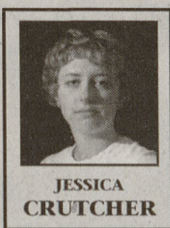


Tuesday, June 6, 2000

Faculty senate callous with comments

The decision whether Texas Aggie Bonfire should continue has many students taking sides in an increasingly heated debate. But regardless of whether bonfire continues or is abolished forever, many of the criticisms made by faculty members during a recent faculty senate meeting were inappropriate and uncalled for.



JESSICA CRUTCHER

The remarks were callous, insensitive and showed an appalling lack of respect for the student body. In addition, many of the concerns voiced by the faculty were negligible.

Problems the faculty discussed included wasting natural resources, hazing and low grades.

The "this is going to hurt me more than it hurts you" attitude is not convincing to college students any more than it is to children.

Rob McGeachin, an associate professor, described bonfire as a waste of natural resources. He stated, "Even events such as Replant are minor efforts in comparison to the amount of timber cut down every year." McGeachin's statement is inaccurate. The timber used for bonfire comes from land that is going to be cleared anyway. In 1998, Replant potted 10,000 seedlings and planted 2,000 trees. That is hardly a "minor effort." In addition, all student bonfire officials are required to attend Replant. If the faculty senate is completely honest, it will admit bonfire is no more of a drain on the environment than automobiles, cigarettes or fireplaces. McGeachin continued his complaints by asking the audience, "How many students flunked out their freshman year because they spent too much time working on bonfire?" Students' bad grades are hardly a valid reason for discontinuing bonfire. Arguing bonfire should not exist because some students compromised their grades is like shutting down Northgate because students spend too much time at the Chicken drinking beer during finals. Texas A&M students are all adults and should be mature enough to budget their time and prioritize responsibly. Bonfire cannot be blamed for students' immaturity. If bonfire did not exist, unfocused students would undoubtedly flunk out for some other reason.

The faculty also addressed concerns of hazing at bonfire site. Bonfire does not cause hazing. If the tradition did not exist, hazing would occur elsewhere. For example, despite repeated accusations of hazing, the Corps of Cadets has not been abolished, because it would be unjust to punish the whole group for the sins of a few people. The same theory should hold for bonfire.

The faculty senate should perhaps be given credit for selflessly taking responsibility for the collapse. In the words of Dr. Paul Parrish, a professor in the English department, "The faculty cannot shirk responsibility in this matter. The only responsible course of action is to discontinue bonfire."

The faculty senate seems to think claiming responsibility gives them the right to decide the future of bonfire. If the faculty wants to claim responsibility for something that was really no one group's fault, more power to them. But discontinuing bonfire would punish students, not faculty. If the faculty feel deserving of punishment, their pay should be docked. The "this is going to hurt me more than it hurts you" attitude is not convincing to college students any more than it is to children.

The faculty senate offered alternatives to abolishing bonfire. One suggestion was that bonfire could be replaced by another less dangerous tradition. This would be like replacing a child's recently deceased pony with a Chihuahua. A tradition begun by the faculty senate is unlikely to be greeted with much enthusiasm from the student body.

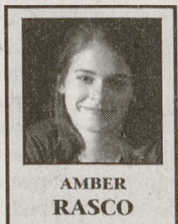
David Barrow, an associate mathematics professor, also stated the need for an oversight board. "We need something to give [students] an incentive to pay attention to corrections that need to be made." In case the faculty was not aware, many students lost close friends in the bonfire collapse. The catastrophe has undoubtedly brought safety to the forefront of students' concerns better than any incentive the faculty could come up with. In addition, safety guidelines were already in place, and students were required to attend a bonfire safety class before ever setting foot on the cut site.

While many of these concerned professors continued to hold class the day of the collapse, many of the supposedly irresponsible students spent the day at the site doing everything they could to help their fellow Aggies. The majority of the faculty failed to offer support and understanding when it was needed most. They have no right to pass judgment on A&M students and traditions now.

The miseducation of Adan Carranza

Citizens' college careers should be priority over those of immigrants

America, the land of liberty and justice for all, continues to prove itself as the most promising country. For thousands of years, people from all nations have abandoned their homelands to travel far and wide for the shores of opportunity. This prowess nation offers the possibility for a nobody to become somebody and defines "a second chance." Recently, this American dream of opportunity has unfolded itself in the life of Adan Carranza. A native of Mexico, Carranza came to the United States with his father in 1990 hoping to create new and improved lives. Time would shortly tell his story of success: The 20-year-old valedictorian of Madison High School now approaches the next chapter of his life — a college education. He has proved himself as a well-learned, hard-working and unique individual; he is the embodiment of the American dream. However, one problem complicates Carranza's continued education — he is an illegal immigrant. Despite obstacles, Adan's future, which once seemed dim, now appears to be brighter than expected.



AMBER RASCO

Although Texas law requires colleges and universities to consider immigration status with regards to tuition and scholarships, admission boards at Texas A&M University, Texas Southern University (TSU) and Houston Community College are currently presenting scholarships to the Mexican native in hopes of winning the underdog's story. TSU is presenting a four-year scholarship with an estimated value of \$40,000, which covers tuition, fees and books. Surprisingly, there is much support for this illegal immigrant in such a conservative state; however, the situation needs reassessment.

There is no doubt that Carranza is deserving of such dazzling offers, and yes, he should continue his education. But the question is where he should continue it. The executive director of the Washington-based Federation for American Immigration Reform asked, "Why can't this guy

get a college education in the country where he is a citizen?" Although this claim may seem harsh, it is quite rational. Texas provides free education through graduation regardless of citizenship. This policy should without a doubt be praised because it allows those less fortunate to lay for themselves an educational foundation, but a line needs to be drawn. Twelve years of utilizing U.S. money is more than sufficient time to get started on the right foot.

Adan Carranza should first become a citizen before being allowed the opportunity to receive U.S. taxpayer's money. United States citizens should receive U.S. funds, and illegal immigrants should receive funds from their native lands.

Until one has sworn allegiance to the United States and its principles, he or she has no right to mooch collegiate benefits. If Carranza is granted citizenship, then no questions will be asked — give him all the money he needs and deserves. Until then, Adan should pursue a college education in Mexico, and share some of his gained knowledge with those natives who were not as lucky to receive the same opportunity as he did. Several advantageous would welcome Carranza back home. Operating as a demigod, role model for his fellow natives, Carranza would contribute much to his country. American ideas would leak into the streets of Mexico, thus expanding the minds of its people. Considering his accomplishments, Carranza has a



KELSEY ROBERTS/THE BATTALION

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LUKE MCMAHAN

American lawyers must respect foreign cultures

Americans are notorious for exercising their ignorance toward other cultures when traveling abroad. "You mean to tell me that you don't have any ketchup here?" is a phrase that has undoubtedly been worn out in overseas restaurants. A relatively new example of this mentality has arisen in France where American professionals are trying to lay down the law on sexual harassment.

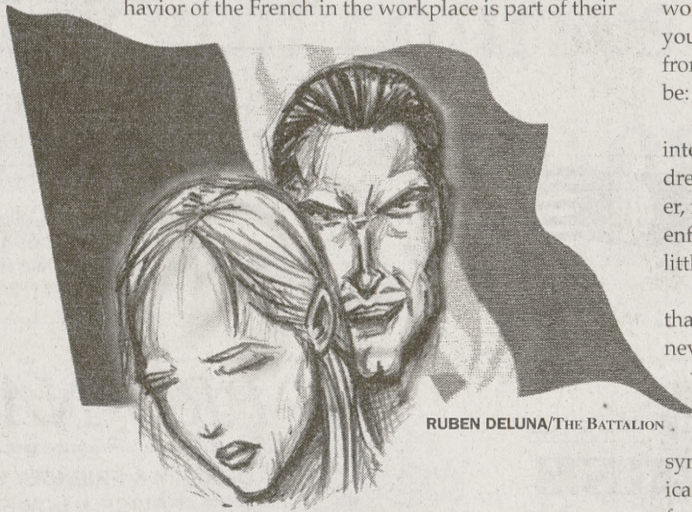
More than a dozen years after the first successful prosecution of a sexual harassment case in the workplace, the problem still exists and still merits much attention. Men and women are still the victims of uninvited sexual advances, off-color jokes, comments about physique and the subjects of sexual innuendos. The steps that American society take to eliminate the problem should be applauded and further implemented.

It must be realized, however, that the term sexual harassment was created in the United States and is a culturally native concept. It is nearly impossible to export and even harder to mandate in a country which has even the smallest sense of integrity or self-identity. While other countries do recognize that sexual harassment exists and is a problem in need of remedy, their definitions and policies regarding sexual harassment are generally much less stringent than in the United States.

According to *The New York Times*, the engineering workshops at Snecma, an engine making company stationed in Paris, have recently been bombarded with accusations of sexual harassment. Several newly stationed American women have cited transgressions by French men ranging from indecent conduct to remarks about the women's physique. The first complaint by the Americans was the abundance of nude photographs and "girlie" calendars that decorated the workspace in the office. "This is an outrage. These photographs are here to provoke women. When we said we didn't like it, the men laughed at us" said Fabienne Lecore, an American aerodynamics

engineer at Snecma. Lecore obviously failed to see that her French co-workers are laughing because they do not understand her allegations. To the accused, these claims are unsubstantiated. In response to the accusations, one French lawyer at Snecma said, "Here we don't care about sexual harassment. Being macho is seen as a good thing in the office. If one is hitting on beautiful women, that's a good thing. And women are hitting on men too."

While this might seem bizarre and even crass to some Americans, it must be understood that the flirtatious behavior of the French in the workplace is part of their



RUBEN DELUNA/THE BATTALION

culture, like Cheetos and corn dogs are to Americans. The French have always been stereotyped with the "lover" image. Is it that surprising to learn that the stereotype is partially true?

The issue of Americans trying to enforce their views of sexual harassment overseas has less to do with the appropriateness of U.S. laws regarding the offense and more to do with the debate of moral absolutism vs. moral relativism, a very controversial topic for philosophers and students of proper ethical conduct.

When in Rome does one do as the Romans do, or does one challenge Rome's policies and try to implement their own set of moral standards? When dealing with sexual

harassment, the answer to the latter question is a resounding no.

With sexual harassment being such a foreign concept in the French curriculum, to enforce American policies in France would first have to be defined according to American standards. The French would have to be educated as to what it is and why it is wrong. Only then could American policies be enforced. Sometime during that informative lecture someone would have to answer the question that would undoubtedly be asked: "Why should we enforce your laws when it is not a real problem for us?" Judging from America's track record overseas, the answer would be: "Because I know best."

With more and more business being conducted in the international setting, issues like this will have to be addressed and a compromise will have to be made. However, moral absolutism is not the answer. Americans cannot enforce their morals on the rest of the world and expect little resistance.

One American lawyer working for Snecma reported that she often tells her French colleagues that they would never survive in an American firm and that many of them would be prosecuted for their loose behavior. This certainly seems like an idle threat, but it is probably true. While the French see this as bizarre and a symptom of what they believe to be an American puritanical culture, they do not contest it. They acknowledge the fact that Americans have very distinct views on the topic in question and they grant them that right.

Business in the global marketplace needs guidelines to resolve these kinds of conflicts. Business must be conducted the "international way," and not necessarily the "American way." The United States must stop trying to evangelize their culture and begin the arduous descent from their moral high ground and acknowledge the fact that these nations do not exist to promote American ideals, but in fact to preserve their own.

When John Wayne decides to travel and do business overseas, he needs to leave his cowboy hat at home.

Luke McMahan is a senior industrial engineering major.

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