

Affirmative action draws scrutiny

Republicans attempt to annihilate much-needed proactive program

Affirmative action gives all the good jobs to minorities. It keeps the most qualified persons from getting the positions they deserve. It does nothing but create bias. It should be abolished.

AMY UPTMOR
COLUMNIST



That is all I ever heard about affirmative action while growing up. Everything I ever applied for that a person of color received instead of me — be it a scholarship or a job — was blamed on equal opportunity programs the government created to make things "more fair."

Then a study was published last week that blew "everyone's" results right out of the water. It seems that affirmative action isn't nearly as much about race as it is about gender.

The Labor Department discovered that, of all the minorities affirmative action is meant to help, it has helped white women the most.

Nevertheless, congressmen are trying to abolish affirmative action because, as Bob Dole put it, "this race-counting game has gone too far."

I wonder if Mr. Dole and others will reconsider the worth of this program now that it has come to light that it has had the most impact on the white race ... even if it is "just women."

It will be a shame if this is the reason. But affirmative action deserves a chance because it gives people who have traditionally faced discrimination a better chance at getting many things they deserve.

The United States has traditionally been dominated by white men. This is no secret. Open any history book and compare the number of white men you study to the number of women and minorities. No blame can be put on anyone for the past. But because of the past, women and minorities still need extra help at times to overcome the obstacles that remain in existence.

Affirmative action will be needed in some form as long as bias exists in the work place, and that will most likely be a long time. What needs to be changed the most are the misconceptions that go along with affirmative action.

Besides the fact that many people have always believed that affirmative action is only for ethnic minorities, too many people also believe that those minorities see affirmative action as a free ride.

While it may be true that affirmative action in some instances has been abused, most people affected by this pro-

gram see it as an opportunity, not as a free ride. As a woman, I see affirmative action as a safeguard that will ensure me that potential employers will look at me and see a qualified individual, not just a woman.

Affirmative action is not meant to take jobs away from the "best applicant." It is meant to make sure that the opportunity to have that job is equal for all qualified applicants.

And by saying "best applicant," it is usually implied that a male, usually white, is being denied. This means that a bias is not being catered to because of affirmative action. That is the idea.

Many affirmative action programs are voluntarily mandated by businesses. This self-policing could be out of para-

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noia, but it could just as easily be done because many managers are beginning to see how biased many businesses are, and they want to change it.

Affirmative action is by no means the answer to all the problems of bias in the workplace, but it is a start.

Affirmative action needs to be closely examined and changed to ensure that it truly does give equal opportunity to minorities. But it is a necessary program, and it should not be done away with yet. Its good points definitely outweigh its bad ones.

It is a shame that affirmative action is necessary, but equality does not exist. White males are still paid almost twice as much as white females and most blacks.

Women and minorities need affirmative action to continue their advancement up the ladder of success — up to the place where white males sit alone. This climb could take years. But, opportunity-wise, women and minorities have centuries of catching up to do.

Affirmative action is shaping up to be a key issue in the upcoming presidential race. It will be interesting to see what stand candidates will take on the issue. Hopefully, a person will be elected that sees that opportunity without affirmative action is not necessarily "equal opportunity."

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Established in 1893

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EDITORIAL WOMEN'S WEEK

This achievements of women should be observed on the A&M campus.

This week is Women's History Week. It is a time to not only reflect on the past accomplishments of women, but to also increase the appreciation of the impacts that women continue to make on our society.

It was not too long ago that women only could attend classes at Texas A&M if they were the daughters of faculty members. This practice changed under the Administration of A&M President James E. Rudder, and in 1963 A&M began to freely admit female students.

Even so, it was years later before women were allowed to join the Corps of Cadets. It was later still that they were allowed to march as part of the Aggie Band.

It was only last year that Brooke Leslie became the first woman to be elected A&M's Student Body President.

And the current A&M System Board of Regents has only three female members.

Enrollment of women at A&M has increased over the years.

However, women currently only make up 41.5 percent of the student population — a figure that lags be-

hind the female population of many other universities, as well as that state and nation.

All of this indicates that A&M still has a ways to go before women are truly equally represented. However, A&M is hardly alone. The discrimination against women is a problem that is still prevalent throughout our society.

Sexism is still alive and well — in the workplace, educational institutions and in society in general.

This year's Women's History Week celebration emphasizes the importance of the women's suffrage movement.

What is unfortunate is that this is only the 75th anniversary of women's suffrage. Our country is more than 200 years old, and yet women have only been allowed to vote for less than half of that time.

Progress has been made. However, we cannot truly say that society is yet gender blind.

Students should be encouraged to participate in this week's activities, and the University should attempt to better represent the female population of this campus.



MAIL CALL

Story should have mentioned location of A&M International

We have always thought that one of the first lessons a journalist learns when writing an article is to answer the who, what, when, where and why questions related to the story.

However, on the front page of the March 20 issue of The Battalion a story entitled "Bill speeds through Legislature, despite opposition" answered all of the above questions except the where?

Although it was not printed, we know that Texas A&M International University is in Laredo, only because we are from there.

Yet, those Aggies not familiar with South Texas were probably left wondering where.

TAMIU is located. Was the exclusion of a fact so vital as the location done in error, or was it intentional.

Carrisa M. Mardiros
Andrea Ramirez
Class of '96

Looking at pictures of nude models compromises morals

I am writing in response to Deric Walpole's and Shelly Cormier's letters on March 22.

I agree 100 percent that Playboy is "highly detrimental" to those who look at the pictures of naked women.

While looking at those pictures, one usually lusts after the women. Looking at another woman, besides your wife in a lustful way is just like committing adultery with her.

This is detrimental to a relationship with a wife or even a girlfriend because one is having an affair in their mind with another woman.

A person may say they can stop when they get

a girlfriend, but I know that is not true because I used to think the same way, and I was proven wrong.

As for Cormier, if she thinks that the women in Playboy represent art, then she should see the beauty in it.

I assert that those poses are associated with sexual acts and are very far from good taste.

Lust, pornography and orgies are wrong and are not beautiful.

I agree that the presence of human bodies, a husband and a wife alone, is a very beautiful thing. However, when it is put out for others to see, it becomes disgusting and perverse.

Jonathan Sneed
Class of '97
Darla Levens
Class of '95

Many differences can be found in Smith, Simpson proceedings

Amy Uptmor's column on March 20 was idiotic. Is it possible that she really has no understanding of and is perplexed by why people differ in their opinions of O.J. and Susan Smith?

She obviously has no appreciation of our legal system and no logic skills.

Susan Smith admitted to killing her two children. She said she did it. Why should we have sympathy for her — regardless of her mental state? She admitted committing a cold-blooded murder, and she should be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

Simpson, however, says he is not guilty.

If Uptmor did not know, our legal system is based on an "innocent until proven guilty" model.

This means that we cannot, in any fair way, say the Juice is guilty when he, in fact, says he is not.

We must take his word as true until it can be disproven. This is what the court case is for.

People sympathize with Simpson because they don't want him to be guilty.

People hate Smith because she has admitted guilt. It is Simpson's right to be given a trial to determine his innocence.

We cannot prejudice him.

This premature accusation by Uptmor is typical of her ill-informed half-truthed style.

M.P. Catalina
Class of '95

Pat Robertson, Pat Buchanan differ in political ideologies

In the midst of David Taylor's long polemic on liberal "closed-mindedness," this liberal reader actually found a statement with which he could agree: "Gee," Taylor writes, "not only am I closed-minded, I'm kinda' slow, too."

No argument there. How else can one explain Taylor's slight confusion over the Republican contenders.

Last time I checked The 700 Club, Pat Robertson was more concerned with spreading the Gospel to those poor, godless Russians that with seeking the Presidency.

Might Taylor have confused Robertson with fellow-conservative Pat Buchanan?

Leave it to a liberal to make sense of things here.

The protest a Buchanan's coming-out party concerned Pat's accusations that:

- 1) Washington is controlled by the Israel lobby
- 2) Figures for the number of Jews murdered in the Holocaust are grossly overstated. Robertson loves Israel and the Jewish people; he just wants to convert them all.

Buchanan rarely smiles, even when he is happy. Robertson always smiles, even when he finds our moral decay troubling.

Buchanan has dark hair, Robertson has grey ... and so on.

Taylor may want to read up on the facts next time he writes a column.

Harry M. Klaff
Graduate student

A&M catered to Bush, Gramm to promote true Aggie spirit

This letter is in response to Dwight Phillips'

March 21 letter about the peddling of the "Aggie" title to "pseudo-Aggies."

First of all, Phillips' letter actually turned out to be about his political conflicts with Phil Gramm, and how Gramm compares with President Clinton. Give me a break.

Instead of making tactless jokes about the Governor of Texas, a former President, a Presidential candidate — originally from College Station, please do not forget — as well as the man for whom his alumni building is named, the Ross Volunteer Company, the Aggie Band, the Corps of Cadets and even Reveille — who did also supposedly represent him at one time — he should have addressed the issue, which was left loosely defended at best.

However, my concern is for the apparent fact that he graduated from this University without grasping what the Aggie spirit truly means.

One of the most sacred traits of a true Aggie is their ability to see the potential Aggie spirit in another, without regard for political affiliation or position.

He obviously missed the purpose of A&M's "court-ing" the Bush family and Phil Gramm, which was not to roll out the red carpet for some undeserving politicians, but rather to pay respect to some fellow Americans by whom we have paid respect.

The beautiful thing about Texas A&M is that we readily accept people into the Aggie family, regardless of what they can do for the University itself.

Which leads me to ask — forget about Senator Gramm or President Clinton — what has Phillips done for "dear ol' Aggieland?"

Although these comments may read disrespectfully, I mean no offense. For I do believe the Aggie spirit is within him, but I believe it has been corrupted by his ever-increasing political education and awareness.

Kristofer Y. Jarboe
Class of '96

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