

Go study somewhere else

Closure of Policy Sciences and Economics Library puts students at disadvantage, alternative needed

For many Texas A&M students, the Policy Sciences and Economics Library (PSEL) is a vital facility provided by the University. The PSEL is located within the Bush Complex and is isolated from the rest of campus.



SUNNYE OWENS

Dr. Arnold Vedlitz, interim executive associate dean of the Bush School, said, "With this remodeling proposal, the study area at the PSEL will decrease by at least half."

The PSEL is only 5,000 square feet, and if this proposal goes into effect, there will be a dramatic decrease in study area for its students.

Courtney Eschbach, a junior political science major, said, "The expansion of the Bush School is great, but it should not cost the students a library. The PSEL is very convenient for economics, and political science majors. It is easy for students to meet at the PSEL for study groups. It would be an awful decision on the administration's part to cut this library in half. There needs to be another solution."

Jonathan Stinson, a junior political science major, said, "If the library remodeling proposal was put into effect, it would be unfair for the Bush School students to have to go all the way back to main campus just to find a quiet place to study."

There are other ways for A&M to solve this office space problem. Vedlitz noted that the remodeling proposal may cost between \$200,000 and \$300,000 for the new offices.

Instead of reducing the PSEL, the administration could use the money toward building another office building.

Also, the construction of a larger study library at the Bush School would enhance the departments.

Bill Perry, executive associate provost said, "All functions of the PSEL will still be preserved: Book drop and delivery, current periodicals, journals, and reference materials will still remain."

While all of these functions at the library are important, the administration is overlooking another important function of a library: to create a quiet study area for students.

This remodeling proposal would eliminate the study area. To compensate for the lost study area, A&M will provide tables and chairs for students to use in the stairwell adjacent to the 41st Club and in the outside covered patio area behind the Academic Building-West.

These noisy, crowded areas are weak substitutes for the quiet of a library.

Most of the student population and administration want the Bush School to grow and prosper.

This remodeling proposal would only allow the faculty of the Bush School to grow at the expense of students.

For the good of the students, an alternative to eliminating the PSEL must be found.

This alternative must be one that benefits both the students and the faculty at the Bush Complex.

Sunnye Owens is a junior journalism major.



JOE PEDEN/THE BATTALION

Another option

FDA approval of RU-486 a possible compromise in abortion debate

Last month's approval of RU-486, commonly known as the "abortion pill," has caused many people to become concerned with the supposed drastic effects the pill might cause.

Conservatives were offended by the FDA's approval and by the lack of stipulations placed on the pill. But most people are forming negative opinions by noticing only the controversial context of the drug's nickname. Though most of the public knows that the pill can terminate a pregnancy, few recognize the pill can change the face of the abortion debate.

There are many misconceptions associated with RU-486. People fear the idea of a readily available pill that can end a pregnancy at any time. These beliefs are merely misconceptions that are easily spread due to the public nature of the abortion debate.

The pill is not going to drastically change the abortion argument, but it could prove just as effective as a surgical abortion. In the United States it has been made an option just as surgical abortion is an option. Just because the FDA has approved RU-486 for use in the United States does not mean it will be available everywhere — it simply means it is acceptable to the standards of the government.

Not to be confused with the "morning-after pill," the abortion pill is a series of pills that must be taken within the first 49 days of pregnancy. The first dose is

mifepristone, which prevents a fertilized egg from developing in the ovaries. The second dose of the pill sequence must be taken two days later and is misoprostol, which causes the uterus to shed its lining.

Pills must be taken in the supervision of a qualified physician, who will either confirm the lost embryo on the third visit or continue with surgical procedures to complete the abortion. In most instances, if the pill is ineffective, a surgical abortion becomes necessary.

Many people have been led to believe the abortion pill will be available at a bargain price in almost any pharmacy. Actually, the pill will be administered only by a qualified physician and taken in his or her presence, and it will cost between \$300 and \$550. This sum is approximately the cost of a standard surgical abortion.

Doctors who do not have surgical experience will be allowed to administer the drug only if they have previously enlisted a surgeon who can perform a surgical abortion in case the pill does not work correctly. Physicians must contact the pill supplier and provide credentials proving they have the necessary qualifications to administer the drug.

Even with the necessary qualifications, many physicians will not take the risk of administering the drug because they fear controversy and confrontations with

anti-abortion activists. Therefore they will only be able to refer patients to an abortion clinic.

Contrary to popular belief, RU-486's accessibility will not cause drastic increases in abortion procedures and will actually increase the personal consequences.

A common misconception is that the abortion pill will cause the number of abortions in the United States to increase steadily. According to Time magazine,

France adopted RU-486 in 1988; the rates of abortions in the country have declined since the pill's introduction.

Time also suggested that only 33 percent of women have abortions in the first seven weeks, which is the time limit for using the abortion pill.

If the pill is a success, then surgical abortions that take place much later in a pregnancy could be banned. This would limit the amount of time women have to decide whether to end their pregnancies. This could decrease abortion rates.

Another concern of many conservative anti-abortion activists is that this pill will decrease the guilt suffered by the mother after an abortion. But the second stage of the pill, misoprostol, induces contractions and causes the lining of the uterus to be expelled, ridding the body of the embryo. One woman featured in Time described the occurrence as "more than just a period."

A sociologist of reproductive health at Bryn Mawr College suggested that the abortion pill could actually

make the effects even more "emotionally wrenching" because women are forced to confront the product of conception rather than having it vacuumed out by surgery.

The emotional guilt and anguish involved in a surgical abortion is said to be severe; having to see the result of these actions might be even worse.

This is another factor that will be considered by women who wish to end a pregnancy by using the abortion pill — a factor that may not be a preferred by many women.

Abortion is a controversial issue, and the abortion pill will only add to the controversy. On the other hand, it may prove in the long run to be more acceptable to society.

RU-486 could be the best of both worlds, giving women a limited but legal option in an unwanted pregnancy and at the same time appeasing the values of some who are offended by the idea of abortion.

The FDA approved the drug on a scientific basis and limited its effects by setting specific standards for doctors and clinics.

This pill will not end the abortion controversy but it may be a step toward a compromise that both pro-choice and pro-life advocates might agree on.

There is no perfect solution to the abortion issue, but thanks to government approval there is a limited option now available for those who really need it.

Cayla Carr is a junior speech communication major.



CAYLA CARR

March for the better

Legacies of Million Family March, World March of Women could bring positive change

Last week, Washington, D.C., was the location of two very different marches. The Million Family March and the World March of Women 2000 were in town, marching in support of their respective beliefs.



BRIENNE PORTER

The Million Family March, which was organized by the same sponsors of 1995's Million Man March, was ostensibly an attempt to strengthen the family unit.

The World March of Women 2000, sponsored by the National Organization for Women, culminated efforts to raise awareness of poverty and domestic violence throughout the world.

Have these and dozens of other marches on Washington in the past decade accomplished anything?

For attendees of the 1995 Million Man

March, the answer is yes.

Many of the same African American men who attended that event brought their families along.

Many felt that the march "unquestionably pushed the topic [of family responsibility among black men] higher on the public agenda," according to the Dubuque, Iowa Telegraph Herald.

This march brought the responsibility of men to their families into a forum where the positive aspects were emphasized instead of the negative.

While some women found the male-only event demeaning and sexist, it brought awareness to the importance of a male role model in the family.

According to Vivian Gadsden, director of the University of Pennsylvania's National Center on Fathers and Families, "the march, while dismaying some women, had positive effects."

With the Million Family March over, it

will have a potentially positive effect on the efforts of communities to unite families.

With the greater occurrence of both single-parent families and dual-income families, a drive for greater family strength is needed in many communities.

With the Million Family March over, it will have a potentially positive effect on the efforts of communities to unite families.

While the Million Man March saw changes in its target community, the World March of Women 2000 is working to affect not just local communities, but the international community as well.

The march was held to place its chosen

issues into the international spotlight.

Ramesh Sepehrad, spokeswoman for the National Committee of Women for a Democratic Iran, echoed the feelings of many protesters when she said, "This march is against the champions of patriarchy that deny the human, democratic and social welfare of women."

The outcome of the seven-month rally will bring about a more worldwide awareness of the violence against women that occurs in many parts of the world.

The rally protested against the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Many who took part of the march feel that the IMF and World Bank discriminate against the poor and do not lend money to countries with the greatest need.

The march brought out not only women, but also many men who are concerned about ending poverty and violence.

This march's effect will not be felt immediately, but the outcome will have a pos-

itive effect on the continuing fight against poverty and domestic violence.

For many, the marches and demonstrations have brought to light issues that are not always readily addressed. But for others, these rallies bring harsh realities to the forefront of their lives.

While it seems that everyone is protesting against something, these recent rallies are working for a greater good and have opened the door for many more.

With many parts of society in turmoil, a stronger family unit and the ending of poverty are just the beginning of much needed changes.

While the world waits to see whether these rallies make a difference, looking at past rallies, there is a good chance that the changes will occur.

Brienne Porter is a sophomore chemical engineering major.

Mail Call

Personal responsibility lost in bankruptcy

In response to Reid Bader's Oct. 24 column. I think that the concept of borrowing money is lost on Bader.

He states the bankruptcy reform bill will "increase the amount of money that the credit card companies collect."

Credit card companies are not in the business of giving money away. However, when a credit consumer maxes out his or her credit card and then files

for bankruptcy, the consumer gets to spend the money and the government says he or she do not have to pay it back.

This is wrong for two reasons. First, those of us who pay our debts absorb the costs.

Second, it is essentially stealing to borrow money and not pay it back. It is time for people to take responsibility for their actions and paying their debts is a good place to start.

Stop trying to blame the credit card companies for the actions of the consumers.

Not to say that the credit card companies are angels, because they are not, but whose fault is it, real-

ly, that people are trying to live beyond their means.

I admit that I am guilty of this myself, but I do not expect credit card companies to give me money with no obligation to pay it back.

The moral of the story: Live within your means. Do not try to finance a lifestyle that you cannot afford.

Please, do you really need that second television, the cell phone, the \$20,000 car, the sixth pair of designer shoes?

Kenneth Kennedy Class of '01

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class and phone number. The opinion editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, style, and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 014 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters may also be mailed to:

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