

EDITORIAL APPROVE THE FEE

Derek Bok, former President of Harvard once said, "If you think education is expensive, try ignorance." Heeding to this popular quote, The Battalion endorses the Enhancement Fee proposed before the Texas A&M Board of Regents.

As a decision for the Enhancement Fee gets closer, students should realize how lucky they are. Texas A&M officials have openly debated options for the proposed fee increase for months. They have held open forums to initiate student responses to the new fees and have considered how students will be affected by such an increase.

The situation at A&M is favorable compared to the plan facing the University of Texas-Austin. UT students are in an uproar because officials made the decision to hike fees during the holiday break, making forum attendance nearly impossible. They are faced with a proposed fee of \$230 per semester for any student taking more than 7 hours, which translates into an increase of nearly \$2000 across four years.

Both current and future students at A&M are being considered as officials decide what the increase should be, and in response, students should be supportive of this fee.

The time to debate the necessity of a fee increase at A&M is over. The proposed increase is estimated at \$30 per credit hour for students after Fall 2002, a reasonable request. As A&M strives toward Vision 2020, the simple truth is that the school needs more money.

The temptation to make the fee applicable to incoming students only is unfair and will have a huge increase in what they pay. If current students pay an additional \$10 per credit hour, and incoming students pay \$20 per credit hour, then the \$30 increase will be taken care of. This will be a small increase for current students and should not have a huge effect on their funds overall, while new students (who are not aware of current fees and thus not impacted so greatly by fee increases) will not be stuck with the entire bill. Current students should take responsibility for the future of their school and be thankful for the consideration given in their favor.

THE BATTALION

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CARTOON OF THE DAY



MAIL CALL

Top 20 is insulting

Automatically admitting the top 20 percent of "target schools" is a reaction to the symptom of the real problem: a poor level of public high school education. Holding some students to relaxed admissions standards implies that they do not have the capability to compete with students from wealthier schools, which is simply not true.

There is no reason why a student at an economically disadvantaged high school should not have the same opportunities to go to college as a student in a wealthier school district. These high schools should be expected to improve the level of their education so that their students can succeed and compete with the best. By refusing to do so, they are neglecting their responsibility to the students, and to diversity in higher education.

Carrie Carson
Class of 2005

Cartoon raises bigger issues

In response to Jan. 14 cartoon:

Marco Portales claims Aggies cannot recognize how the "offensive" cartoon can be considered racist, evidently because the Battalion ran the cartoon.

I object to the general argument that the perception of a work of art as racist is sufficient cause to condemn the artwork. Consider the inspirational photograph of three members of the FDNY at Ground Zero raising the American flag.

Some people perceive a sculpture of this scene as racist, offended by the race of the three firemen (they happen to be white).

The point of the sculpture is completely twisted, the message missed. I can spot a loopy argument when I see one.

Cam Barker
Class of 2002

More than weird science

Human exhibits should not be made theme parks



COURTNEY WALSH

When the "Human Body Worlds" exhibit opened in 1997 in Mannheim, Germany, it is doubtful that its creator, Professor Gunther von Hagens of the Anatomical Institute of the University of Heidelberg, expected the wildly popular and often contentious response it has received. Or, did he? It features more than 200 human bodies preserved by a technique called plastination, the removal and replacement of water in cells with various polymers, and arranged in some rather controversial and unrefined poses.

These poses include a pregnant woman lying on her side with her abdomen sliced open, fully exposing her womb and the fetus she is carrying and a man riding a horse with the layers of his skin flying off behind him, simulating the wind's effect as he "rides." Each figure gives an eerie life-like impression; so much so that visitors have fainted upon witnessing these images.

Hagens is the inventor of plastination, and there is no disputing that the veterinary and medical communities have vastly benefited from its application. Plastination produces plastic bodies or body parts that are odorless, dry, non-toxic, pliable and so durable they can be stored on a shelf. However, somewhere along the way, von Hagens misconstrued the intended scientific purpose for his technique. Granted, most of the people passing before this exhibit, now on display in Brussels, will never view the human body how medical students and physicians do, but von Hagens has taken this to a level that has no jus-



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tified scientific application. It involves the dismemberment and disfiguration of the human form as his perverse version of art.

Since the exhibit's debut, fierce disputes have raged over the dignity of the dead and the sanctity of the human body. In a May 2001 news article featuring the exhibit, von Hagens stated he was helping to absolve people's fears of death by showing them the beauty of their own bodies. He even

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went so far as to say, "This exhibit gives people the possibility to approach death in a good mood, even a mood of festivity." What is festive about a body, sliced into a multitude of fragments and suspended in the air as if it were shrapnel from an exploding bomb? What of that person's soul?

And yet, bizarre as this is, more than 7.5 million people have passed before this exhibit, and each day an average of five people attending the exhibit donate their bodies to von Hagens, bringing recent totals to more than 4,000. Have these individuals stopped to consider that their loved ones will have an even more difficult time finding closure for their loss when their bodies are displayed in such a disconnected and nightmarish manner?

In a recent world news telecast from Brussels, von Hagens predicted that within the next 10 years he would have animated exhibits in Germany, Japan and the United States.

Freedom of artistic expression and appreciation for the beauty of the human form are not excuses for one man's blatant disregard for the social and emotional impact his "art" is making. If this happens, boundaries will be blurred on multiple levels, plastination as a scientific tool will be completely distorted and doorways will be opened for the Jeffery Domers of the world to create beauty by taking life.

Courtney Walsh is a senior biomedical science and English major.

An education is lost

Wellness Fair should not have been canceled due to Planned Parenthood abortion flyers

Once again, the extreme abortion opinions of some have interfered with the lives of others. The Bryan Wellness Fair will not be held this year, leaving many people without flu shots, cholesterol screenings and valuable health information they usually receive.

The Wellness Fair was originally for Bryan Independent School District employees, but over the past seven years it has grown to be a helpful event for the entire community. Bryan Superintendent Herman Smith announced the fair was canceled at a board meeting in early January. Smith explained the cancellation as a cost-saving measure and possibly prevention for liability of the flu shot.

Before last year's event, both Planned Parenthood and the Coalition for Life were asked to remove graphics from their displays and both complied. The Science Coordinator for BISD, Patti Willems, reviewed each brochure. However, at last year's fair, one of the flyers that Planned Parenthood passed out said "abortion services."

The flyer obviously just slipped through the cracks, and it is hard to believe that any harm was done. Still, there was an uproar at the December meeting of the school board, where the



MELISSA BEDSOLE

Coalition for Life suggested that Planned Parenthood should not be involved with the fair.

It has been said a hundred times before, but evidently there are people who cannot grasp the concept, so it should be said again: Planned Parenthood does not offer only abortions. It is a clinic that offers many other services such as pap smears, birth control and family planning consultations.

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For many women, it is the only option for these services, because most services at Planned Parenthood are greatly reduced from most doctors' offices prices. Brett Cumpton, a trustee of BISD, recently said, "We're in the business of educating children," but their actions are not supporting that. The Wellness Fair was an opportunity to educate adults as well, but now the opportunity has been lost.

The problem of a flyer with two

words that were supposedly inappropriate is easily fixed.

Simply have someone take a closer look at what is being handed out – and undoubtedly, Planned Parenthood would have complied with regulations. But on the other hand, it is time that people stop overreacting.

Having flyers passed out that say "abortion services" does not mean that BISD supports abortions, it is simply information being passed on to the public.

If the concern is having children read those words, that is an even more ridiculous argument. Children of any age could read or hear the words "abortion services" anywhere, anytime. It is in the best interest of everyone that parents clearly answer their children's questions and explain their personal views.

Because these options were too much to handle and no one was big enough to make a decision, this community has lost a wonderful event. It is a shame that the school district has yet to be truly honest about canceling the Wellness Fair, but even more shameful that those who are associated with teaching have given up this chance to really educate.

Melissa Bedsole is a senior psychology major.