

EDITORIAL A STUDENT VOICE

The student newspaper of the University of Texas-Tyler has come under fire from university administration simply for doing its job. *The Patriot* has evolved into an award-winning, investigative bimonthly publication under the guidance of its faculty adviser, a former newspaper reporter. This, however, has gotten the paper into trouble. *The Patriot* now faces a First Amendment battle over the administration's decision to replace Vanessa Curry as adviser and create a student media policy that decreases student involvement. Such action is a gross violation of free speech rights and a detriment to college students and the surrounding communities.

The student newspaper has aggressively sought to obtain public information that the University of Texas-Tyler would rather keep out of public view, such as faculty salaries and campus crime reports, data readily available to A&M students. But the students kept up their efforts to obtain what they had a right to know, in an effort to write well-informed, balanced stories that target their readers. For this, the students and their adviser are being punished.

The UT-Tyler administration has acted shamefully and recklessly. A student newspaper cannot be effective with administrative interference.

The administrative plan to set up the Publication Administrative Council, an oversight board completely composed of administrators with the power to hire and fire the faculty adviser and student editors, is a naked power grab by overbearing administrators.

The administration of the University of Texas-Tyler, by dismissing a faculty adviser and dragging its feet on the release of information and setting up an oversight board, has conducted itself in a manner contrary to the First Amendment. *The Patriot* has yet to do anything that would warrant such hasty and overreaching action.

THE BATTALION

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Freedom Consumed



Female binge drinkers should think twice about their actions



JENNIFER LOZANO

For years, women have fought to overcome stereotypes, ridicule and physical weakness to develop a strong, educated and competitive image next to men in many areas of life. Today, the front line is on novice ground, and the battle scars are in the form of hangovers, blurred recollection and sometimes alcohol poisoning or sexual assault.

According to *Time* magazine, universities nationwide have reported an increase in binge drinking among college women. In a society that has predominantly associated heavy drinking with men, this new twisted level of equality demands the attention of Americans, educators and especially young women.

As women's suffrage evolved into the 1960s sexual revolution and later the feminist movement, notions of femininity were thrown out the window, and women began to embrace liquid liberation, also known as the keg. Although this development came with many perks such as shedding the stifling, unrealistic image of women being angelic, innocent naiveties, the dangers generated are very real. For example, according to *Time*, Syracuse University administrators report that twice as many women as men are rushed to the local hospital because of acute intoxica-

tion. In addition, counselors at Stanford University have observed a rise in the number of women who report "regretting sex" while drunk, and at Georgetown University, there has been a 35 percent increase in women sanctioned for alcohol violations during the past three years.

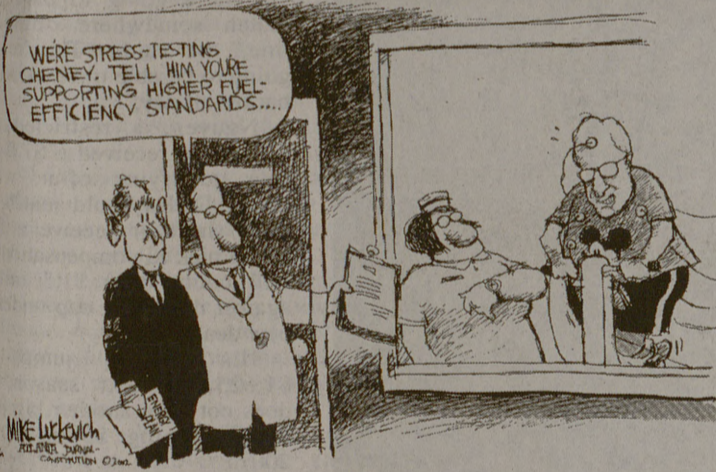
Unfortunately, this trend has not been limited to universities located in a large, metropolitan area or with a large Greek life. In fact, all-women colleges have seen a 125 percent increase in frequent binge drinking since 1993. Although Texas A&M's results from the four-year-old CORE survey, a national college survey, have been surprisingly reserved — Aggies still need to be aware of the hazards of binge drinking at a young age. Jennifer Ford, programming coordinator for Texas A&M's alcohol and drug education program, said other universities that already have collected the results of this year's survey claim that a larger population are choosing not to drink, but the population that is drinking is drinking significantly more.

If more young women are falling into this category of heavy drinkers and trying to drink one for one with men, there are certain female biological limitations that must be considered. Aside from the obvious size difference, studies reported by *Time* reveal that women's bodies have a higher fat to water ratio that makes alcohol less diluted when it enters the bloodstream. Women also have a lower level of enzymes that help break down alcohol

and the long-term negative effects of drinking for women have been found to develop earlier than in men. To add insult to injury, mounting evidence leads researchers to believe that girls who start drinking in their early teens are more likely than boys to become alcoholics. It has become more apparent that although women have become overzealous about drinking with the boys, their bodies have not been as able to keep up.

However, advertisements in women's magazines, popular television shows and movies have done little to enlighten women to the threat that binge drinking poses. In fact, given that the media frequently equates female drinking with power, it is no wonder that women turn to alcohol for a sense of equality. Through pleasing media messages and economically pleasing offers such as "ladies night" at the bars, the negative effects of binge drinking for women have been concealed. Unfortunately, the evidence against binge drinking for women is mounting and cannot be ignored. It is an educated woman's responsibility to learn about the dangers that surround binge drinking. Although it may seem unprogressive and old-fashioned, women are at a higher risk when drinking excessively. This is the reality, and reality does not heed the fashion of the times.

Jennifer Lozano is a junior English major.



MAIL CALL

What merits Aggies?

Last week, Texas A&M disappointed me. After my brother received his rejection letter, we met with the admissions committee to review his application to better understand the rejection. Varsity athletics, leadership in organizations, college credit, strong grade point average, and competitive SAT scores were complimented, however, verifiable facts do not matter as much as we thought. Further into the meeting we discovered that 60 percent of admittance this year depended on the amount of community service hours, something that easily can be embellished since no record of the hours is required. Admissions should realize that sometimes, community service can be obligatory by court order or requirements for school organizations, not just completed from the goodness of one's heart. Furthermore, our parents both have college degrees. We were told a stronger candidate for admittance would have parents who had not graduated high school. Maybe I should quit now so my children will have a chance to attend college. Also, I understand that legacy is no longer considered because it is discriminatory, but I cannot help but wonder if he was rejected because his family attends A&M and it would look bad for diversity issues.

Vision 2020 will eventually make Texas A&M an "ivy league"

caliber school, but once you try to be like everyone else, you are no longer special, like A&M still is. So if your family and friends were rejected by this University, it is not because they are not great students or great people. It is because Bowen and the administration are so wrapped up in Vision 2020 and filling state quotas, they have forgotten what it means to be an Aggie.

Kristen Roesler
Class of 2004

Statistics are what you make them

Just because a statistic is alarming does not make it true. The statistic in a Tuesday *Battalion* article "1,400 students are killed each year in alcohol-related accidents" is actually a fabricated statistic from the Task Force on College Drinking. According to a FOXNews article, these statistics did not come from research but from guesswork. The task force began with the total number of deaths of 18-24 year-olds caused by alcohol related incidents (4665). Since 31 percent of that age-range is in college, they calculated 31 percent of the overall number to conclude that 1445 students were killed. The same technique was used to arrive at other, equally shocking numbers.

Burton French
graduate student

Stricter punishment for cheaters



KATHERINE TUCKER

Aggies do not lie, cheat or steal, right? Think again.

In an academic integrity survey issued in 1997, 88.5 percent of Aggies surveyed admitted to cheating at least once. What is more astonishing is that 74.6 percent of Aggies admitted to cheating more than once. On most college campuses, more than 75 percent of students admit to cheating, according to the Center for Academic Integrity at Texas A&M. Texas A&M boasts of honor within its student body. However, it seems that in such a competitive academic environment, honor has been overlooked in light of personal advancement.

A&M is aware of this problem. In response to the 1997 survey, the Student Government Association established "Know the Code," a committee focus to encourage Aggies to abide

by the honor code. If only it was encouragement Aggies needed.

According to the 1997 survey, only one participant did not know about the Aggie Code of Honor. When a majority of students knowingly engage in an activity that is expressly forbidden, there is only one answer — stricter enforcement of the honor code.

A&M has sent out a message by the silent tolerance of students looking over other students' shoulders that cheating is not a serious offense and will be tolerated under most circumstances. However, according to a faculty workshop on plagiarism Tuesday, it is apparent there is grave concern about the lack of academic integrity. The focus of the discussion on student cheating revealed that A&M faculty and administration are dissatisfied with their current role in the prevention of cheating, and they wish to recommend institutional changes to improve the situation.

There are two ways to

combat academic dishonesty at A&M — by preventing and policing dishonesty or by reinstating the virtue of honesty and integrity. It is a lofty thought that by offering students a refreshing course on honesty, they would change their virtues but realistically, students already know that cheating is dishonest, according to the survey. This is not to say that the University should not promote honor but A&M needs to be realistic — if people are dishonest, they already have violated the honor for which A&M stands, and the University cannot assume that its renewed interest in honor will overcome the self-focused goals of the individual.

Instead, A&M needs to focus on preventing cheating by educating its faculty more intensely and on punishing those who are guilty of cheating. It was noted at the faculty workshop that less than 50 cases of plagiarism per year are reported to the dean of student life. The fault of Texas A&M because it does not require faculty to report

cheating. Reports such as these could establish whether a student is a repeat offender and merit harsher punishment for reoccurrences. Having an active faculty and administration is the first step to correcting academic dishonesty on this campus.

Punishing cheaters is the primary way to enforce the honor code and the best alternative. The 11.5 percent of students who are trying to earn their degree honestly deserve to be given a fair playing field. They cannot wait for the conscience of the 88.5 percent to catch up to them. Texas A&M is at a critical point of growth and must be open to change. Now it is time to see if students will stand up against the skewed morals of a select group and reclaim the University as an institution that stands for nothing less than complete academic integrity.

Katherine Tucker is a sophomore general studies major.