

Backbone



MAIL CALL

Bowen's stance on class admirable

I applaud the decision by Texas A&M President Dr. Ray Bowen to reject the Faculty Senate proposal to force all undergraduate students to take a health issues course.

The responses by some of the liberal faculty senators revealed their agenda to indoctrinate Aggies with a politically correct view of AIDS and sex.

They attempted to hide their intent by including a few other health issues in the course.

The provost's office had estimated the first-year cost to implement the health class requirement would be \$160,000.

That increased expense would come at a time when the administration is struggling to raise student fees in order to give the faculty pay raises.

Would those angry senators forgo their raises in order to pay for the AIDS class? Doubtful.

Another good reason to reject the curriculum change is the class is not needed. All Texas high school students are required to take a health class which covers the health issues that were in the proposal.

Few A&M students really need to take a "remedial" health class in college. Some of them may make poor lifestyle choices, but these decisions are not because of a lack of information.

We can only hope that Dr. Bowen will exercise the same leadership in denying the Faculty Senate's other silly proposal.

A report issued in February shows that 75 percent of the students are already taking classes which would satisfy the Faculty Senate's proposed U.S. Cultures requirement, and 79 percent are already taking classes that would meet the proposed International Cultures requirement.

The same report estimates a cost of about \$300,000 per year to force the other students to meet the new core requirements.

Most of the money would be spent in the College of Liberal Arts, and the classes would be taught by A&M's most liberal professors. Small coincidence they were the ones who cast the most votes in 1993 to create the new cultures core requirements.

This is one former student who does not want his donations to A&M or his state tax dollars to be spent forcing Aggies into indoctrination classes.

I am proud of Bowen for standing up to the left wing of the faculty so far. This is a good time for local former students and conservative faculty to express their support for him.

Rodger Lewis
Class of '76

Club teams need more attention

Club sports don't get a great deal of recognition at Texas A&M or in The Battalion. This is disappointing because many of the athletes competing are just as talented and work just as hard to represent A&M as any of the athletes of varsity sports.

One club I would like to bring attention to is the women's club soccer team.

I realize A&M has a great nationally ranked women's varsity team that deserves all the recognition they get, but the club team deserves attention also.

Emily Stroope
Class of '99

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 and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald. A valid student ID is required. Letters may also be mailed to:

The Battalion - Mail Call
013 Reed McDonald
Texas A&M University
College Station, TX
77843-1111

Fax: (409) 845-2647
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Bowen listens only to former students

Call me nosy, but I would have loved to have eavesdropped on a conversation between Texas A&M President Dr. Ray Bowen, and Speaker of the Faculty Senate Dr. Pierce Cantrell, following Bowen's decision to reject the Faculty Senate's culture's bill. I imagine it would have gone something like this:

JASON BROWN
COLUMNIST



Cantrell: Dr. Bowen, I just don't understand why you didn't approve our bill.

Bowen: Well, Dr. Cantrell, you set a Dec. 31 deadline on me, and I just didn't have time to get the input I needed to make a decision.

Cantrell: But you've had a year and a half since you came here. Besides, it's a well-researched bill. We talked to a lot of people when we came up with this three years ago.

Bowen: Maybe so, but you didn't talk to the most important people — the former students.

Cantrell: What do they have to do with the cultures requirement?

Bowen: Well, they've been complaining to me about it. Royce Wisenbaker wrote me a letter about it, and he's thinking about donating a lot of money to expand Kyle Field. He's worried about the Faculty Senate being liberal and Berkeley-infested, and I don't want risk the chance to milk our former students for all they've got.

Cantrell: But I'm not from Berkeley. I'm an engineer from Georgia Tech.

Bowen: Doesn't matter. I'm about to launch another fund-raising plan — another \$500 million by the year 2000. I've already got the halftime show planned when we reach it; the band will spell \$1 billion and dance around for the next 10 minutes. Fortunately, it won't be a war anniversary, so we won't have to dedicate most of the perfor-

mance to those pesky veterans.

Instead, the entire halftime will be focused on the A&M fund-raising machine. Sure, the cultures bill may have its benefits, but I'm not about to sacrifice my dreams for it.

I didn't hear any of this, and this encounter may be purely hypothetical, but Bowen's recent rejections of both the cultures requirement and the health and wellness requirement give an indication of whose opinions he cares about in making curriculum decisions. At most universities, the faculty shapes the curriculum; at Texas A&M, the alumni do.

Although he considered the cultures requirement proposal "a well-planned moderate modification of our core curriculum," he rejected it, because the mistrust he feared it would cause.

As factors in the decision, he cited potential problems of administering the requirement and the deadline the Faculty Senate set for him.

However, these are both red herrings. Cantrell insisted there was no need to "set up a curriculum police" to ensure fairness in governing the curriculum, but a couple of innocuous additions would prevent the problems of curriculum manipulation.

Also, Bowen has had a year and a half to gather input from people about the cultures requirement, which has been the most pressing issue on campus. If anything, he should have made a decision before now.

In reality, the mistrust the issue has caused has stemmed from the fact that Bowen has waited so long to make a decision. His refusal to make a decision allowed College Republicans to spook former students into believing the cultures requirement and health and wellness requirement would force students to take politically correct courses.

So, the former students howled, and Bowen, whose attitude is "skip the sermon — go straight to the offering," listened.

Bowen's emphasis on raising money is no secret, especially after his obsession with the Capturing the Spirit campaign.

When asked if Bowen's quest for money influenced his decision on the cultures requirement, Cantrell acknowledged he was "certain that it was a factor."

Cantrell even suspected Bowen's rejection of the health and wellness bill was influenced by the mouths and wallets of former students, although Bowen suggested it was because the course would preach morality — which it would not.

Because Bowen has made a habit of postponing decisions, and then basing his decisions on the wrong reasons, he is quickly losing credibility among various sectors of the University.

College Republicans has slammed him in two of their letters, basically calling him a liar at one point. But Bowen has also angered the other end of the spectrum by copying-out on the cultures requirement.

Even more important, the faculty is losing faith. At the last Faculty Senate meeting, a couple of senators proposed a vote of no-confidence, and that was before Bowen rejected the cultures bill. Cantrell admitted that Bowen's decision about the cultures bill will only exacerbate the growing rift between the faculty and the president.

If Bowen wants to regain the confidence among the student body and the faculty, he should spend less time in the Clayton Williams Alumni Center, and more time with the people presently at the University.

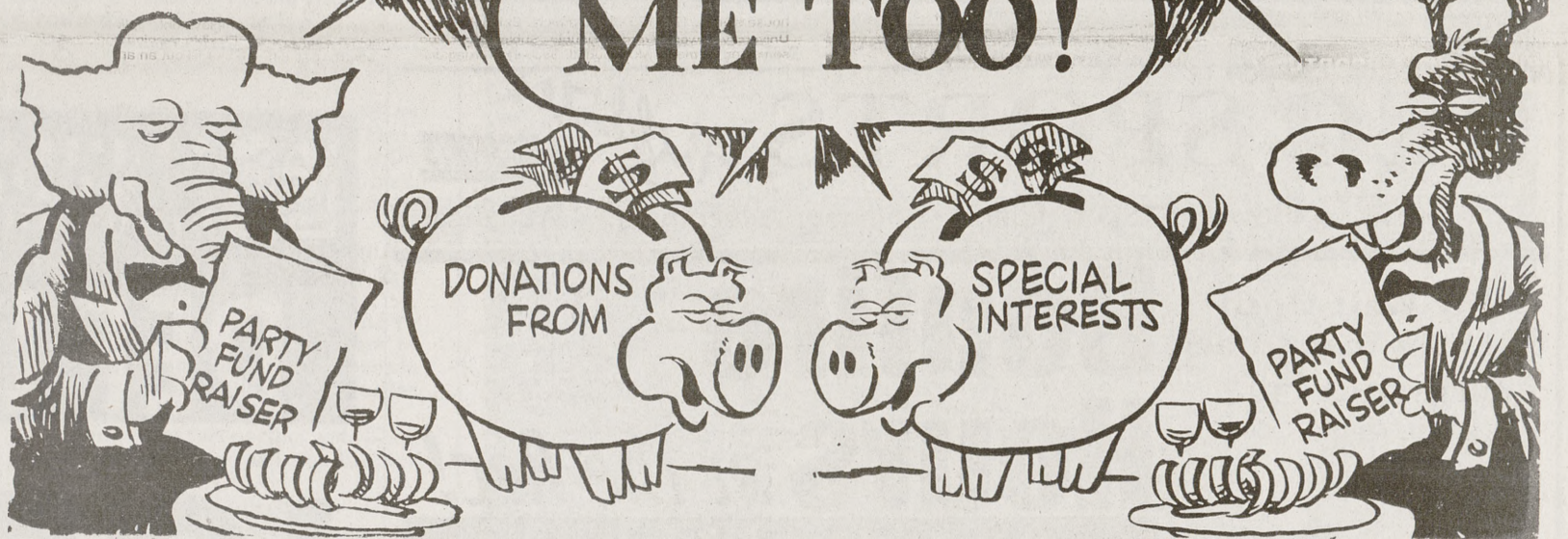
Otherwise, he will soon be a member of not just the Association of Former Students, but of the Association of Former Administrators, too.

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BOY, AM I STUFFED!

ME TOO!



Aggies, residents work together

Imagine 14 college students simultaneously painting the trim, doors and window frames of a house in Bryan. The inhabitant watched in amazement.

In three hours on Saturday morning, members of Beta Alpha Psi, led by Amy Perryman, together with Volunteers of Elder-Aid, completed the job.

At noon the young people were treated to lunch by an accounting firm. The owner's only expense was for a few gallons of paint, brushes and rollers.

Other jobs are done by college students to show their appreciation for Bryan-College Station citizens.

"Town and Gown" in earlier centuries often had an unfeeling relationship. As "Town and Gown" prepare to enter the twenty-first century, "together" increasingly describes their attitude. More power to the forces of "togetherness" as we all interact.

Milton Huggett
Bryan resident

Trash talking own team bad bull

Last year I attended the A&M vs. t.u. game in Austin. I was seated in the t.u. alumni section and was offended by their actions and words.

They were calling the players names and talking trash about every play made. These fans blamed every play on the players or the coaching. I was glad these were t.u. fans and thought Ags would never do such a thing.

Much to my surprise, every home game this year, I have heard rude comments about the players and the coaches. Many students seem to feel they could run faster or throw farther if they were on the field.

The players are great athletes. R.C. Slocum knows more about football than you think. They work as hard as they can.

Please support the team when you watch them perform. They are students just like the rest of us and they are working hard for A&M.

Aggies need tips on writing hate letters

At long last we have come to the end of another semester. As we drag our weary bodies across the finish line, most of us can look back with satisfaction on another educational job well done.

CHRIS STIDVENT
COLUMNIST



But wait, let's stop a moment before we run merrily off into the sunset, secure in our supposed intellectual prowess.

Stop me if I'm wrong, but there remains one small area where our academic skills are somewhat deficient.

There are students on our campus who know how to palpate a cow uterus with the best of them, but there is still one thing they haven't mastered to the full extent of their powers.

There is one talent that many students still lack in their intellectual arsenal. It is the art of writing a good hate letter.

Since I have received a couple hundred letters this semester, I have come to consider myself an expert in the field of judging what makes a hate letter flow.

Each week, I eagerly await the crop of letters that come wandering in. I comb through them, hoping to pick up some ideas about how and why I might have been wrong in my column for the week.

Usually, I am disappointed in my quest for knowledge. The letters I receive are often just not that impressive.

With this in mind, I have devoted this column to public service. It's time that we all buckle down and figure out how to write a hate letter.

One of our most valuable tools in the hate letter is the insult. But it must be used properly to be truly effective.

For instance, writing "Dear Christie Stidvent, your ideas last week really pissed me off, and your mug shot makes you look like an 11-year-old girl," doesn't really have that much kick to it. I still have no idea why you are angry, even if my masculine self-esteem

has been dangerously wounded.

Let's work our insult into a more coherent statement. How about "Mr. Stidvent, whose mug shot reminds me of a cross between Cinderella, Tinkerbell and the Faerie Queen, has once again missed the mark." Then you may proceed to tell me how I missed the mark, preferably in great detail.

Another thing to avoid are those catch phrases that we all seem to be so fond of around here. A letter that reads, "You are wrong, and it's obvious that you will never bleed maroon or know what it is like to be on the inside of A&M looking out."

"Highway 6 runs both ways, so why don't you move to Austin with the other tips" is just sort of stupid.

Not only do I not know why I'm wrong, but you have used cheesy phrases as a poor substitute for logical reasoning.

Additionally, if the columnist you are writing to happens to believe these Aggie cliches are generally idiotic, and trust me I do, then there is no reason that columnist is going to be impressed if you sprinkle them liberally throughout your letter.

Try to be more creative. Separate yourself from the pack.

Let's try to work a little wit and irony into these phrases. "Mr. Stidvent is wrong because of this and that (reasons one and two). I would like to tie him and his big mouth to the back of my pickup truck and drag him down Highway 6 to Austin, where the other queer, hippie liberals live. Maybe then we'll see if he bleeds maroon." This is much, much better.

Another dangerous weapon that is too often placed in the wrong hands is fact. If you are writing a letter to a columnist, try to make sure the facts you use in your letter actually relate to what the columnist wrote about.

The following example is fairly good: "You mock bonfire and all that I hold dear in life. How could you do this to me? And, listen here. Reveille deserves to be our mascot. How dare you presume to make fun of a school that has 'Aggies' as its team name and a dog as its mascot?! As a member of Unit Q 32, I happen

to know for a fact that Reveille is a very agriculturally oriented animal."

Nice letter. But if the columnist discussed the situation in Bosnia, then it doesn't make sense. If you are going to gripe about something, at least make sure it is a gripe that relates to what the columnist was writing about.

Then there is that class of letter that simply annoys the hell out of me. These are the letters that begin, "I thought I was safe here at Aggiland, so I left \$700 in cash sitting out in the library before I went to find some books. When I returned 12 hours later, three of my dollars had been stolen. Obviously somebody out there isn't following the Aggie Code of Honor."

Of course there are students who do not follow the Aggie Code of Honor around here. Hell, quite a few members of the administration don't seem to hold this code too dearly either.

Also, if you are going to write a letter to the Opinion Page, makes sure it expresses an opinion. So, let's see if we can apply what we have learned. We are going to write our very own hate letter, critiquing the column we have right before our eyes.

"Dear Mr. Stidvent, I had always presumed that you were an effeminate, illiterate moron, but I had never before realized how egotistical you were (good use of insult).

An entire column devoted to your columns and the hate mail that you receive! (Good fact, proves you actually read the column.)

I must admit, you have established a new low in the standards for what they will print on the Battalion Opinion page.

I would like to shove you down on the MSC grass and watch the Aggies who aren't two-percenters like yourself beat the living daylights out of you! (Good sentence, combines threat of physical violence with innovative use of a tradition.)

I hope that this is your last column, and I resent your intrusion into my ordinarily peaceful life." (Excellent conclusion)

Chris Stidvent is a senior English and philosophy major