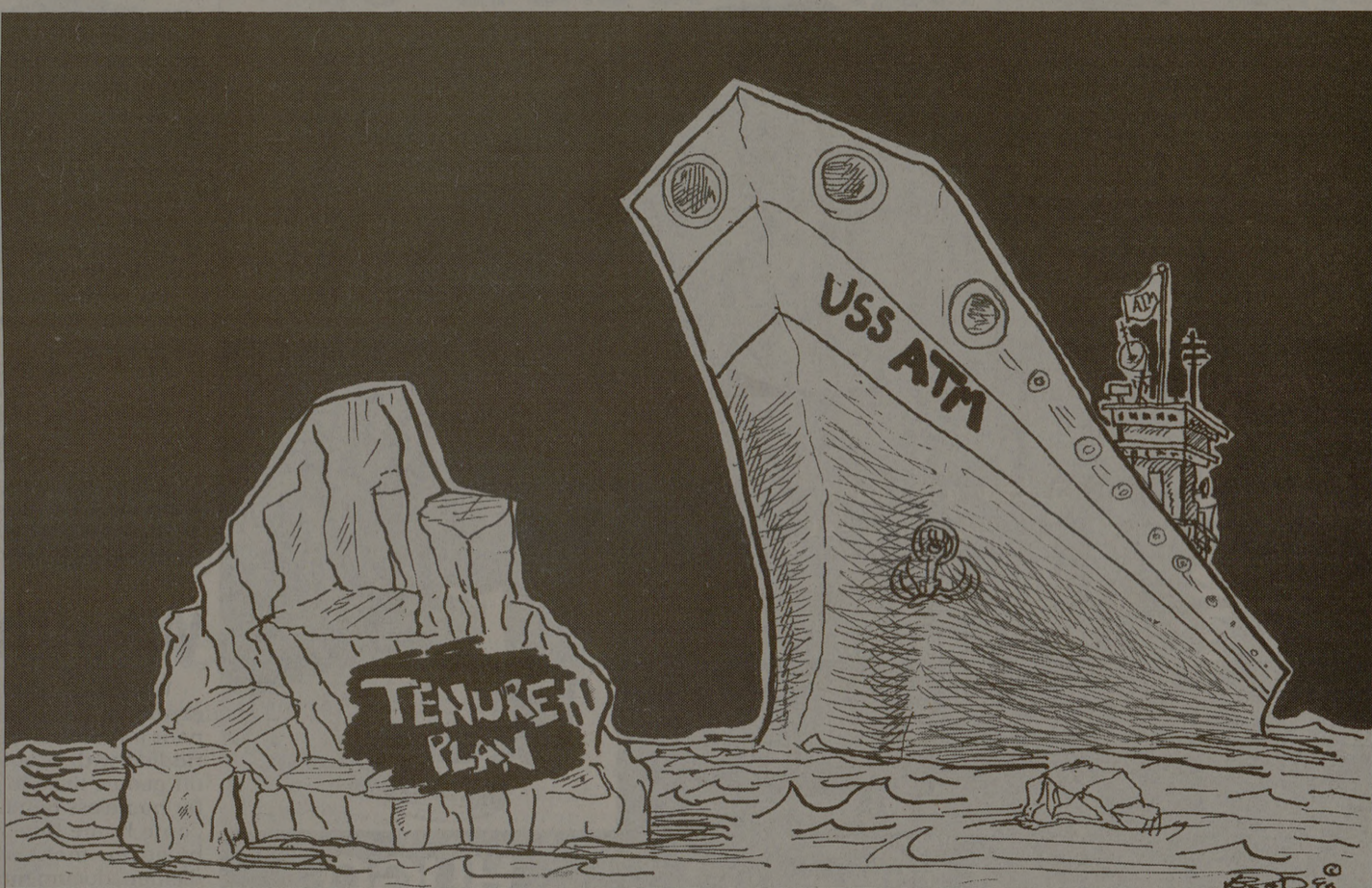


# Sink or Swim

## Texas A&M's post-faculty tenure review should be re-evaluated



Columnist



**Stephen Llano**  
 Senior history major

In April of 1912 the Titanic set sail on its maiden voyage from England to New York City. The creators of the vessel claimed that this fine luxury liner was unsinkable.

After ignoring warnings regarding icebergs in the area, the vessel struck one and went down as any other ship would. This disaster could have been avoided if the ship's commander had heeded the warnings and changed course instead of

trusting reputation. Likewise, Texas A&M has an academic reputation that is considered unsinkable. But recent rhetoric regarding post tenure review of faculty may be the iceberg that sinks the University.

Earlier in the semester, the Board of Regents decided there was a significant number of tenured faculty who, after achieving a permanent position in a prestigious university, decided to sit around and do nothing.

The regents, secure in their infinite mega-corporate wisdom, decided the best solution would be to institute a faculty review program that eliminates incompetent faculty at this late stage of the game.

The regents' decision is a good business move. The key word is business. In case they haven't read the full name of the institution, it reads Texas A&M University. The regents think they are still in the corporate office or managing

the ranch. Running a university is not the same.

Tenure is usually defined as a contract between the university and a professor that prevents the professor from being terminated. Some believe professors slack off after gaining tenure and enjoy the permanent income flowing in from doing nothing.

But to professors, tenure is a part of their income. In a society where educators are not compensated adequately for the time and effort spent teaching, many look at tenure as part of their expected salary. Tenure grants professors the ultimate intellectual tool: academic freedom to pursue knowledge wherever it may exist. Having to worry about potential performance reviews would seriously affect the quality of a professor's work.

And tenure is not just handed to every new Ph.D. who receives his or her diploma. According to the tenure review proposal the Faculty Senate approved in October, new faculty members already undergo a seven-year period in which their work is scrutinized by peers and other academics. At the end of this period the Provost and the University President may recommend to the Regents that tenure be granted. After the intense work and study taken to reach this point, faculty members have to love their field. What could possibly make professors slack off when new doors are opened to them? The argument just doesn't make sense.

Tenure review policy in this proposed form is unique to Texas A&M. The other institutions we compete with for new faculty offer tenure with no strings attached. Which university will have the toughest

time attracting the best faculty? Sure, our reputation is well known, but changing this one little policy is just like that one little iceberg.

It can be said that the Faculty Senate has rolled over to the regents' desire to treat the University as a corporation — hiring and firing to maximize profit potential instead of intellectual potential.

But perhaps the Faculty Senate is trying to burn the village in order to save it.

Why would they do such a thing? Considered to be disgruntled employees by the regents, their complaints are not regarded as very significant.

If they didn't propose a review policy, the regents would have created one. The well-justified outcry by the faculty was unceremoniously ignored by the Board.

The people that the regents would probably listen to — the students — are

not speaking up. Unfortunately, the Regents translate this apathy into support for what they're doing — "If they don't like it, they'll let us know" mentality.

The students should take a vested interest in what happens regarding the intellectual climate for faculty members.

Whatever restriction is placed on their academic freedom is a blow against the world-class education we're supposed to be receiving.

**Recent rhetoric regarding post tenure review of faculty may be the iceberg that sinks the University.**



## Yell leaders embarrass Texas A&M

Spotting the bumper sticker "Stiers and Queers: Only at t.u." always produces a good laugh from me. It amazes me that our world-class university readily admits students with five-year-old intellects.

Columnist



**H.L. Baxter**  
 Senior geography major

to live with. You wouldn't like it if someone poked fun at your insecurities, so don't do it to others. This is Rule 1.

Rule 2: If you can't say anything nice about a person, don't say anything at all. This rule follows from Rule 1 and is often called respect.

Everyone has different opinions about homosexuals and homosexuality, just as everyone has different opinions about blacks, Jews or women. Some people harbor derogatory sentiments about heterosexuality (heterosexuality adds to the world's population problem, continues the cycle of poverty, etc.), but only fools say it out loud. It just seems better to keep your negative comments to yourself. This is Rule 2.

Rule 3: Don't pretend to be something you are not; it is commonly called hypocrisy. It's not nice when someone befriends a person and then speaks negatively about the new friend to someone else. If one wants to be a friend, be a friend. If one doesn't be a friend, Rules 1 and 2 still apply. The occurrence of one of our pupils actively soliciting the gay vote while campaigning is a good example of hypocrisy. This is Rule 3.

Rule 4: Help those less fortunate than you. This is called compas-

sion. Compassion was shown toward black Americans by Jewish Americans. With the help of Jews, blacks acquired equal rights during the civil rights movement. Jews were jailed for protesting Jim Crow Laws and ostracized by those friends and family who did not believe blacks deserved equality. In some cases, Jewish Americans died so that blacks could have equal protection under the law.

Gays and lesbians face a similar peril. Parents sometimes ostracize or abandon their gay children. Some gays and lesbians even die because others don't believe they deserve equal rights. Marching in a gay and lesbian parade may not be a comfortable way of helping their plight (even most homosexuals have problems with marching in parades), but help would be a nice gesture, if only to provide safety or to remain a friend instead of turning into an enemy. This is Rule 4.

The Golden Rule, respect, virtue and compassion are elementary concepts and fundamental for good relations.

Real leaders should master these concepts. Whether one leads a political party, student government or a yell, these four basic concepts can never wane. The ignorant, insensitive remarks of three yell leaders tarnish not only the image of this university, but humanity.



## MAIL CALL

**A&M's club sports deserve recognition**

Regarding the Nov. 26 sports brief concerning club soccer:

First, let me say I am pleased to see a comment regarding one of the many sport clubs at Texas A&M in The Battalion.

However, the comment about the women's team bowing down to Colorado St. does not give these women the respect they deserve. The Women finished second after being scored upon with three minutes left in sudden death overtime. Prior to the finals, they scored 14 goals while allowing only one.

This is only an indicator of the strong soccer that exists at Texas A&M. Both the women and men's club soccer teams have excelled at the local and national level.

During regular season play, the women lost only one game and the men were undefeated and posted two ties. After regional competition, pre-tournament rankings had the women ranked No. 1 and the men, 16. The men's club team only allowed one goal in the tournament, led by goalkeeper Greg Axelson and a strong defensive package.

However, the men were eliminated in the quarterfinal, after one of the finest games played in the tournament. The men lost in penalty kicks after a 1-1 score in regulation and a scoreless overtime. This marks the seventh year the men have completed the season with a top five national ranking.

So, let's say congratulations to these two fine teams, and to all those players involved. And, to all those students involved in sport clubs, we are proud to represent Texas A&M (even if we do it without the knowledge of the student body or staff members).

Congratulations to both teams and thank you for the years of great play.

Michael T. Lee  
 Class of '97

**New solutions could improve parking**

I am writing to offer a suggestion that might help solve the parking problem. I live in north Bryan, nowhere near a bus route, and have no choice but to drive to campus.

Although I purchased a parking permit, I seldom park on campus. Instead I park along the streets of the empty lots located on the north side of the Albertson's shopping center.

On my long hike to campus, I notice many other Texas A&M parking tags hanging in the numerous other cars that line these streets. I also notice all the signs that say that the empty lots are Texas A&M property.

Is there a reason why this land couldn't be turned into parking lots? An on-campus shuttle bus stop could be added, and students could park and ride to class.

Tamie Glass  
 Class of '98

**Easy target found by pointing fingers**

The purpose of this letter is not to discuss George Bush's involvement in cocaine importing. I do not know all the facts, so I won't comment on it.

However, I do take objection to one point that Donovan Wheatfall makes. He claims that "this scandal" is directly responsible for drug use in African-American communities. To say that drug use is so rampant simply because the government may have helped provide cocaine is a cop-out.

No one holds a gun to anybody's head and forces them to start using drugs. It's like an alcoholic blaming Budweiser for their problems. It's like a cigarette smoker blaming Marlboro for their addiction.

Grow up, people. We can't blame others for problems we de-

velop. True, drugs may not have found their way into these communities without the government. But just because something is there does not mean you have to reach out and grab it.

Wheatfall wonders if "everyone has a fair chance in America." The answer is yes. Everyone has a fair chance to say yes, but everyone also has a fair chance to say no.

Mike Stancel  
 Class of '99

**Aggie Band robbed of Bonfire tradition**

The redpots have attacked the meaning of "Aggies." We've read, and seen, how the tradition of the outhouse for Bonfire being supplied by the Aggie Band was ended, and that Parson's Mounted Cavalry, who builds an outhouse anyway, took over the tradition. I was in the Cavalry — it has never built an outhouse.

Supposedly this action was retaliation for the band cutting up the redpot log. However, the following facts were omitted. The redpots intentionally scheduled band cuts when the BQs were unable to participate. They tried to keep BQs from participating in centerpole wrap. They burglarized first floor BQ rooms after shattering the windows. I even heard the redpots led E-Walk across the Drill Field. The nation saw that the redpots wouldn't allow the whole band to march around stack Tuesday night. Bad bull, Aggies are supposed to be as true to each other as Aggies can be.

James E. Hudson, III  
 Class of '93

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 300 words or fewer and include the author's name, class, and phone number.

The opinion editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, style, and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters may also be mailed to:

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 College Station, TX  
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Campus Mail: 1111  
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For more details on letter policy, please call 845-3313 and direct your question to the opinion editor.