

THE BATTALION

Senate

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Rodriguez said the SGA Diversity committee is a management team that oversees the culture of student government and an educational group.

"I want to dispel the myth that diversity is a tightrope that we walk — the tightrope of political correctness," he said. "We're not on a crusade to change beliefs. We don't focus just on differences. (We) also focus on similarities."

He also answered questions from the senators about the committee's involvement in Coming Out Week.

The diversity committee co-sponsored a program with the Gender Issues Education office, Rodriguez said, to start a discussion about gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered issues. Sixteen people attended the Oct. 6 discussion, and after the GLBT individuals in the audience introduced themselves, there was some discussion about GLBT issues.

Kerri Ward, speaker pro-tempore and a sophomore business major, said students who have approached her have voiced their concerns about spending their fees on promoting a lifestyle during Coming Out Week that they morally disagree with.

"Students who have come to me have said they don't want it," Ward said. "Think about your constituency."

Sen. William Dugat, a freshman geology major, said he noticed there were no fund-raising efforts on the part of the Diversity committee dur-

ing the previous year.

The line-item budget also listed no fund-raising events planned for the current year.

After Rules and Regulations Committee Chair Jessie Miller moved to pass the budget in its entirety, External Affairs Chair John Mathews amended Miller's motion to accept the budget without the \$8,500 for Diversity.

After the motion was seconded, an hour of debate ensued.

Sen. Jeff Graham, a junior management major, asked why the Diversity group could not be self-sufficient.

Sen. Will Hailey, a freshman political science major, said it was not a government's job to make sure the students are thinking the right way.

"Spending money on Coming Out Week raises questions for me," he said.

Sen. Will McAdams, Corps Commander and a senior political science major, said that if the Senate cut Diversity, it would send a message to the University administration.

"The University administration is pushing this all over the place. It's going to be supported one way or another," McAdams said. "We've had four weeks of just a bloodbath in our organization (about Diversity)."

Mathews said he was suspicious of Diversity's intent because it seemed to be turning into a committee of indoctrination.

Former Student Senator and current Executive Director of Experiential Education Narietha Carter said that for the Senate to reject Diversity's budget would send a horrible

message to high school students.

"How would you feel if you saw that the Texas A&M Student Senate rejected Diversity in a Houston Chronicle headline?" she asked. "University President Robert M. Gates has given complete reverence to diversity. We've given him complete trust in molding this University, and we've gained so many accolades (for Diversity) in SGA."

She said diversity is education.

"If we go out in the real world with stereotypical views, the real world will shut the door on us," Carter said.

The amendment to cut the Diversity budget failed, and another amendment to reduce the budget from \$8,500 to \$3,000, also failed.

The budget finally passed in its entirety, by a margin of 27 to 21, voted on by secret ballot.

At the end of the night, Ward, Graham, Hailey and Sen. Scott Smith introduced a bill stating that the Senate supported all efforts to make all SGA committee line-item budgets available to any inquiring individual.

Ward said the bill was intended to let students know that senators were doing their best to be accountable to constituents, and would require action.

"The Senate will do everything in its power to release the information to the public," Ward said once the bill passed.

The bill was tabled, ending debate for the night, and leaving the bill to be taken up again at the next Senate meeting on Oct. 22.

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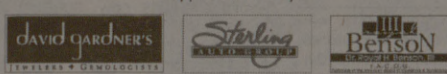
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10.4	UNC	vs. Virginia
10.11	Texas A&M	vs. Baylor
10.18	Kansas	vs. Baylor
10.25	Kansas St.	vs. Kansas
11.1	Michigan State	vs. Michigan
11.8	Ohio State	vs. Michigan State
11.15	Oregon State	vs. Stanford

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