expansion, the Board of Regents should place education as its main priority. If the acquisition of a new school will in any way jeopardize the System's quality of education, then expansion should be stopped.

The regents also should give heed to the fiscal practicality of such ac-

quisitions.

Any new schools acquired should not place a greater financial burden on the System.

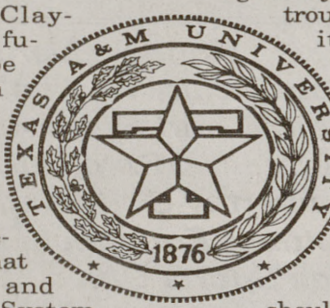
According to a state audit report released earlier this year, Texas A&M already has financial management problems that need to be remedied. Expanding the System is likely to add to those troubles. A&M should first solve its own problems before adopting those of other schools as well.

Geography should also help decide whether to expand. System schools should be accessible statewide for both the University of Texas and A&M Systems.

Any changes to the System should be well-thought out.

The acquisitions of new schools to the System should be made only after the best methods for merger have been researched and the possible effects have been analyzed.

The expansion of the A&M System is a very delicate process. Many benefits can be gained from such a move. However, it brings with it certain risks that must be recognized.



## A&M parking bill to return to Senate floor

2,000 space garage, renovations contained in proposed legislation

On March 9, the Campus Parking Improvements Bill will return to the floor of the Student Senate.

**J. D. COLE**  
GUEST COLUMNIST

Throughout this year, many students have expressed frustration with the parking and safety situation on campus, and this bill is the Senate's attempt to solve the parking problems students face daily. The Senate worked with PTTS to develop several specific improvements to the situation.

First, the Senate has called for the construction of a parking garage with at least 2,000 spaces. This garage would be located to the north of the Recreation Sports Center over what is now Parking Area 56, known as the Fish Lot.

This site has been chosen because of its accessibility from Wellborn Rd. and Joe Route Rd., the short distance to Kyle Field, the Rec Sports Center and the future Special Events Center. Further, this lot currently needs \$800,000 in repairs, and building a garage on this site instead would save the University this expense.

Second, the bill calls for the funding of 750 of the 1,500 parking spaces in the Special Events Center parking lot. The University has only approved half of the proposed parking for the center, but we need all of the parking to help accommodate school parking and special events parking.

Third, the bill calls for the improvement and expansion of the infrastructure for existing and new facilities on West campus — the streets, sidewalks, emergency phones and lighting around the Rec Sports Center, the Special Events Center and Olsen Field as well as many other improvements in infrastructure on West and main campus.

The bill calls for the expansion of the Zachry parking lot. The proposal before the PTTS would increase the size of the parking area by 500 spaces, addressing the parking shortage in this area.

In addition to these proposals, the bill also requests that the PTTS address the need for more inexpensive parking for the Southside residence hall area. Further, the bill calls for the funding of the Library Parking Garage, slated for construction beginning this fall.

These proposals show the attempts of the Student Senate and the PTTS to answer the requests to improve the

parking situation on campus.

These proposals will make parking more secure and more convenient for everyone. However, the improvements come with a price.

The PTTS can barely meet their current fiscal needs because permit fee schedules have not been updated for 10 years.

As a result, it does not have the funds to make future necessary improvements — even with the \$50 tickets for illegally parking in 30 minute zones.

The PTTS has proposed a number of fee schedule changes that would allow the University to implement the improvements contained in the Campus Parking Improvements Bill in the Student Senate.

In addition, the fee changes would allow the PTTS to address any future problems with parking, transit and traffic issues.

The proposed changes are as follows:

	Current Fee	Proposed Fee
Commuter student	\$55	\$75
Faculty reserved	\$135	\$200
Night permit	\$15	\$35
Summer permit	\$20	\$55
Garage (roof)	\$150	\$180
Garage (inside)	\$200	\$240
Garage (visitor)	\$.50/hour	\$.60/hour

In addition to these changes, PTTS has proposed some new alternatives to save students money on parking and transit:

Twelve Month Commuter Student \$100  
— savings of \$30 over commuter and summer permit

Bus Pass with Night Permit \$110  
— savings of \$35 over separate purchase of pass and permit

Please contact your senators about the Campus Parking Improvements Bill. I believe that the proposals contained in this bill, if implemented, will greatly improve the parking situation on campus.

*J.D. Cole is a senior history major*



## MAIL CALL

### Students should be wary of Republicans cutting programs

Ain't this place great? Friday, Feb. 24, A&M welcomed home an old Ag as he announced his bid for the presidency. As a former professor at Texas A&M, what better place for "The Conservative" to make such an announcement? It's the most conservative campus in Texas. However, I would like to point out what the GOP is poised to do in the

House Budget Committee while Phil Gramm is beginning his campaign for president.

For all of you out there on federally funded financial aid, listen up. They want to cut federally-funded aid like the Stafford loan interest exemption, Perkins loans, Federal Work-Study and the Educational Opportunity Grant. Those of us who rely on these programs to make it through college are in big trouble. I have noticed that Phil Gramm has yet to specifically address this issue. Seeing that he has committed himself to cutting government spending, I am very concerned what his election would mean to me and other students in similar positions. Will he feel the need to back his party and cut government spending at the expense of the future of college students? I sincerely hope not.

*Audrey L. Allen*  
Class of '97

Accompanied by 8 signatures

### Gramm protesters showed ignorance in front of media

I'm writing in response to Jamie Treinen's letter on Feb. 28 which stated that College Republicans should avoid hypocrisy. I'm so sorry Feb. 24 turned out to be a day that heightened her disrespect for Aggie Republicans, but apparently some don't understand what the day was about. It was a great day in history because a great Texas leader came to a campus to announce his presidency. Phil Gramm gave a speech of hope, and regardless of party preference, a man of his caliber should be respected. Some were pacing around during the ceremonies disrespecting him with signs against his policies. During his speech, these people proceeded to yell and counteract his beliefs with their own. College Republicans were honored to lead the

event and did everything possible to make our senator feel comfortable and welcomed. If College Republicans would have let the derogatory remarks be heard, it would have only distracted and distressed Phil Gramm and take away from his time. Disrespecting a man of his caliber is not only ignorant, but inexcusable.

Republicans were there to support him, and others were there disrespecting him to get media coverage.

*Sarah Lewis*  
Class of '98

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 for length, style, clarity and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald. A valid student I.D. is required. Letters may also be mailed to:

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