

Opinion

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Getting involved, making a difference Committees offer students experience and training

representatives from hundreds of campus organizations will flood the MSC as they adhere groups and recruit members. MSC's Open House is an undertaking. It all task to assemble wide range of clubs afternoon, but the project is just one many tasks of the organization known Memorial Student Center. MSC is comprised of 24 committees, areas from performing arts to leadership programs. The committees in-er 1,800 Aggies, creating a collection res unparalleled on the A&M campus. Sunday, those committees will be re-alongside other campus organizations, ents should make a point of learning y can get involved with the MSC. all its assets, the MSC has a lot to of-ns. Although anyone can attend an gram, Aggies have the opportunity to iting experiences by helping to prose same programs. Hurd, a senior computer science and



DAVE JOHNSTON

international studies major and this year's MSC president, said the MSC provides students with a real learning experience. "Students are involved from generating the ideas to putting on the programs," Hurd said. The MSC hosts many highly visible events. The Film Society brings a variety of films to Rudder Auditorium, MSC Cepheid Variable plans a large science-fiction convention each year, and several committees such as MSC Wiley Lecture Series bring interesting or big-name speakers to campus. Besides allowing students to hear speakers like Margaret Thatcher and Colin Powell, the MSC also offers members an opportunity to plan these same major campus events. MSC committees vary in size from 40 students to about 200. Here students work together and can develop skills that will help them later in life — such as working in teams. Besides hosting productions, the MSC has committees dedicated to creating leadership programs to help students. MSC members are given a variety of opportunities to extend their abilities as leaders through both experience and training. The MSC offers programs designed for many different groups, including several programs just for freshmen; Aggie Leaders of To-

morrow, Aggie Fish Club, the Freshman Leadership Organization and others. But freshmen are encouraged to get involved with any MSC committee. There is an MSC committee for almost every interest, and Open House is a great time to get involved. Students interested in joining an MSC committee should talk to fellow Aggies at Open House and find a committee that interests them. Each committee will hold an informational meeting in the near future, allowing students to get more information on any committees they are considering joining. Once a student has decided on a committee, they must apply to join. Committee chairs review applications to find Aggies who are motivated and will remain involved throughout the year. MSC members should be hard workers who are committed to making a difference on the campus. The MSC encompasses so many programs that it can affect almost every Aggie — if they choose to allow it. Opportunities extend beyond the surface. Aggies have more options than just hearing a lecture or attending a program, they can also get involved and help make a difference.

Dave Johnston is a senior mathematics major.

Campus decisions made by pocketbooks

They are taking away Mr. Toad's Wild Ride. For those students who never got to participate in the subversive side of Disney World, joy-riding with Mr. Toad meant "driving" a stolen car past various obstacles until getting hit head on by a train and going straight to hell. Surprisingly, Mr. Toad is not being replaced as part of Disney World's ongoing effort to make a visit to the Magic Kingdom as wholesome as a trip to church, albeit without the free wine. The reason Mr. Toad's Wild Ride is going the way of the serving wench from the Pirates of the Caribbean ride is purely business. Disney believes the Mr. Toad ride, based on a children's book character several decades old, is not making nearly as much money as a newer, more market-friendly attraction could. Despite the nostalgia that the Wild Ride evokes for an older generation, there is simply no way that popular sentiment can compete against the lure of higher profits. Money as the primary factor in decision making is not limited to large corporations. The influence of the almighty dollar has a key effect on students everyday here at Texas A&M University.



STEVEN GYESZLY

Even with the most perfunctory glance, the differences between the facilities for the College of Business and the philosophy department are striking. The most convenient explanation is to proclaim a lack of respect towards certain academic fields. However, the reality is much simpler. The College of Business brings in much more money to the University through company donations as well as industry-funded research and consulting. Unfortunately for the philosophy department, Socrates is no longer around to endow a chair. That is the difference between a room where the screen electronically descends from the ceiling and a classroom where the chalkboard is barely attached to the wall. As students, it is easy to rationalize why things should go exactly the way Aggies want them to. After all, there are several variations to their reasoning. "My tuition is paying for his/her salary," and "Last semester's fees went to pay for this building" are all common refrains. These complaints are tempting, but unrealistic. A student taking 15 hours pays around \$1,800 in tuition and fees to the University per semester. Granted, students, who have learned to subsist on a Ramen-Noodles-and-Big-K-soda budget, consider this is a staggering amount. But also consider that a professors' salary can range from \$30,000 to well over \$150,000, and the construction of a new building costs several millions of dollars. Students pay a small fraction of what it costs to run the University and as such, get a small fraction of say in how the University is run.

This may seem to be a very callous attitude, but to paraphrase Marlon Brando in *The Godfather*, it is nothing personal, just business. No single institution is out to get college students; our needs are simply not the most valuable option. It is a harsh truth, but it works both ways. Students attend college because earning a college degree means earning a higher salary than going out into the work force with merely a high school diploma. So in the end, who uses who? Either way, Mr. Toad isn't coming back. Another example of the power of money in decision making can be seen on a tour of campus.

Aggies came back to school this semester to find that parking on the side of George Bush Drive, one of the last bastions of free parking close to the University, is now illegal. Many students saw it as yet another fiendish plot hatched by the Parking, Traffic and Transportation Service to make students walk marathon-like distances just to get to class. The truth is the City of College Station received a million-dollar federal transportation grant, and building bicycle paths throughout the city — including installing bicycle lanes along George Bush Drive — was merely one component of receiving the grant. One million dollars, or convenience for a small percentage of students and staff — to city planners, it was a very logical choice to make. Steven Gyeszly is a senior finance major.

MSC Open House: diversity on display Event features smorgasbord of campus student organizations

day, the event will be a hot, noisy and crowded affair. It is hot, noisy and crowded. Aside from the purely physical, Open House also asks students to contrast a wide range of organizations. There are not just apples and oranges to compare, but bananas and kiwis and cantaloupes, too. Also, only half or less of all student organizations can physically fit into the MSC for Open House. This, unfortunately, cuts in to Open House's benefits of comparing all the student organizations and helping smaller ones get their 15 minutes. And, as the number of student organizations grows, this problem will only get worse. There are solutions. Open House should be moved into a larger space and should be divided so different groups are split into mini-Open Houses. Since the MSC cannot hold even the number of groups it does now comfortably, it should be moved to a larger space, such as Reed Arena. The main floor of Reed Arena has 25,000 square feet of exhibit space, plus an additional 10 meet-



CHRIS HUFFINES

ing rooms that range from in size 600 to 6,000 square feet. That is not an insignificant portion of real estate. In addition, the sheer size of the rooms will cut down on the heat and noise, especially if sound dampeners are hung to kill echoes. Reed Arena also has good parking and is not as much of a maze as the MSC. Despite Reed Arena's monstrous size, even it may not be able to hold every organization for Open House. Or, the MSC may decide to continue hosting the event on-site. Either way, Open House should be divided into a series of mini-Open Houses. Student organizations can be naturally divided into several different categories; categories that could each have their own Open House, eliminating the crowds and apple-orange comparisons that are currently plaguing Open House.

For example, the sports-related organizations could hold Open House one day, with the academic organizations taking the next day and so on and so forth. One will not take away from the other, and this will cut the size of Open House dramatically each day, since some students will not attend every one of the mini-Open Houses while, more importantly, the booths will take up much less space. Both of these will make the entire Open House atmosphere much less claustrophobic. Here and now, the problems with Open House are obvious. It is too late to reform Sunday's Open House, but for the spring, for the good of the student body, Open House must be changed. Chris Huffines is a junior speech communications major.

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atherine Kelly, Ashley Kelly, Melissa Maines, Amanda Mansfield, Holly McCoy, Kristen McNeill, Merritt, Michael, Isha Muggles, O'Neal, Catherine Owen, Andrea Peterson, Isha Piotrowski, Holly Piskun, Glissa Roberts, Roundtree, Catherine Sarant, Borah Saunders, Indie Savage, Stephanie Schaefer, Cy Shaver, Kal Sieger, Courtney Smith, Thryn Stemm, Lynn Stev, ren Strube, phanie Tanne, issa Telotte, y Thromm, nifer Trogolo, berly Twigg, ca Watkins, ber Weaver, ke Woodson, y Yaklin, ny Yochim



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