

**CAMPUS CONNECTION**

# Ring dance

## Graduate students not afforded same tradition privileges as undergraduates

The Association of Former Students (AFS) Ring Office determines the policies for ordering and distribution of rings. Currently, undergraduates order their rings upon completion of 95 semester hours. Graduate students may apply for their rings after their degrees have posted.



**ADAM COLLETT**  
columnist

The practical interpretation of these policies is undergraduates order their rings in sufficient time to have them in hand (or on hand), for graduation, job interviews and other end-of-college traditions.

Graduate students, on the other hand, are generally precluded from enjoying that privilege because they will not receive the rings until well after they have left campus.

Porter Garner, the associate executive director of the AFS states that the goal of those policies is to maintain the integrity of the ring.

Each Aggie has the right to walk across the graduation stage wearing his or her Aggie ring. The current policy can be changed to permit that while still maintaining the integrity the AFS, and indeed all Aggies, value.

Doctoral students should be permitted to order their rings upon reaching degree candidacy, and master's and professional students should be permitted to order their rings after applying for graduation.

Tying doctoral-student ring eligibility to attainment of degree candidacy is perhaps the most obviously needed change due to the similarity in the lengths of time undergraduates and doctoral students spend at an institution. In fact, this change has generated the only formal proposals made, in the form of resolutions from Graduate Student Council and Student Government.

Undergraduates traditionally spend four to five years on campus. Compare that figure to doctoral students. Some can theoretically finish in two to three years, but due to the length, rigors and setbacks of the dissertation research process, more commonly

stay four or more years.

Attaining candidacy (by completing course work and having one's research plan accepted) typically occurs sometime in the third year. Thus, granting ring-ordering privileges to students who have made that cut is roughly comparable to the standard for undergraduates.

Allowing master's and professional students to order their rings just after applying for graduation is the toughest sell of the three. Although the current policy indicates these students are entitled to a ring eventually, even adjusting the timing slightly requires several misconceptions be cleared up.

First, awarding an Aggie ring after only a year or two at the University is always inappropriate. This would be poor policy for a non-transfer undergraduate, who would still have two to three years remaining at the University. However, if graduate students were awarded their Aggie rings in their last semesters, that would sometimes entail the ring being ordered after a year-and-a-half at the University or (more rarely) after just under a calendar year.

Those timelines are based on the fact although a typical master's program consists of at least three years of work, a few only last one-and-a-half or two years.

Another misconception is the different lengths and difficulties of graduate programs will make any new system of ring-granting inherently unequal.

Admittedly, there is great variance in program length for master's and professional programs (at least compared with undergraduate programs). But given that graduation applications are submitted the semester in which one graduates, the application requirement affects all programs equally.

For example, under the current policy, Master's Student A completes her degree in seven semesters, Master's Student B completes her degree in five semesters; and each orders her ring two months after each graduates.

With the proposed change, each would be eligible to order the ring an equal six months earlier: Student A at the beginning of her seventh semester, and Student B at the beginning of her fifth. Although this proposed change does not enhance the fairness of the policy, it at least does not detract from it.

The final misconception is the integrity of the ring will be diminished by allowing graduate students to have their rings just before graduation.

Again keeping in mind it is already accepted practice these students are entitled to rings after they graduate, then in order for the integrity of the ring to be affected, it would have to be likely these people would not actually graduate.

It is ridiculous to suppose there is a large population of evil-minded graduate students who will invest time and money in several years of graduate studies, get their Aggie rings, and then suddenly leave A&M before completing degree requirements. All this be-

cause they are consoled by the thought, "Hey, at least I beat the system and got my ring."

A longitudinal study by the Office of Graduate Studies showed a retention (graduation) rate for graduate students of over 80 percent. That keeps pace with the latest reported rates for undergraduates.

The truth is, on a level consistent with undergraduates, graduate students finish what they start, meaning that pre-graduation ring granting is equally risky for both groups. Even Garner admits there would be no actual loss in the integrity.

And if there is no actual loss of integrity of the ring, then there can only be a symbolic loss. Garner fears this perceived loss will cause undergraduates to collectively respond with sentiments such as "If I have to wait nearly three years to get my Aggie ring, then everyone should have to."

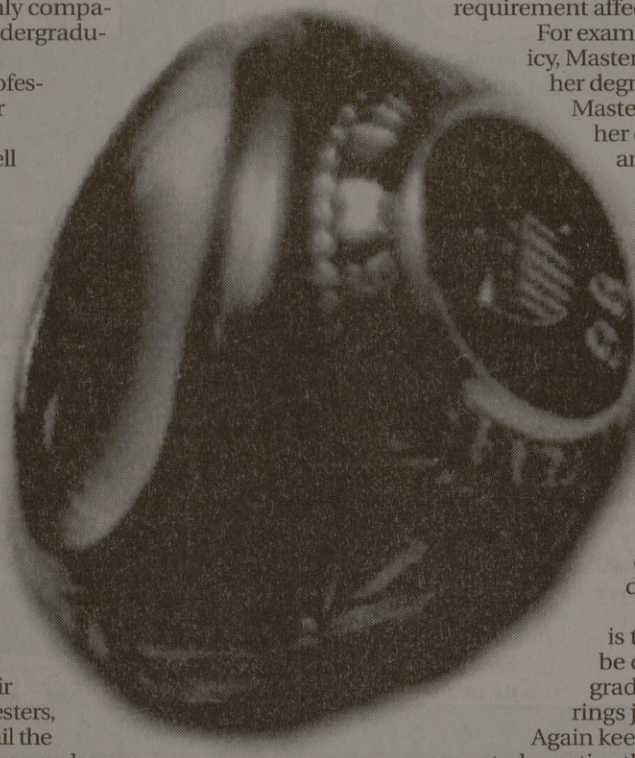
Such a view sells undergraduates short. I know and trust most students will sympathetically understand that allowing all Aggies to graduate with rings is worth overcoming those initial selfish reactions.

The University's Vision 2020 plan includes enhancing the institution's reputation for graduate study. Opening up the ring experience to hard-working graduate students will be a proud but long overdue step in the right direction. By making this leap of faith and changing the policy now, even on a trial basis, the Association may ultimately benefit from more involved and supportive former graduate students.

The AFS is currently holding committee meetings to consider changes to the Ring policy. The time for transfer, graduate student and supportive undergraduate Aggies to act is right now. They can seize this window of opportunity by communicating their views en masse to Student Government, the Graduate Student Council and the Association of Former Students.

Graduate Aggies may not fit the traditional picture of a recent high-school graduate, first-time-at-college Aggie, but they work hard and are a valued part of the community. It's about time we started treating them as such.

*Adam Collett is an educational administration graduate student.*



**PERSPECTIVES**

# AIDS research raises questions about origins, myths of illness

News-papers around the globe last week reported that the first known HIV-virus has been discovered in a blood sample taken from a man in 1959.



**STEWART PATTON**  
columnist

This discovery is another episode in the chain of events which former Harvard professor of biochemistry Charles Thomas calls "the most morally destructive fraud that has ever been perpetrated on young men and women of the Western world."

To date, there is still no concrete evidence that HIV causes AIDS, and researchers continue to ignore the possibility that AIDS may in fact be a noninfectious disease.

What exactly is AIDS? University of California-Berkeley professor of molecular biology Peter Duesberg said HIV is now named as the new cause of thirty previously known diseases, including Kaposi's sarcoma, tuberculosis, dementia, pneumonia, weight loss, diarrhea and leukemia.

If any of these previously known diseases now occurs in a patient who has antibodies against HIV (but rarely any HIV), then his or her disease is diagnosed as AIDS and is blamed on HIV.

With all of the AIDS rhetoric of the past decade, this simple truth may shock you: there are no citations in any medical journals or books for the hypothesis that HIV causes AIDS.

Duesberg's statistical evidence and verifiable data have never been refuted; rather a media ready to pounce on "sex equals death" stories has ignored him.

Duesberg shows HIV cannot cause AIDS because HIV does not destroy T-cells in laboratory petri dishes even at thousands of times the concentration found in humans.

Additionally, none of the 150 chimpanzees injected with HIV have AIDS — some approaching two decades of exposure — while

chimps injected with other known human viral diseases contract the disease in 24 to 36 hours.

While the medical science establishment cannot conclusively prove that AIDS has an infectious cause, Duesberg shows the many possible noninfectious causes of the grab-bag of diseases now known as AIDS.

Using standard statistics, he shows that nearly all people who die of AIDS have been users of heroin, cocaine, AZT (developed for cancer chemotherapy but abandoned as too toxic), or amyl and butyl nitrates (popular among homosexuals in the disco era).

Duesberg shows that AIDS does not meet even one of the classical accepted criteria of an infectious disease.

Unlike conventional infectious diseases, AIDS is nonrandomly restricted to males, which constitute 95 percent of those infected; there is no active microbe common to all AIDS patients; no common group of target cells are rendered nonfunctional; and there is no common, predictable pattern of AIDS symptoms in patients of different risk groups.

How, then, have scientists come to accept the notion that HIV causes AIDS? Bryan Ellison, co-author of *Inventing the AIDS Virus* with Duesberg claims the Center for Disease Control, a \$2 billion a year government agency, has a bias towards epidemics of contagious diseases because of its "great admiration and respect for the germ theory."

The germ theory of the late 19th century ended the era of infectious diseases, which now account for less than one percent of all mortality in the Western world. Because of the great success of virus hunters in curing infectious diseases, Big Science has a bias towards microbial causes of disease.

Big death tolls and big funding lead to what Steven Epstein in *Impure Science* calls a science-in-haste. AIDS research is research driven by exigency and in-your-face tactics from AIDS activists, all of which causes the Center for Disease Control to fall back on what it

knows best.

Is AIDS an isolated incident of mistakenly attributing infectious causes to a noninfectious disease? Certainly not. Scurvy, which scientists now know is a result of a vitamin-C deficiency, was once thought to be spread by rats and unsanitary conditions aboard ships. The disease was completely eradicated, however, once sailors were given daily doses of limes (hence the sailors' nickname "limey").

Hidden in the annals of forgotten bad science is an epidemic that anticipated the AIDS epidemic. SMON, a frightening disease that caused nerve damage and paralysis, raged through Japan in the 1950s.

After nearly 20 years of ineffective virus-hunting, scientists finally found that SMON is caused by the drug clioquinol, a medication that was prescribed for stomach cramps. The epidemic's toll officially ended in 1973 with 11,007 victims, including thousands of fatalities.

The Center for Disease Control, which is now a main player in AIDS research, predicted in 1976 that "swine flu" would devastate the country.

This announcement led to the immunization of 50 million Americans with a vaccine known to have toxic side effects.

No flu epidemic materialized in the rest of the population, but thousands of people had nerve damage and paralysis, and dozens died from the toxic effects of the vaccine.

Over six billion dollars a year is being spent to fight AIDS. People who test positive for HIV are given death sentences, and junior-high girls are taught how to put condoms on bananas.

Will AIDS be a repeat of the SMON fiasco? For the sake of the 10,000 AIDS patients that are expected to die in the next year, scientists should learn from the past and abandon the unproven HIV-AIDS hypothesis.

It is time to find the lime or the clioquinol instead of fruitlessly chasing HIV.

*Stewart Patton is a junior sociology major.*

**GENDERSCOPE**

# The Rules II offers another dose of tips for man-catching

All right women; it has been three years since *The Rules*, the modern woman's how-to guide to achieving wedded bliss, first burst onto the dating scene.

What? You haven't snagged a man yet? And you've been following the golden *Rules*? Well, not to fear. Ellen Fein and Sherrie Schneider, the gals who brought us such invaluable advice as "don't leave the house without wearing makeup" and "don't accept a Saturday night date after Wednesday," have now published more sure-fire tips for dragging Mr. Right down the aisle.

But how do these new *Rules* apply to me, you ask. They seem so archaic, so antifeminist. Not true. The *Rules II* apply to any 90's collegiate woman pursuing her MRS degree.

The sequel to the original *Rules* examines some of the aspects of dating Fein and Schneider failed to include in their original manual. These are serious topics that any single, marriage-minded female should study, memorize and take to heart. The vital, relationship-saving information in this book includes:

### RULES FOR TURNING A FRIEND INTO A BOYFRIEND

An important topic for so many women. Fein and Schneider have laid out a step-by-step procedure that will no doubt land you in a Rachel-Ross-esque relationship.

1. Make sure he has always been interested in you as more than a friend.

This is very important for *Rules* girls to remember because the crucial element in any *Rules*-based relationship is animal attraction. After all, *Rules* girls understand that men are not attracted to women's personalities or minds.

Definite signs that he is interested in more than friendship include him making excuses to be near you ("My toilet is broken. Can I use yours?"); asking lots of questions about your love life ("If you and your boyfriend aren't going to use those tickets tonight can I have them?"); and trying to help you out by doing little things around your house ("Sorry about the grease fire. Do you want me to clean that up?") And teasing is crucial. Think fourth grade. Now think college. Realize that men never change.

2. Once you have established that he is interested, mention you are not dating anyone.

Hint, hint. With any luck, he'll pick up on this oh-so-casual hint and ask you out. And once he does, immediately start following the original *Rules* (i.e. Never call him back, never pay for dinner, etc. — definite ways to endear yourself to a man.) So what if he thinks you've gone Jekyll and Hyde on him?

You are a *Rules* girl. It could be fatal to your new *Rules* relationship if you continue to be your old self, the woman he always felt comfortable just hanging out with. Instead, be feminine, graceful, mysterious. And flip your hair. A lot.

GETTING BACK WITH AN EX



**JENNIFER JONES**  
columnist

Generally speaking, not the best idea. But you've gone out with several bozos since your breakup with the ex and realized that his minor personality flaws were nothing compared to the foot odor and back hair you have encountered since. So what's the first step?

1. Leave a message on his answering machine.

No, not 20 saying how much you miss him, how sorry you are, how many children you'd like to bear him. Just something short, sweet and nondescript. If he does not call back or files a restraining order against you, the relationship is over, end of story.

2. (If he calls back and you set up a date,) try to be the girl he fell in love with.

It doesn't matter that you have grown, matured, changed. This is about getting a ring.

### ON-LINE DATING

You are love struck. Surfing the 'Net one night, you drop into a chat room and lo and behold you discover your soul mate, screen-name Studmuff33. Realizing that he is The One, you know you must put *The Rules* into immediate action or risk losing him. But how? How does one radiate animal magnetism over modem lines? Send a photograph. After all, there is no point in continuing an Internet relationship if the person thinks you look like Uma Thurman if instead you resemble Janet Reno.

### OFFICE ROMANCE

Once again, Fein and Schneider have identified a true concern of modern women: what to do if you fall for a guy you work with. Tips for a successful catch:

1. Don't hover near his work station.

This is important for several reasons. One: You don't want him to catch you making puppy eyes at him. He should notice you because he finds you attractive, not because every time he looks up he meets your love-glazed eyes. Two: It is hard to get your work done if you are constantly hanging around his area. Neglecting your own work will just get you fired and then where would you be? Three: It just isn't cool if you, in your haste to have him notice you, trip and dump an entire tray of drinks on yourself. It tends to shatter that graceful and mysterious image you've been trying to cultivate.

2. Don't kiss or hold hands at work.

This definitely rules out any steamy rendezvous in the storeroom.

3. Always look cute and fashionable.

Once again, *Rules* girls understand that relationships based solely on physical attraction are the only ones that really last. You should dress in trendy outfits, look sexy and, most importantly, dress to impress. Granted, this can be difficult in a McDonald's uniform. But not to worry. By wearing makeup and spraying on the perfume you too can become the object of your crush's desire. Remember, as Fein and Schneider point out, "Do all of this for yourself, but also because you could run into him ... at the office."

As you can see, Fein and Schneider offer a wealth of information to single, independent women in their new book, *The Rules II*. Their insight into men, women and relationships is truly astounding. No woman who has marriage on her mind should be without a copy of this liberating, intriguing text.

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