

For the love of money Texas A&M, American Airlines forsake all for cash

There's an old saying I'm particularly fond of, one of those amorphous things that can be applied to one's experiences at any given moment in time: "(Fill in the blank) makes the world go 'round.'" Such a simple, beautiful sentiment, saying so much and so little at the same time.

One can fill in the blank with any appropriate phrase. Music makes the world go 'round, for example. Perhaps money, which is the version I've heard most of.

From multi-billion dollar corporate conglomerates to public universities, many people are too caught up with the mell of money.

As cynical as it sounds, such an adage couldn't have survived in our collective memory without a grain of truth at the center of the pearl.

From there, it's a logical progression to the next step: if money makes the world go 'round, a lack of money may make the world stop. The people at American Airlines can testify to that.

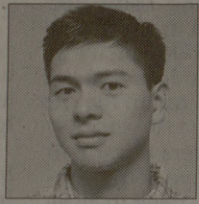
By now, the general outline of the impending strike by the pilots of American is probably widely known. It's about filthy money, of course. And without an 11 percent pay raise, pilots are threatening to make American travel grind to a halt.

Airline pilots are, for the most part, highly skilled professionals. Maybe they do deserve more money. It seems the yearly going rate of \$130,000 might be just barely enough to scrape by on.

The pilots' union at USAir recently voted in favor of a pay cut for themselves because USAir apparently was in serious financial jeopardy. This selflessness goes to show people are willing to cooperate and sacrifice, especially during hard times.

Nevertheless, the hyper-charged capitalist zeal that has shaped America is also the culprit of many of our country's problems. Leading citizens are resorting to strikes, lawsuits and other drastic means in efforts to claim a bigger piece of the pie. These actions shroud a basic tenet of any functioning society:

Columnist



Travis Chow
Computer science
graduate student

ultimately, society's success depends on the efforts of all people working toward a common end.

Introducing the human element into high-stakes finance doesn't really seem like such a radical idea. But it's one that both the union and management sides at American Airlines could stand to consider. Actually, it's a principle students and A&M employees should consider.

Money, rather than the Aggie spirit, has been the recurring issue at the core of University problems.

Every semester students complain about the newly established tradition of fee increases, while professors continue to scream for more cash. Recent allegations of an A&M professor's misuse of funds sure don't help. On top of it all, consider the loopholes such as PTTS selling nonexistent parking spaces and the MSC bookstore's absurdly high prices on "exclusive goods."

Money is, indeed, one of many commodities that make the world go 'round.

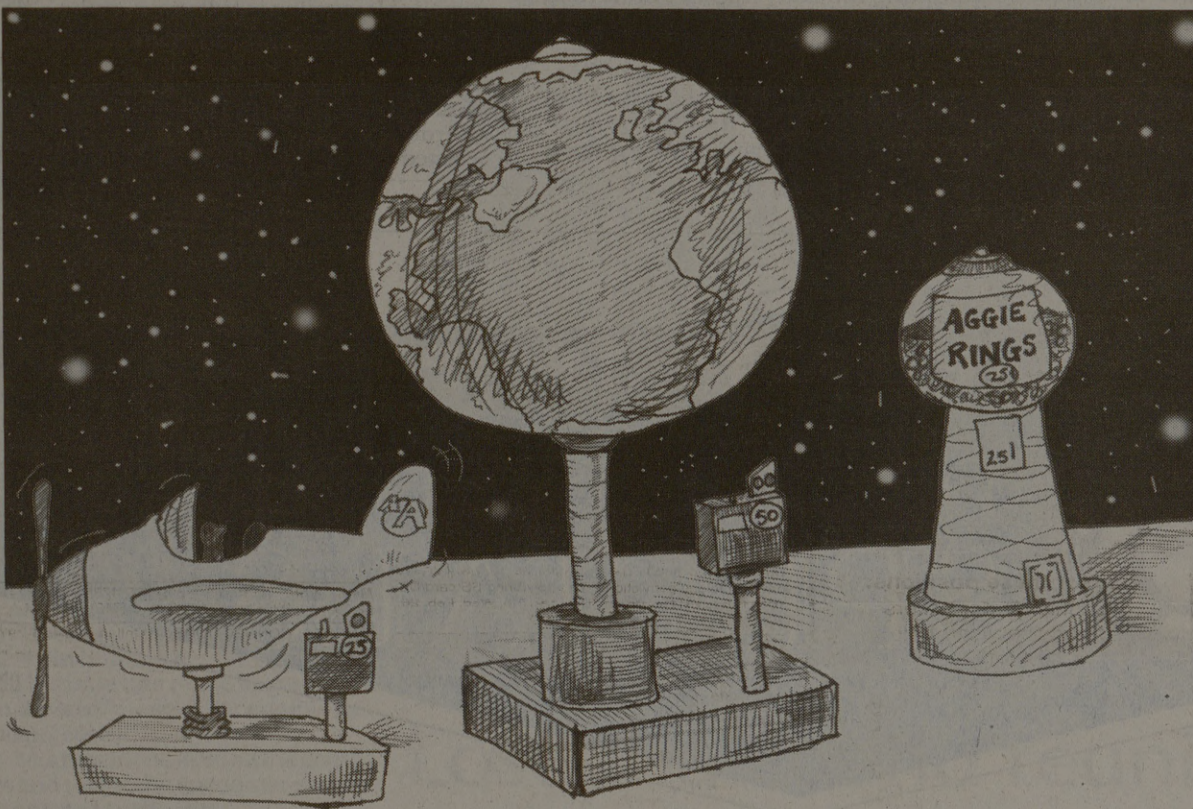
But there is also love, spirit and cooperation. Without such insight, a crisis similar to the one at American Airlines could occur here on campus.

Professors, like pilots, are highly-skilled professionals who have been asking for a pay increase for years.

In addition, numerous positions in Student Government held by unpaid volunteers are actually paid positions at other universities. Under relentless criticism from the student body, these individuals just may snap.

The American Airlines conflict is still not resolved. During the "cooling off period," maybe someone will have a moment of revelation. Is it worth disrupting all those lives for another \$1,000 every month? If only one person felt it was not worth it, American might start flying again.

On the other hand, if students and university employees learn from the mistakes of American Airlines and the cooperative spirit of USAir, we just might become a better University.



Incompetent professors rob students of time, money

At a world renowned university such as Texas A&M, accredited professors should be a given. Webster's Dictionary defines a professor as "a teacher," specifically a college teacher. While most professors at A&M have extensive knowledge of their fields, many lack the ability to teach.

Maybe Webster wasn't defining university professors, but only college professors. University professors must only be here to research, considering the act of teaching as a necessary evil. The first time (and unfortunately

Columnist



David Boldt
Senior
marketing and
management major

nately not the last) I ran into this problem was in a business analysis class.

My class was taught by a professor who I assume had sufficient knowledge of the curriculum. She had been teaching this class, as well as another BANA class, for years. But, after three weeks of watching students correct her own curriculum, I began to get aggravated. I would leave the class every day

feeling clueless and cheated out of time and money.

After talking to other students who had taken this professor's class, I realized this same mode of scatter-brained teaching tech-

niques had gone on for years. There were even rumors of a petition in past semesters to have the professor removed. I wondered why this professor was still teaching at A&M.

One might think I'm just a disgruntled student who is complaining because I received a bad grade. On the contrary, in just a few hours a funny man named Arf explained the class curriculum in simple enough terms for me to earn a B in the class. Maybe he should hold tutoring sessions during class and save time for everyone.

This semester it's back to square one. This time I managed to get an economics professor who was capable of making even the simple concept of supply and demand seem complicated. When

asked why she insisted on mathematically proving every formula, which thoroughly confused everyone, she stated my point perfectly. "I'm an economist—that's the way I think," she said.

Back to tutoring I go. In the last three years at this school, in casual conversations all over campus I have heard variations of this scenario over and over again. It has to stop. Responsible students shouldn't have to pay extra money to have a tutor do the professors' jobs.

One problem lies in the qualifications evaluated during hiring of professors.

Dr. William Perry, Dean of Faculties, said three main criteria are examined. "We usually look for a doctorate degree as well as evi-

dence of an ability to research and teach," he said.

I guess one out of three ain't bad. When asked whether the ability to research is weighed over the ability to teach, he said, "That decision is left to the department level."

There should be no such decision. The possibility of weighing research ability over teaching ability shouldn't be an option.

Another problem lies in teacher certification. It doesn't exist. Department heads have nothing to go on, no proof these people can actually communicate effectively what they know. High school teachers must be certified by the state to teach what they know, but anyone with a master's degree (and

sometimes less than that) can teach at A&M.

Student-professor evaluations offer no help either. Perry said the evaluations are considered in promotions and tenure, but not necessarily reviewed by the department heads each semester. They don't seem to care much what we think about the average professor.

Obviously, many professors are competent teachers. Most of the professors I have had are pretty good at effectively conveying the material. But one professor with below average teaching skills is one too many.

Students' futures are at stake, and they must be allowed to learn the material from the people they pay to teach it.

Too many incompetent professors are slipping through the cracks.

PTTS neglects student parking

As if the parking situation at A&M isn't bad enough, the students that park in the Read lot next to Kyle Field have been told they are not as important as a conference scheduled for March 2-6. After continually denying that a parking problem exists on our campus, Tom Williams, Director of PTTS, only makes the problem worse by allowing the parking spaces students have paid for to be used for a week by the conference attendees.

I contacted the PTTS office to complain, only to be told to fill out a form which would be processed in 2-3 weeks (after the conference—how convenient). I would suggest to PTTS that they refund the money for a week's worth of parking permits. If a reasonable explanation exists for this situation, I would invite Williams to address it in a Mail Call letter to the students. I encourage every student that will be affected by this situation to call Williams and voice an opinion.

Brendan Guy
Class of '99

Brad Russell
Class of '97



Gays deserve equality in military

In response to Steve May's Feb. 21 column

There is no legitimate justification for not allowing homosexuals in the military. The claims that allowing homosexuals in the military will disrupt morale and discipline are the same bigoted remarks that were made when the decision was made to integrate blacks into previously all white units.

Homosexuals aren't disrupting discipline and order, prejudice and homophobia are.

Soldiers are supposed to obey orders and work with whomever they are told to. The only reason for excluding homosexuals is bigotry. Bigotry has no

place in the U.S. Armed Forces or anywhere else.

As for May's comments about women not being able to serve in infantry units, wouldn't the logical solution be to set up what physical and mental standards are required for serving in the infantry and then let anyone who meets those standards can serve? There are definitely women who are physically capable to serve, and they should be allowed to.

Our armed forces should be run strictly on the basis of ability to do the job. If you can do it, no matter who you are, you should be allowed to do it.