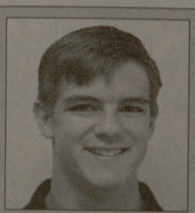


# A Course, A Course; My Kingdom for a Course

## A&M students, faculty should respect the liberal arts department

Now is the winter of our discontent." — Shakespeare, "Richard III."

It is a fair-afe bet to at Texas M Univer-, a school nded on disci-nes of agri-ture, me-ics and ilitary, liberal s are a lit-neglected. far, no-ty has complained. However, A&M now has de- it wants to be a top-10 uni- sity. To do this, the University o has decided it is necessary to f up the College of Liberal Arts rder to achieve this status. r the first time in the over-100 r history of A&M, a true fine s program is being founded. is manipulative approach to ucation is not something the iversity should be stooping to. "Idote on his very absence." — he Merchant of Venice."



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columnist

For many years now, the University really has not needed a llege for liberal arts. In fact, the iversity really needs to not ve a college for liberal arts. Af- all, a college of liberal arts rks critical thinking. Heaven forbid there be some ial criticism of this fine, up- anding, completely balanced stitution of higher learning. In e tradition-steeped atmo- here red-ass A&M are addicted t that kind of deviation into e realm of free thinking would

be downright dangerous. To the mentally-inbred, homo-phobic, conservative collective brain of Aggieland, free thinking, and therefore a strong college of liberal arts, is not something to be desired. "Use her well." — "Othello."

However, the University has decided to brave the criticism and strengthen the College of Liberal Arts. This is being done simply because all the top-10 universities have good liberal arts departments, so Aggieland has to have one, too. Keeping up with the Joneses is being played out with thousands of students and millions of dollars. That's mature.

Of course, the faculty and staff in liberal arts have jumped at the chance. Who wouldn't? Who would turn down the chance to really make a difference in many lives? Who would turn down newer, better facilities and more higher-caliber students? Who would turn away millions of dollars? Only the heir to the throne of the kingdom of idiots. There is no shame in opportunism. "We few, we happy few. We band of brothers." — "Henry V."

The most ironic touch to this little tragedy is that everyone is using everyone else, all the while smiling and exchanging hearty handshakes. The College of Liberal Arts is using the University's short-sighted religious passion toward becoming a top-10 university to increase them and theirs.

The University is using the College of Liberal Arts' desire to finally expand to give the appearance of wanting to provide a good education. As usual, the students are getting the sharp

end of the sword. The decision to expand the College of Liberal Arts or not should be based on whether or not the University needs its expansion to improve the University, not to satisfy the institutional inferiority complex of the University. To enter into a program designed to nurture the minds of students and certify them to continue on into life with less than pure motives is to risk passing on that Machiavellian mindset to the students.

Second-tiering students' educations in favor of looking better for a national poll is denying the very existence of this university, an institution of higher learning. The University exists to educate students; everything else should be secondary. Over the years, this has been forgotten in the politics and grabs for power.

The ability to backstab and use everyone around you may be quite valuable at a departmental meeting, but in life, knowledge of a field and how to successfully interact with, not over the dead bodies of, people is essential. Playing with lives is not a good idea.

As Hamlet said, "The play's the thing, wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king." The king, in this case, the administration, is engaged in a very dangerous act.

Whether it falls apart around their ears or not will be based solely on whether the administration is guilty of only using the colleges for the University's image war, or if they honestly care for the students' educational well-being.

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GRAPHIC BY QUATRO OAKLEY/THE BATTALION

# Controversy concerning free speaking decreases unity

Over the past few weeks the nation has been exposed to repetitive commentary regarding pro football's most effective defensive end, Reggie White.

Football, however, has not been the topic of remarks from everyone ranging from Jesse Jackson to Republican Congressional leaders. The topic has been the appropriateness of White's remarks before the Wisconsin State Legislature.

Apparently, White gave a speech where he poked a little fun at every racial group, including his own, and then tied the speech together with a positive message. He had a little something to say about homosexuality as well.

The message since the speech, however, has been nothing but negativity and a stifling posture from those who disagreed.

It seems as if the phenomenon of political correctness has spun America into a state where it is unacceptable to have an issue or to make commentary on an issue for fear of upsetting some person or group of persons. As a culture we have spent so much time telling ourselves that we were a mean, intolerant people in years past that, in effect, we have become mean and intolerant of those who dare to voice their opinions today.

This trend has got to stop.

Political correctness is edging us toward a homogeneous society where everyone is encouraged to have the exact same beliefs, publicly at least. Ahh, unity.

White is an ordained minister, family man and quite probably the best defensive end to have ever played the game of football. Based on these credentials he should be an American hero, but he's not — in the past few weeks he has been turned into an American villain.

Why? Because he dared to admit his true feelings on some of the issues that are prevalent today: Race, sexual orientation, family values, etc.

He admitted that he saw some differences between the races of the world, not differences that make one race better or worse than another, just differences.

He admitted that he prefers women to men and quite frankly, he doesn't agree with or understand fathoming another man as a sexual or romantic partner.

Ugh, so what? Most of us don't either.

Opinions are like . . . well, you know the saying. Homosexuals can't fathom having a member of the opposite sex as a sexual or romantic partner, and people of one race usually can't fathom being anyone other than who they are.

Again — so what?

Does that mean that we are all incapable of seeing the other person's point of view or that because there



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are little differences between all of us that there can never be any common ground?

A few years ago it was a regular occurrence to have seen comedians make fun of people's differences and things they don't understand, but no one ever complained. Weren't these comedians just professing their personal opinions in a humorous way? Sounds sort of like what White was trying to do.

White just went one step too far. He brought God into the debate.

Of all of the arguments and all of the disagreements that are out there in Irrationality Land for people to disagree upon most can be handled peacefully, until somebody starts telling us what God thinks about this and what God thinks about that.

Each religion has its own idea of what its deity is like and what that deity will stand for and what it won't, but for some reason when folks start talking about being intolerant of something their argument is usually finished off by religious reasoning.

Pat Robertson and White seem to think we're in for some trouble because we keep "shaking our fists in the face of God" by tolerating homosexuality as a society.

I guess they want us to round up all of the homosexuals, drag them out in the street and throw them a solid beating.

Trent Lott and Dick Army say that homosexuality is like a medical condition or a disability that can be treated. Well good for them. Congratulations, guys.

They have mastered the task of asserting their opinion regardless of what people might think about that opinion.

We don't have to agree with their opinion but at least they have the intestinal fortitude to get out and voice it.

Be an adult; say what's on your mind.

We have a television shows like "Politically Incorrect" and "Dennis Miller Live" because it has become such a nuisance for someone to express an opinion other than the safe and expected status quo guaranteed not to upset anyone.

America needs to grow up a little bit and get used to taking a punch again.

Political correctness has allowed a trend to develop that makes it wrong by public opinion for one to assert any sort of personal opinion that makes a value judgment about anyone or anything.

We all make value judgments about other people everyday in the form of who our friends are and what religion we subscribe to; it's just become wrong to advocate your decision making criteria publicly.

If we don't toughen up a little bit and stop crying every time someone shares an opinion there will probably never be open and honest debate on the issues of the day without someone getting persecuted in the process.

Although some of us agree with Reggie White and some of us don't, he's got the right idea.

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# Violence solves no problem, racism often is mistaken

Three weeks ago my skull was fractured in four places when I was assaulted, presumably for being a racist, at a concert in Albuquerque, N.M.

I'm not a racist, but I am a stand-up comic. At the concert, I was telling three of my friends a joke I was working on, and in the discussion that followed, I made a stereotypical remark about Asian men. It just popped out. I did not mean it.

Twenty minutes later I was accosted by an Asian guy and two of his friends. I apologized sincerely for offending them and offered everybody a beer for their grief.

Instead of accepting my apology, the guy told me he was going to bash my skull in, and then proceeded to do it.

Since then I've struggled to put what happened to me into a larger context, to see if there were any latent racist tendencies inside of me.

But racists, generally speaking, do not apologize for their racist statements, nor do they offer to buy their victims a beer.

In truth, the assault was probably an act of random violence. The guy might have risen that morning wanting to hit somebody, and I just happened to give him half an excuse.

But my experience, and far more serious incidents like the brutal murder of James Byrd Jr. in Jasper, illustrate the failures of political correctness in America.

In our rush to condemn a vocabulary of offensive words and phrases, we have largely ignored their social context and the sentiments of the people that use them.

That's because it's much easier to attack the way people



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will always be "colored person." I realized this while listening to Maya Angelou speak. The terms "colored person" and "person of color" spring forth from her beautiful full lips with a dignity that makes me wish I was 10 shades darker. Her understanding and appreciation of her culture could make any dead word, even "nigger," sound less a label than a noble title.

Yet most every dictionary identifies "colored" as offensive. While we kill each other in the streets, we tiptoe, giggle and talk about how we don't use the "n-word" and pat ourselves on the back for making a difference.

It shouldn't matter what we call anybody. It should only matter how individuals are treated. And where all but the worst jokes and stereotypes are concerned, we'd do well to remember the phrase, "We're laughing with you."

Not all whites are racist. Not all blacks are criminals. Not all Hispanics are lazy. Not all fat people are jolly. Not all Asians are hard-working and studious.

But here's a stereotype on it's way up: Americans are vicious thugs.

And 10 years of political correctness has done nothing to fix that. Three weeks ago while I was complaining about a few fractures and black and bloodied eye I got for making a stupid comment, a colored man who did nothing other than try to walk home was dismembered by demons with a pickup truck and a few miles of Texas road.

What did they call him? Nigger? Colored? African-American?

Who cares? Which one of those terms is harder than the chains that bound him to a fender? Which one of them is softer than sun-melted asphalt?

This culture of violence won't be fixed by all of us learning a new language or telling new jokes. Our first step towards correcting the problem should be more ambitious.

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