

Opinion

EDITORIAL

A MESS AT CIS

Internet access should be an issue

The computer problems plaguing on- and off-campus students are unacceptable, and the nonchalant attitude Computing and Information Services (CIS) has taken in dealing with the problems is even more inexcusable. The series of outages that have occurred throughout the month of April — and seem to be continuing — are coming at the most crucial time in the semester. With many students faced with paper deadlines and Summer and Fall registration, it is imperative that Internet access be available at all times. CIS is not considering these issues and the extra stress that is added when computer services cannot be relied on.

CIS Associate Director, Willis Marti shrugged off questions about the problems by saying that the most recent firewall blockage and Internet outage was fixed within 10 minutes. However, there have been instances this semester when the server has been down for hours at a time, completely inhibiting students from accessing Websites. CIS Director Thomas Putnam said these are routine outages, calling them such “non-events” that he does not pay attention to them. But to students, these frequent outages are a significant issue, especially when \$148 a semester is charged for computer services access. CIS is responsible for providing a service that considers students’ needs and takes every necessary step to solve any problem that arises. However, attitudes of CIS supervisors must change and more energy should be directed toward targeting the cause of such outages. A solution will not be met until the director and associate director of CIS decide that student need is an issue. If something is not done soon, students should bombard CIS with complaints, and perhaps that will be more overwhelming than the problem at hand.

THE BATTALION

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Real life, celebrity style

MTV's 'Osbournes' captivates television audiences



DIANA SUAREZ • THE BATTALION

Who would have thought watching Ozzy and Sharon Osbourne quarrel over the placement of a dog bowl could be entertaining? Or that listening to Ozzy curse, and curse some more about bubbles, could be one of the most hilarious TV moments in recent memory? Oddly enough, it is this and more — MTV has hit the jackpot with its show “The Osbournes.”



KELLY ZIMMER

Ozzy Osbourne, his wife Sharon, son Jack, daughter Kelly and too many dogs to keep track of are the subjects of the newest spin on reality television from MTV. “The Osbournes” satisfies a fetish for the famous, an obsession for the lives of others and is a show perfectly suited for today’s culture. MTV has discovered the secret to reality success by opening the lives of the rich and famous and added an essential element by focusing on a subject that is a bit uncanny.

It is quite possibly the best thing on TV, for no other reason than the antics and cursing of this family are absolutely captivating. Thankfully, the producers at MTV have realized that watching ordinary people try to win money, run races, survive, conquer, eat bugs and go on dates has gone on long enough. Somehow the “prince of darkness” and his family have entered into American homes, unknowingly becoming equated with normal family life, although few people would

say this is what their childhood was like.

Herein lies the appeal of this show. The Osbournes fail to prove that they are that much different than the typical viewer. In each episode, there are inherent similarities exposed between the Osbournes and something resembling normalcy. Take away the cursing, the tattoos, the pink hair, the British accents and the wealth, and the Osbournes are stripped down to something that somehow, somehow resembles what any family can understand.

Their portrayal on the show and the problems that arise are not that foreign to any family. Kelly loses the gold card, and Jack hits his sister. Ozzy and Kelly share a father-daughter moment by discussing her first visit to the gynecologist. Sharon is the super-mom, managing the band, feeding the animals and throwing hams at the neighbors.

Ozzy Osbourne is shown as more than the hard core rocker known for biting heads off of birds and has given his softer side to an MTV culture. “The Osbournes” makes people see their lives in a different light and serves as an outlet for fantasies. Do not be alarmed by the stigma of the Osbourne family; this show gives people what they want to see. So, thanks to the Osbourne family for being just deranged enough to allow an MTV culture into their home. They have proven to be a fascination worth watching.

Kellin Zimmer is a junior English major.



MAIL CALL

Administration blunders

It is no secret that Vision 2020 destroys traditions, camaraderie and the very aspects that give A&M its uniqueness. We are unlike any school in the nation. Granted, we have problems, but we stand out among the nations universities. We are always surprising ourselves with our abilities, for example, Red, White, and Blue Out. Yet, our beloved school's administrators feel the need to turn this land upside-down in an attempt to fix something that was never broken.

They feel we should lower our standards to accommodate a more racially-balanced campus. They feel dollar signs are the answer. They feel a ranking in U.S. News & World Report will bring some sort of panacea to our problems and elevate A&M into Ivy League status. Did our administrators ever ponder the failure of Vision 2020? What happens when all of your destruction brings not even your precious single-digit number. I know my sentiments right now are not in line with the Aggie spirit, but sometimes frustration with our administration overpowers that. I love Texas A&M, but this needs to be considered by administrators.

Jeff Givens
Class of 1993

Weight loss will be costly to all

In response to Collins Ezeanyim's April 15 column:

At first glance, the idea of the IRS allowing taxpayers to claim weight loss and control expenses as medical deductions, seems ridiculous. This policy is as porous as a wall of a mudhouse in Afghanistan shelled by bullets. A common sense way of exploiting this policy is to eat like a pig for the first 9-10 months of the financial year and then shell out money on weight control measures in the remaining 2-3 months, in order to make the tax payable zero. This in effect implying that a person eats and then gets paid by the government for it.

Another loophole, as accepted by Collins himself, is that this policy is not valid for the purpose of improving the general health of an individual. This means that a non-obese person pays to trim down the obese fellow of his neighborhood. It is easier to say that even a single person motivated by this policy means one more healthy individual. Though it is not hard to realize that the 'well-being' of this particular 'healthy' individual had cost several others' hard-earned money.

Saurabh Gupta
Graduate Student

Culture change is inevitable

Vision 2020 will bring new atmosphere to Texas A&M



RICHARD BRAY

During his visit to campus on April 4, Dr. Robert Gates, one of the finalists for the Texas A&M University presidency, was quoted by The Bryan-College Station Eagle as saying there is no conflict between maintaining A&M's unique culture and the changes needed to make A&M a top 10 university, the stated goal of Vision 2020. This statement displays either an ignorance of A&M culture, which seems unlikely since Gates served as the interim dean of the George Bush School of Government and Public Service from August 1999 to June 2001, or a severe misunderstanding of the myriad of changes that must take place for A&M to become a top 10 university.

While Vision 2020 may not change the traditions A&M holds dear, it will invariably affect the A&M culture. Tradition is just a part of the culture that makes A&M special. Culture includes factors such as the students who are admitted into the University, the general thoughts and ideas of the students and faculty and the academic quality of the institution.

To see why A&M's culture must change, one must understand the various

challenges A&M faces breaking into the ranks of the top 10 public universities in the nation. If Vision 2020's goal were to move up from the top 50 to the top 30, the required changes would be relatively painless. However, moving from A&M's current ranking within the top 20 public universities into the top 10 would require a great deal more effort and adaptation on the part of everyone involved in the University system.

In the Vision 2020 baseline, several factors are named that must be improved for A&M to achieve its Vision 2020 goal. Among these are a high student-to-faculty ratio, low retention and graduation rates, the inability of A&M's best programs to be ranked among the best nationally and the lack of a law school or a fine arts program. The document also said many of A&M's top-ranked programs are in academic areas that are considered relatively unimportant.

One of the changes proposed in Vision 2020 that has become a high-profile issue is diversification of the A&M campus. One of Vision 2020's goals in response to A&M's lack of diversity is to specifically recruit in targeted school districts and community colleges. Vision 2020 also calls to “create an environment that respects and nurtures all members of the student, faculty and staff community.”

This change alone is desperately needed in A&M culture. A misconception many Aggies associate with Vision

2020 is its aims to change the A&M culture. However, these changes are not necessarily going to ruin A&M's traditions. Aggieland simply will be introduced to new methods of achieving its goals. Although the academic atmosphere will change, traditions do not necessarily have to change.

Changing admissions standards so that SAT scores of incoming undergraduate students will more closely compare to top-10 schools will invariably change the atmosphere at A&M. So will trying to attract a greater percentage of students to live on campus, another trait of the typical top 10 university.

All of the goals and ideas brought forth by A&M will impact the way A&M is viewed by outsiders and the way Aggies view their own school. Invariably, these changes will combine to affect A&M as it is known today. After all, if Vision 2020 resulted in no change in the A&M culture, then the project would be a waste.

While Gates may be a viable candidate for A&M's culture, he should recognize that Vision 2020 will indeed change A&M's culture. It will be the job of A&M's next president to make certain the changes implemented improve that culture.

Richard Bray is a junior journalism major.