

No Pass, No Play — keep emphasis on academics

The state of education in Texas is once again under attack by the Texas Legislature. This time they are proposing changes to the 10-year-old No Pass, No Play rule.



ZACH HALL
COLUMNIST

If some lawmakers get their way, the ineligibility requirement for those students who fail a class would be lowered from six weeks to three weeks. The two proposals in the legislature would allow students to return to their extracurricular activities if their grades are at passing levels after three weeks. The students would also continue to practice in their extracurricular activities during the period of ineligibility.

The No Pass, No Play rule, passed in 1984, restricts students who fail one or more classes from participating in any extracurricular activities for six weeks. If, after sitting out a six weeks, they are passing, the students are allowed to continue their extracurricular activities. Before 1984, a student could fail as many classes as they wanted and could still continue to participate in extracurricular activities.

The whole purpose of the original No Pass, No

Play law was not to punish students for failing classes, but to take the primary emphasis in schools away from athletics and put it back on academics. Students are barred from practicing during this ineligibility period because the practices take up so much of the students' time on a daily basis.

It would be pointless to bar students from participating in extracurricular activities but still allow them the ability to practice.

However, many state legislators seem less interested in improving educational standards and more interested in giving another break to athletics.

Senator Greg Luna of San Antonio put best when he said that, "we should not go on and dilute the very best thing that we have done for school reform — all in the name of athletics."

Allowing students to return to extracurricular activities after only three weeks does not effectively discourage failing a class.

I remember that in most of the classes I took throughout high school, we took very few grades in the first three weeks.

If this is not the case in most classes or if teachers choose to "fudge the numbers," then students may not be improving as much as it would seem.

Furthermore the ineligibility period in most school districts is five weeks anyway. A student's ineligibility begins when reports cards are sent

home — a week after the end of six weeks — and ends at the end of the next six weeks. Many teachers will tell a student involved in an extracurricular activity if they have passed at this time.

They are then able to return to the extra-curricular activity without having to wait for their report card to come out.

Critics of the law point to increasing gang activity and higher drop-out rates as effects of the No

Pass, No Play law.

They contend that students who are required to sit out an entire six-week period for failing a class become involved in gangs or, in some cases, quit school because their extracurricular activity was all they cared about.

However, no statistics support these arguments. To suggest that No Pass, No Play is the cause of higher juvenile crime in Texas is ludicrous.

Over the past 10 years, the No Pass, No Play law has served as a reminder to students that they had better pass their classes if they want to participate in extracurricular activities.

Students know the consequences of failing to complete assignments, skipping class or not studying. If outside activities mean that much to a student, they should make sure they pass all of their classes.

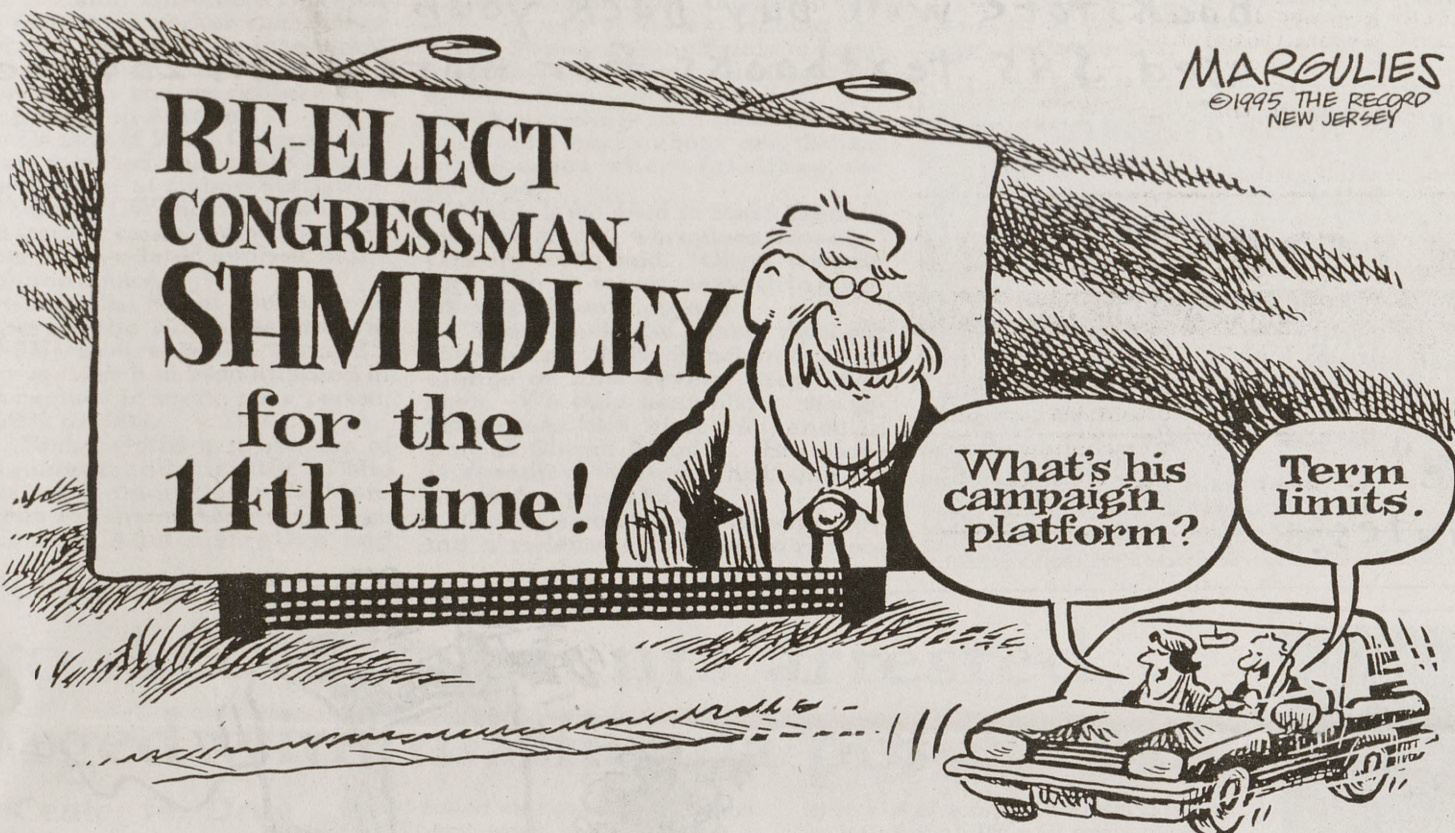
It's usually the students who do not give a damn about school in the first place who end up failing out of extracurricular activities. So why should we change the rules to help these students who don't help themselves?

For those of you up in Austin diligently working to pass the revision to the No Pass, No Play law, pay no attention to the fact that most parents and teachers support the current law.

No, go ahead and make your changes in the name of fairness, in the name of athletics and in the name of the ever-decreasing standards of academics.

To Hell with education.

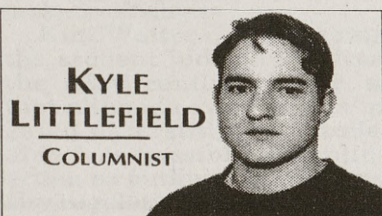
Zach Hall is a sophomore mechanical engineering major



Innocent mockery of other people definitely not a laughing matter

I'm stuck on myself. I'd like to try to deny it, but it's true.

You might be saying, "Yeah, Kyle thinks he's a big shot because he writes a decent column every now and then." But that's not it at all.



KYLE LITTLEFIELD
COLUMNIST

I am reminded of my self-centered attitude almost everyday on the most basic of levels. And the funny thing is that no one knows how stuck-up I am.

So what is my crime, you ask.

I laugh at people.

Seems harmless enough, but if you delve deeper, you will find the monster to which I am referring.

Now, I am not talking about laughing at people who are disabled, retarded or anything else along these lines.

I don't find anything funny about people having disabilities.

In fact, the people I laugh at, would probably not seem humorous to anyone else.

Sometimes it is what people are wearing that makes me laugh.

Other times it could be just the way they look.

I guess you could consider me a people watcher. When I go out to eat, my best friends will play a game where we will find a person who looks like someone else.

For instance, the other night I saw Tony Barone at a restaurant in Houston. It wasn't really him, but that's the joke.

Another game my friends and I play is a little bit more disturbing.

When one of us sees someone who is funny-looking, we will turn to another and say, "Hey, there's your twin." Or another hybrid of the game, shouting your friend's name at the person who you think is funny. The game can go on with each of us trying to out-do one another — or until we realize that we have been making asses out of ourselves.

If this does not sound funny, then maybe it's too foreign to relate our brand of humor. But I can attest that some of us have laughed so hard from games like these, that it felt like we had endured an abdominal workout.

Creativity is valued, and sometimes you just have to admit that your friend really got you, and there's no use in trying to one-up him.

Maybe these are games that all people play in one form or another. I wouldn't be surprised in the least if I had unknowingly been the target of someone else's game.

When I break the games down, I find that I must think that I possess a quality to which I compare other people.

If they don't match up to this quality that I think I have, then I laugh. Laughing for me is similar to looking down on people.

I never realized how much outward appearance affects me until I caught myself laughing at this guy jogging on

campus. As I was laughing, I found myself wondering why I thought this guy was so funny.

I don't know this person.

He didn't tell me a joke.

He was not even aware that I was looking at him.

Yet, with one glance, I had already judged this person.

In less than a second, my brain processed the image of this person, compared it with the qualities I think I possess and generated the impulse to laugh.

And then I stopped laughing.

It was no longer funny.

It was sad.

I was disappointed with myself. Now there was a quality that I thought I possessed that I really did not.

Who do I think I am to be laughing at this person or any other for such superficial reasons? Have I proved myself in some way that makes me ineligible to be on the other end of such scrutiny?

Of course not.

And it doesn't just stop at laughing.

The other night I was in the Kettle Restaurant and was

I am reminded of my self-centered attitude almost everyday on the most basic of levels. And the funny thing is that no one knows how stuck-up I am ... well, until now.

thinking about how I was fortunate enough not to work there.

I had caught myself again.

It was a very value-laden thought. Did this mean I automatically thought that the wait staff was "below" me in the hierarchy of life?

I don't think I feel that way consciously, but subconsciously, maybe.

It sparked the same kind of self-reprimanding as the first incident. "Who do I think I am to judge others? Why am I so stuck on myself?"

In a way, my problem remains unresolved.

But I did have a revelation on the matter: I feel guilty about thinking about others in this way, but maybe there are others that think this way, who are not even aware that they are doing it.

This doesn't lessen my guilt, but like they say, the first step is to recognize you have a problem.

I realize that there is nothing wrong with a good laugh, but sometimes we must ask ourselves, "What's so funny?"

Now if I laugh for the same reasons, it prompts a whole new array of thoughts that sober me before I can become drunk on myself.

Kyle Littlefield is a senior journalism major

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EDITORIAL

EXEMPLARY EXAMPLE

A&M's should be applauded for its diverse base of awarded contracts.

In fiscal year 1994, Texas A&M hired more women and minority contractors than any other agency in the state. This not only contributes to A&M's goal of achieving diversity, but it also sets a good example for the rest of the state to follow and helps to overcome a history of real and apparent discrimination at Texas A&M.

Texas A&M has made increasing diversity within the System one of its goals. This goal can be achieved by not only increasing minority recruitment and hiring minority employees, but should also involve awarding contracts to businesses headed by members of both genders and all races.

This practice helps to create a well-rounded system for all University processes.

The fact that A&M has the highest percentage of hiring women and minority contractors should be an example for the rest of the state to follow. The University has reported a 26.5 percentage of such contractors, which is almost twice as high as the state agency ranked second.

Other states should look at A&M

and realize the importance of awarding contracts to women- and minority-owned businesses. However, it is vital that A&M continue its nondiscriminatory contracting process to remain a role model in the state.

Furthermore, this report should help dissolve some of the myths and stereotypes that are associated with Texas A&M. Since its founding, A&M has been known as a predominantly white, male-dominated University. By doing business with minorities and women, perhaps some of these myths will be dispelled. Last year's figures demonstrate that A&M is making a real effort to achieve diversity and recognize cultural differences.

Increasing multiculturalism has been a sensitive issue for Texas A&M in recent years. There have been several incidents that have reflected the need for more diversity within the System. By working with all races and genders, A&M not only is taking the needed steps to increase multicultural awareness but also is seeking to improve the reputation of Texas A&M as a whole.

MAIL CALL

Criticism lacks proof of Corps' injustice

I am writing in response to Hope Siegel's letter in the March 31 Battalion.

First, I have a question for Siegel. On what information does she base her attack on the "leaders" of the Corps of Cadets? What proof does she have that the "leaders" of the Corps of Cadets — or any member of the Corps of Cadets — vandalized property? If she has such proof then she is at fault for breaking the Aggie Code of Honor by not reporting it. And if she didn't witness this act, she has no right to attack anyone without such proof. Anyone could have done it, cadets or non-reg's.

Secondly, since she wrote so highly of family and unity among Aggies, what does she think she's doing by attacking the Corps of Cadets? If we are all Aggies, is she not turning on "many of your own?" To repeat her words back to her, "In this situation this 'family concept' had not shown through."

I am not "personally" attacking Siegel. But when such accusations are made about anyone, proof must be present. It is blind accusations such as these that "do not hold true the real meaning of an Aggie."

Tanya Woodington
Class of '95

Mike Tyson should not be considered heroic

What kind of jacked-up values system does Robert Rodriguez have? To say Mike Tyson is a hero because of his "rags to riches" story and that he shouldn't have been in prison in the first place is quite possibly the most ludicrous thing I have ever heard. The man is a convicted rapist. He should get a new hero, and get his head checked while he is at it.

Jeff Wilkinson
Class of '96

Affirmative action insults weak groups

Regarding Amy Uptmor's column on affirmative action, does diversity mean equality? If not, then Uptmor is way off in saying that affirmative action helps our country. The diversity of America is one of our strongest points. Rejoice in one another's strength and weaknesses instead of criticizing the strong and insulting the weak.

Michael W. Newman, Jr.
Class of '96

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