

OPINION

THE BATTALION

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Corps block ruins unity

Cadets sitting separate from other students divides Aggies into two groups

Aggies love to extol the virtue of unity and believe they exemplify what student unity should look like. With such a large campus, it is unfortunate but



COLLINS EZEANYIM

inevitable that some sort of division is going to occur, especially between the Corps of Cadets and non-regs who, despite attending the same university, receive their education in vastly different manners.

Opportunities for the student body to unite are precious few, which is why football games are so important. On Saturdays, students come together to become the Twelfth Man and do everything they can to see their team to victory. Yet, even at Kyle Field, the division between the Corps and the rest of the student body is visible. This is due to the arrangement of Corps seating at football games — a configuration known as the Corps Block. If true student unity at football games is to be achieved, the Corps Block must be eliminated.

Amy Janac, customer service associate for the Athletic Ticket Office, said that, starting each Wednesday before home football games, members of the Corps can pull tickets for section 140, with adjacent sections opening up as demand warrants. The system mimics the full-week drawing priority schedule the rest of the student body must follow and compacts it into two days, with Corps seniors drawing Wednesday morning, juniors on Wednesday afternoon, sophomores on Thursday morning and freshmen on Thursday afternoons.

In certain cases, block seating is preferred and even mandatory. For example, no sane student would argue that members of the Fightin' Texas Aggie Band shouldn't sit together. When the Corps attends road games, sitting in a block creates an intimidating presence and helps elevate the noise level when it performs Aggie yells.

But when the Corps chooses to segregate itself at home football games when the vast majority in the stands are fellow Aggies, it only bolsters the perception in many non-regs' minds that the Corps is an elitist organization.

For example, some students grumbled about how the khaki uniforms of the Corps Block interrupted the sea of blue present on the first deck of Kyle Field during last year's awe-inspiring commemoration to Sept. 11, 2001: the Red, White and Blue Out. This tension boiled over when a cartoon appeared in *The Battalion* Sept. 24, 2001. In the comic strip "Manumation," two students are discussing the wonderful display of patriotism that Aggies managed to put together when one of them asks, "But what about those guys that had on brown uniforms?" In the last panel, the other student answers, "I guess they forgot what colors make up the American flag."

Not surprisingly, members of the Corps blasted the cartoon in Mail Call the next day. One letter, accompanied by 120 signatures, said the cartoon was "in poor taste."

Another letter-writer "took great offense." This incident underscores how the Corps Block can negatively impact student unity by creating a divide between the Corps and ordinary students. Non-regs were resentful both because the Corps didn't participate in Red, White and Blue out and because it chose to sit apart from the student body. Corps students were offended that their patriotism was questioned simply because they couldn't wear blue shirts while sitting in the Corps Block.

In this case, both sides had legitimate points to make. As Regan Turner, former Deputy Corps Commander, explained in a Mail Call last year, "our proud display of khaki in a sea of red, white and blue was a lasting tribute to those killed ... and the thousands of Aggies who have given their lives to preserve our freedoms." On the other hand, it wasn't necessary for the Corps to sit by itself in order to pay tribute.

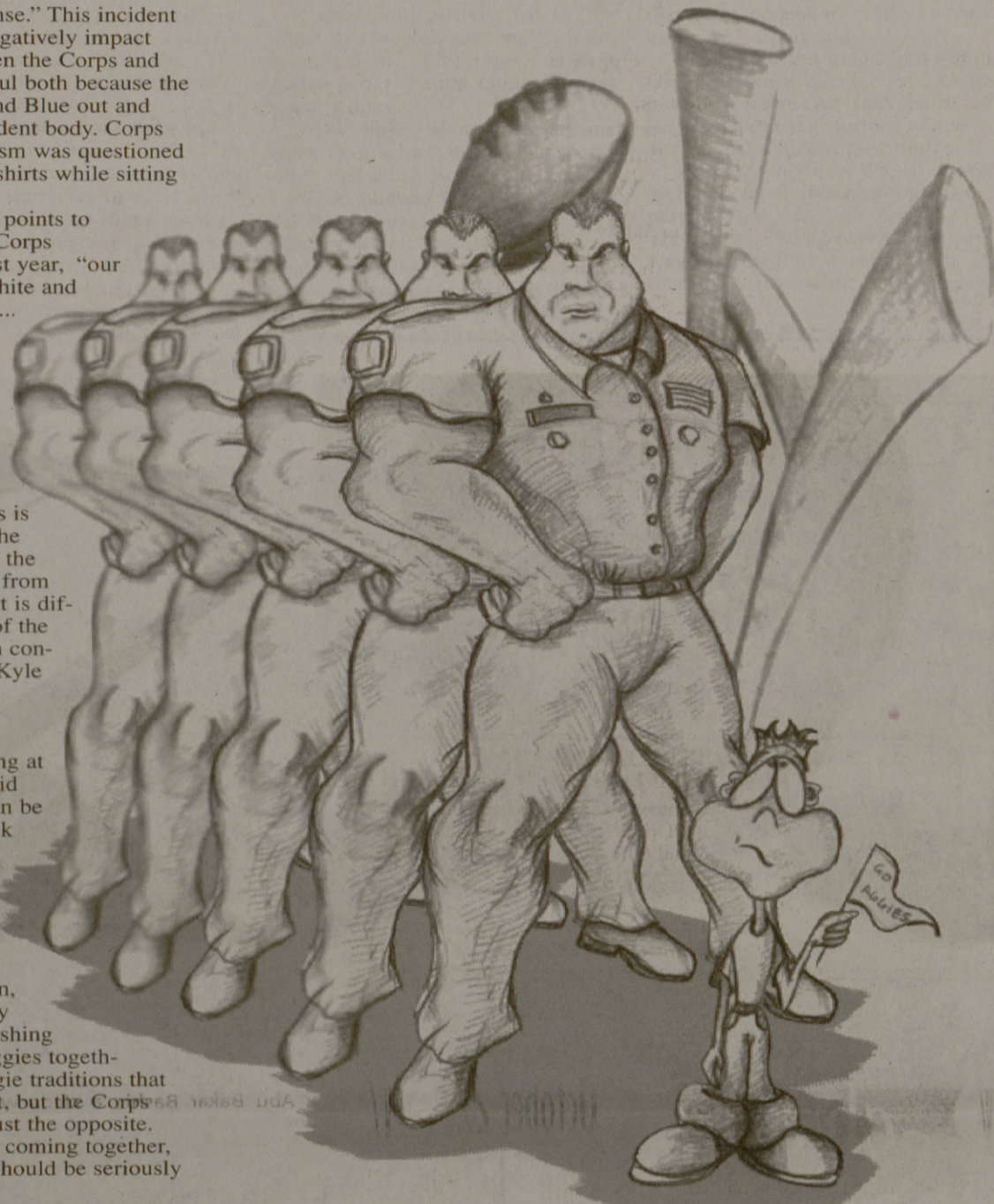
Janac said that the Corps Block began four years ago when the Corps asked the Athletic Ticket Office to set it up so cadets could be near the band. This is understandable. However, the cadets in the Corps are the self-described "Keepers of the Spirit." Much of the Aggie spirit derives from the unity Aggies are supposed to share. It is difficult to keep this spirit when members of the University's most important organization condense themselves into a few sections of Kyle Field during football games.

Proponents of the Corps Block might point out that the Corps is not the only organization that has special group seating at Kyle Field. This is true. In fact, Janac said that groups with 10 or more members can be issued special group seating on third deck starting on Mondays. But students in this type of group seating still interact with their fellow Aggies while non-reg contact for cadets seating in the Corps Block is kept to a minimum.

Proponents of the Corps Block may also use the argument that it is a tradition, but the Corps Block has come about only recently. One of the criteria for distinguishing Aggie Traditions is that it must bring Aggies together. To be sure, there are some recent Aggie traditions that satisfy this criteria, such as Maroon Out, but the Corps Block clearly does not. In fact, it does just the opposite.

Because it blocks students from truly coming together, the Corps' current seating arrangement should be seriously altered or ended altogether.

Collins Ezeanyim is a senior computer engineering major.



ANGELIQUE FORD • THE BATTALION

MBA standardized test won't be effective

Examination would not be a reliable measure of students' business skills

Lawyers have the bar exam, accountants have the CPA exam and doctors have specialized certifications, but now pressure is being put on graduates of MBA programs to take the



CHRIS JACKSON

same brand of standardized certification test. The problem: a Masters of Business Administration (MBA) degree covers such a broad scope of subjects that narrowing them all down into a simple five hour test is ludicrous.

Fields like accounting give certification exams that test what accountants are supposed to know, including tax law, earnings and revenue reporting and fraud investigation. A graduate with an MBA, however, is expected to know the workings of accounting in addition to finance, information systems, marketing and management. The field is too broad to be quantified, and the learning objectives too abstract to be measured by a test.

A July article in the *Kansas City Star* reported that a number of business professionals opposed to the new test are all of nearly the same mindset. The consensus seems to be that an MBA degree is a sort of gray area, and it doesn't necessarily denote a specific standard of learning criteria. Bill Beedles, a professor of finance at the University of Kansas Business School, said that "given the diversity of areas of expertise, a common exam for

certification would not seem to serve students or the professional community." He points out that there are plenty of very successful business people without such formal training.

Business management is inherently a study of the philosophy of business, making a standardized testing system inappropriate. A symphony is not judged by how it looks as sheet music, because a symphony, like an MBA, is meant to be performed.

The proponents of a standardized test for MBA graduates, however, are quick to point out why business schools may decry the establishment of such an assessment. They call attention to the fact that many top-tier university graduates have been able to command much larger salaries than graduates of more modest schools and that potentially brilliant talent could be overlooked by the better companies.

The hard truth, though, is that a promising young businessman would have the drive and initiative to make it into one of the top-tiered universities. The good companies go to the good schools because, as Louis Lataif, dean of Boston University's highly regarded management school said, "the sorting has already been done for them."

The eye of scrutiny should be on those who support the testing of MBA graduates on a standardized scale. As *USA Today* reported in late August, the CMBA, or certified MBA, is sponsored by the International Certification Institute and the multi-

billion dollar Thomson Corp., which raked in \$7.2 billion in revenue in 2001 and is a driving force in the certification and computer administered testing industry. It makes sense: convince business grads that they need more certification than their already prestigious MBA degree implies, and then collect \$450 from each of them to take a test that does not even measure the abstract thought developed through the MBA program.

The folks at Thomson are using their business skills — possibly their own MBAs — to implement a great new source of revenue for their company.

The facts are clear. An MBA is a collection of business knowledge that is broadly sweeping in scope, different from the specialized focus of such fields as accounting or law. An MBA standardized test would, for the most part, be irrelevant because market demand dictates which schools provide the best graduates.

This is not to say that a standardized test would be ineffective for everyone involved. Ask the executives at Thomson if they required an MBA validating test to come up with their business strategy, which could make millions if corporations decide to go along with it. You'll probably get a smile and a wink, because hey, it's just good business.

Chris Jackson is a junior information and operations management major.

MAIL CALL

Freshmen deserve to keep their positions

In response to Sarah Walch's Oct. 17 article:

Ben Steed and Joey Boggs should not have been removed of their titles in the freshmen elections. Student council means that it is a student-run and elected organization, therefore, the students should have the right to choose who will represent them.

In the run-off election, Ben Steed won 70 percent of the vote. Obviously, this shows that the student body wants him in office.

Not turning in an expense report should not be grounds for dismissal. It did not affect his performance in

running the student body.

Also, it was written in the article that "Steed had family matters he had to attend to and Boggs was not sure where to turn the form in." They both also had Corps responsibilities and were in Waco for the weekend. What happened is not a mark for how they will govern the class.

It is completely ridiculous that one form could take them both out of office when they both won by majority votes of their class.

It isn't right that the new vice president only won 30 percent of the class votes; this does not cater to what the students want. A new election should be held.

Sarah Schott
Class of 2006

Bonfire's future is not a newsworthy event

In response to Matthew Maddox's Oct. 17 column:

Kudos to Matthew Maddox for presenting a student-written article on important world events. With all the atrocities being committed in Zimbabwe and throughout the world, it is ridiculous to see the majority of the page devoted to the in-depth coverage of the Bonfire dilemma. After reading Maddox's article, is there any Ag out there who believes when or where a pile of sticks is set on fire constitutes a "newsworthy event?"

Patrick Munoz

