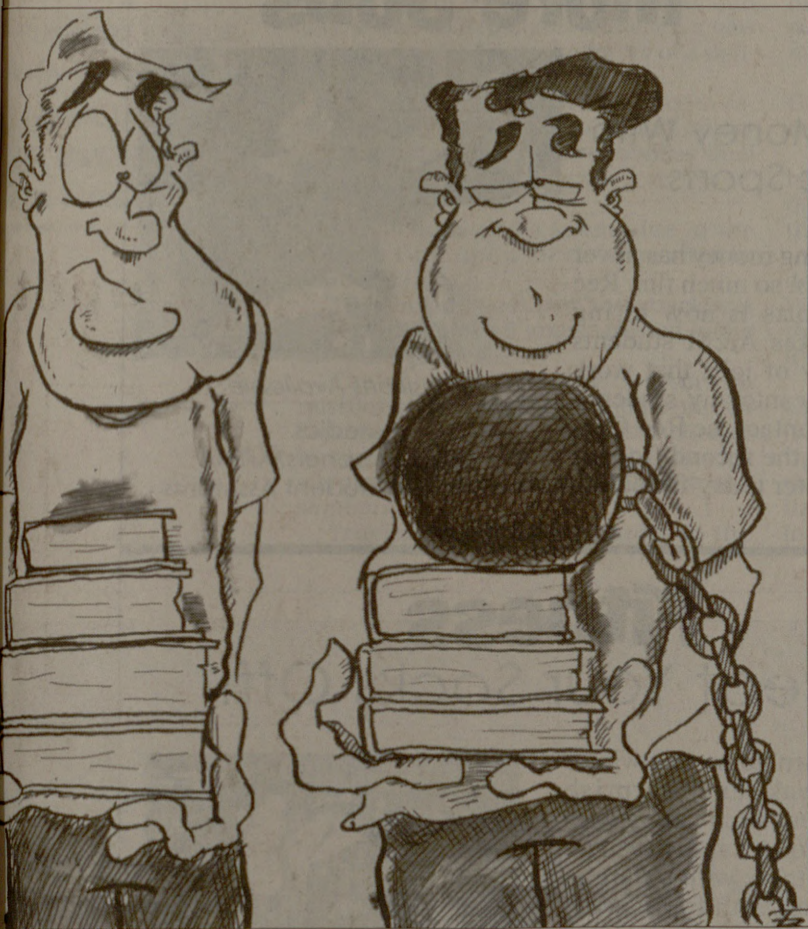


Married with classes

Confessions of a married student



The beginning of a new semester means new classes, new books and new faces. But for married undergraduates, one thing never changes — the same old question, "Aren't you a little young to be married?"

As a married undergraduate student, I am always amazed at the intrusive arrogance of such a question.

What answer could possibly satisfy such individualistic bachelor inquiries?

"We were in love."
"It is an insurance scam to get a better policy on my 1967 Mustang."
"In dog years we are both 140."

All of these responses flash through my brain, but none would satisfy the questioner.

The single student's question is not intentionally rude or malevolent. It is mostly just curious.

Marriage is a mystery to people who are single.

They ask, "Why marry young?" Already, this inquiry is oozing with hidden questions.

First, the wild, partying college singles want to know why people would give up their freedom — their lives — to get married. Why not live a little first? Why sacrifice

Columnist



Marcus Goodyear
Senior English major

years of bachelorhood by exchanging parties and late nights for a ball-and-chain? Married life is calmer, but it is far from free. Married life offers security and routine, two ideas that sound suspiciously boring to a single college student. Ironically, married students weren't even allowed into some universities until 1940 because this calmer lifestyle was seen by some institutions as a distraction from academics.

Of course, such a restriction today would seem fascist and pointless since few college students are married. Most of them now consider it a post-graduation project.

Perhaps this explains why the University of California and the American Council on Education found that only 7 percent of students even consider marriage before graduation. The other 93 percent of students have another hidden question: How can someone stand to get married while still in college?

The answer is simple. My wife and I got jobs and changed our priorities. We dropped out of some clubs, worked more hours and tried to spend our free evenings enjoying each other's company.

In some ways, finances have become tighter — no more shopping sprees,

fewer concerts and certainly no keg parties for the neighborhood. At the same time, though, a married couple has twice the income. Becoming financially responsible is the scariest part of marriage.

Suddenly, a new husband and wife need everything from major medical insurance in case of pregnancy to their own auto insurance policy. All sorts of new little bills begin popping up. But with a little help from parents and the government, we've managed to live pretty well.

Finally, the single person's question might really be, "Why are you married and I'm not?" He or she feels inadequate, like the geeky kid in the back of the gym who gets picked last for the basketball team.

Married people aren't better than singles, they are just married. Single people are single because they haven't met anyone they could love enough to give everything up for.

That 93 percent doesn't understand marriage. They can't until they experience it.

Marriage is not like a career that a person strives for. I'm not majoring in English and Husband-ness.

My wife and I got married because it was more difficult to stay apart than it was to take on new responsibilities.

Married college students are just lucky. We happened to meet that special person a little bit earlier.

Student government thrives on input

Howdy! My name is Carl Baggett and I have the privilege of serving as your 1996-1997 student body president.

I would like to welcome all returning Aggies and especially the Class of 2000, which will take A&M into the 21st century.

This year will be an exciting year full of many opportunities.

As your student body president, I will fulfill three roles: representative, resource and advocate.

As a representative, my job is to speak on behalf of the students at Texas A&M.

This summer, I have worked to fulfill my role as a representative for students by speaking to the state legislature in regard to student concerns over fees.

As a resource, I am a facilitator for the exchange of information among

Guest Columnist



Carl Baggett
Senior accounting major

different groups on campus. I have accomplished some of my objectives as a resource by organizing a Student Body Executive Council, which brings together a diverse group of student leaders for unity and input.

We will continue to act as a resource for students by developing a media campaign highlighting student involvement and leadership at the University.

To fulfill my role as advocate, I voice the needs of the student body to the administration.

I have done this by initiating and supporting the development of a pilot summer escort program in conjunction with the Corps of Cadets.

Future plans include continued support for the improvement of the Library Complex.

Student Government and I will continue to represent students by creating links to the Association of Former Students, the 12th Man, the Development Foundation and the Federation of Aggie Moms.

I will keep you updated on these and other issues through The Battalion.

The Aggie name has always been synonymous with teamwork.

Therefore, in order to continue to fulfill my role, I need your help.

Obtaining opinions from the student body is my most important duty. Please stop by my office with your questions, concerns and ideas.

My office is in the Student Government office in the Koldus Building.

Also, we need to come together on Sept. 11 at 7 p.m. when the Singing Cadets host a benefit to aid a fellow Ag, former Student Body President Toby Boenig.

With your help we can make a difference. Gig 'em!

EDITORIAL

THE BATTALION

Established in 1893

Editorials in The Battalion reflect the views of the editorial board members. 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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SAFETY FIRST

Student government should offer stronger solutions

Campus leaders have been talking for a long time about campus safety improvements — more lights, phones and University police officers. But very few reasonable and specific solutions have actually been suggested to Texas A&M president Ray Bowen.

Now, students are more concerned about their safety than ever before.

The most recent attempt to improve students' security on campus is a proposal by Chris Reed, Student Senate speaker. If implemented, the plan would create a task force to research security problems and recommend solutions to the Student Senate.

But Reed's proposal is only the latest in a long list of attempts to boost campus security.

The last two student body presidents have offered proposals to curb campus crime. Toby Boenig wanted to see an increase in the number of emergency phones, University police officers and self-defense courses.

But in a roundtable discussion last October, Bowen bluntly said there was not enough money for the slated improvements. But he did offer some good advice.

"The campus is misleading in that it seems safe," he said during the discussion. "I think anyone out there at night ought to be very careful, particularly woman students."

Students need something more than that to guarantee their protection as they walk across campus at night.

Unfortunately, the lack of resources is a shadow over the new committee. It's hard for students not to be cynical about the lack of prospects for improving security.

This cynicism, coupled with students' increasing fear on campus, makes it even more vital that the new committee, if implemented, takes its job seriously.

Reed and the other members of the task force should painstakingly research the issues and think of serious and specific solutions. The Student Senate should listen to what they have to say — and offer strong, reasonable solutions for the University to adopt.

A&M students should expect Student Government to pass resolutions expressing the need for greater security measures on campus. Students should be represented by people who will take a stand.

The safety task force is a good opportunity for Student Government — and the Student Senate in particular — to show they are concerned fellow students and not just politicians.

But most importantly, students should expect Bowen and the University to take the new committee's proposals seriously.

After all, it is the University that has an obligation to keep the campus safe.

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University's lack of firm attendance policy hurts students

Oh, the joys of returning to college life. Wearing ourselves from home cooking. Abandoning our four-days-a-day schedule. And going to class. This week, I have done the good student thing. I have done the snooze button thing at every class perky and wide-eyed. However, in collecting my various labi, I found myself in a growing state of confusion.

It's those class attendance sections. Some professors just graze over it, while others spell out stiff penalties to the tune of letter grade deductions for missing their class.

Now, being the considerably bright person that I am, I understand (and agree) that if you miss a day in which you have a test, paper deadline or the like and do not have a university-approved excuse, then

Columnist



Aja Henderson
Senior political science major

it's your butt and the prof is under no obligation to let you make up this work.

What is disturbing is that professors seem to tremendous leeway on how they factor in your attendance on regular lecture days — you know, the everyday. Even if you do exquisitely on your required work and meet all deadlines, it is possible to still fail some classes if you are not in your seat just a few times.

This seems important, futures are at stake here, surely there must be detailed policy outlining just how a professor can factor in attendance, right?

Nope.

If you undertake the weighty mission, as I did, of searching for specific policy spelled out in black and white in the university's Rules and Regulations you will find vague, hazy stuff.

Part One of this meaty booklet, the "Grades" section, says that the semester grade can include "weights as applicable as..." then gives a long list such as papers and homework, with class attendance and participation wedged in there. Hmm.

Flipping to the "Attendance Policy" section is no better. Here the university tells us that they view "class attendance as an individual student responsibility". Then, they abandon the topic and skip to the carefully outlined excused absence policy.

The rules just grazed on the subject of class attendance weighting. It is basically boils down to the professor doing as they wish shy of violating a University policy.

Well, it's apparent that anything would probably fly given that there isn't any detailed policy on the matter.

What is truly scary is that some of the professors who penalize for attendance do it on an eyeball basis.

The ramifications of this are staggering. I am usually the only black person in most of my classes, I am mocha in color, I stand out.

Wouldn't a professor notice me missing in a classroom before the homogeneous looking person who sits in the middle row? It is clear that minorities get the short end of the stick in this scenario.

Race aside, consider a person with very red hair. Or someone who is extremely tall. Anyone with distinguishing features would be noticed missing before Plain Jane.

This adds a double whammy onto this entire unfair practice.

What is going on here?

There needs to be a definite policy written, and it should heed the fact that Texas A&M is not a preschool. Conscientious students realize that class attendance is critical. We certainly don't need professors to spank our hands with their rulers of point