

FORUM

THE BATTALION

Page 4B • Thursday, February 5, 2004

The price of the Texas A&M experience Fee increase will ensure Aggies continue to enjoy all University has to offer

The Student Service Fee Advisory Board (SSFAB), a nine-member student board that represents undergraduate and graduate students in developing recommendations on the student service fee each year, recently released its recommendations to the University community. The SSFAB's findings revealed that an increase from \$11.86 to \$12.51 per semester credit hour was necessary to sustain the benefits that the fee provides to all A&M students. According to the SSFAB Operating Guidelines, the Student Senate and the Graduate Student Council can consider and provide their opinions on any proposed fee increase to the Texas A&M administration. Though these two governing bodies have now offered opinions, the results need to be made clear to students.

Last week, a simple majority in the Student Senate voted in favor of the



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SSFAB recommendations. Due to Senate policy, however, a two-thirds vote is required to approve this type of legislation. Consequently, the recommendations were not approved, though no additional legislation was offered to solidify a precise opposing response. The speaker of the Student Senate alone is likely to submit a letter of dissent that will undoubtedly indicate Senate opposition to the recommendations.

This week, one vote short of a two-thirds majority in the Graduate Student Council voted in favor of the SSFAB recommendations. Unlike Senate policy though, only a majority vote is required for recommendation approval in the Graduate Student Council. Clearly, the representative voices of the student body are in conflict. The main question that students should ask is, "Why?"

The key issue is the student service fee cap, as defined by the Texas

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State Legislature. The cap currently sits at \$12.50 per semester credit hour. If the SSFAB recommendations push the fee over the cap, a student body referendum is required. If approved, the new cap would become \$25 per semester credit hour, with a maximum possible growth rate with-

out student body approval of 10 percent of the original cap, or \$1.25 per student credit hour, annually. Increases lower than 10 percent would not require approval of the student body. To answer the previously stated question: short-term gain is the driving force behind the debate over the SSFAB recommendations.

We talk quite a bit at this University about the importance of traditions. We also talk about legacy. Is it really worth the price of two extra value meals at McDonald's to jeopardize affordable childcare services or the Aggie Band? Does the cost for a trip to the movies outweigh International Student Services, or the opportunity to study abroad? Should The Battalion or CARPOOL be passed over for the price of a Northgate crawl? The student service fee was last increased in the fall of 2001, so we are in our third academic year without an increase in the fee. What we do by rejecting the student service fee increase now is rob future

Aggies of the services that students, past and present, have verifiably benefited from.

The Student Senate has proposed a referendum to be held in April that will allow the entire student body to vote on the SSFAB recommendations. If approved, the fee increase will go forward. If the referendum fails, we step backwards at a time when we speak so passionately about growth and excellence. As a graduate student who pays nearly three times higher than the cost of tuition and fees for an undergraduate student, I would likely be quite conservative with my vote. Yet it is with great conviction that I support the SSFAB recommendations. The inherent value in student services have benefited so many. Why deny those to come the same opportunities?

Josh Peschel is graduate student in biological & agricultural engineering

MAIL CALL

Military does support Bush

In response to Collins Ezeanyim's Feb. 4 column:

I'm not sure who Collins Ezeanyim is, since his name does not appear on The Battalion masthead, but he does prove that Aggie traditions live on. More than 25 years after I left, The Battalion is still populated by the extreme left of Aggie opinion, and most people writing for The Battalion do not have a clue.

Even The Washington Post knows the turkey centerpiece President Bush was holding was real, and a five-minute call to the Trigon would have informed Ezeanyim (and The Washington

Post) that a "trophy turkey" is a military tradition. The bulk of the men and women are served from steam tables, and the unlucky few on duty during the meal get to eat the "trophy turkey" afterward.

The turkey story is a minor point, but it shows Ezeanyim's laziness, disregard for the facts and preconceived opinions.

It also makes it easy to ignore the rest of his ill-informed editorial, since I already knew it would sink to the same "standard" as the turkey story, and be just as easily refuted by five minutes of Internet research.

Sorry, Ezeanyim, but the men and women of the military will continue to support their own best interests, and vote to re-elect President Bush. Perhaps this time (unlike 2000), their

votes will even be counted in Florida.

*Dean Brown
Class of 1977*

Soldiers don't suffer indignity

In response to Collins Ezeanyim's Feb. 4 column:

Mr. Ezeanyim, maybe you assume Bush should get no votes. That is perfectly fine, but under no circumstance should you again print that service members suffer "indignity" because their commander in chief did not show up for their burial just because that is what you think. Judging by the

service and time you donated to the U.S. Armed Forces and your country, it is very hard for me to understand how you can possibly know what we think or what we feel about our duty. The one thing that would cause me to "suffer indignity" is death for my country would be knowing that back home in Aggie land there is writer without respect for soldiers, social tact and a presumption that he knows enough about the job we do to print what and how we feel about politics.

The only slap in the face I have received as a serviceman is the one felt by the writer who will spare no group of their dignity and the self-impugning, condescending tone that his articles are fashioned with. Generalizations aren't any way for an adept student of rhetoric to prove a point.

Camp Day

Tuesday, February 10
9:30 am – 3:30 pm

MSC Flag Room and Hallway

50 Camps from California to New York and throughout Texas interviewing for summer counselors & staff

Wanted: Counselors; wranglers; instructors in arts and crafts, sports, lifesaving/water safety, small craft; individuals with nature and outdoor education skills, people interested in working with youth in a variety of outdoor settings throughout Texas and the nation.

All Majors Welcome

Sponsored by the Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences, the Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences Club, and the TAMU Career Center

2 EVENTS...

1 REASON.

MONEY

Thursday, February 5 &
Friday, February 6, 2004
RUDDER FOUNTAIN
8:00 am—5:00 pm

Visit
COSTEP's
Mobile
Education
Resource
Vehicle,
MERV so



you can instantly file next year's FASFA via the Internet. Bring your 2003 tax information and your parent's 2003 tax information and counselors will help you complete your FASFA and answer your questions. This is one of the **fastest** and **easiest** ways to get your FASFA completed so you don't have to worry about it

What is MERV?

MERV is a 36 foot CruiseAir vehicle, completely redesigned and equipped with ten Dell flat panel 15-inch screens, and Dell OptiPlex GX110P PC's with wireless access to the Internet.

Saturday, February 7, 2004
POST OAK MALL
10:00 am—2:00 pm

DESTINATION: EDUCATION
FUNDING YOUR FUTURE

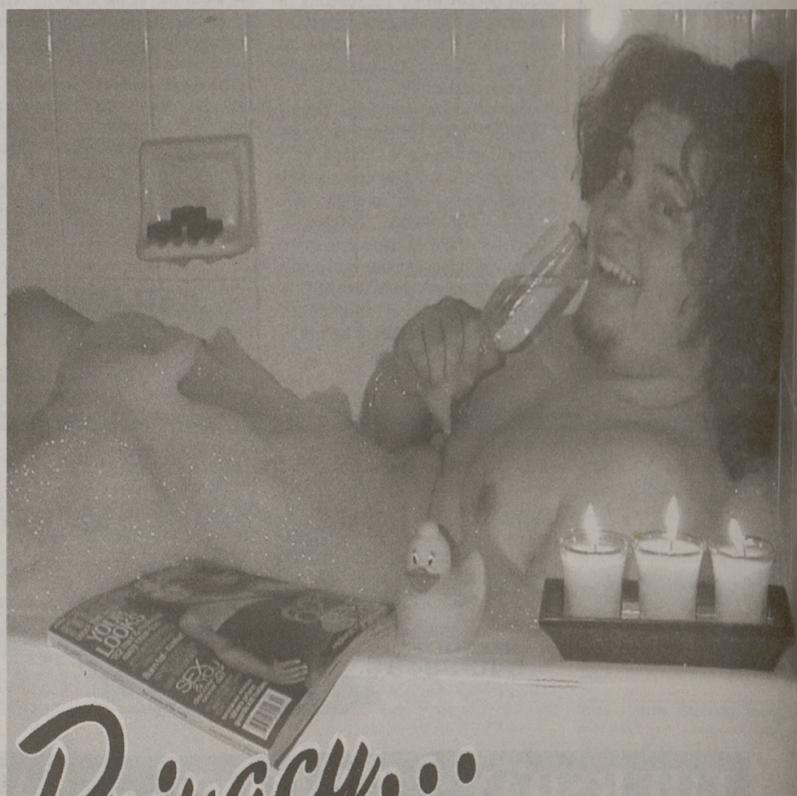
Destination: Education is a FREE interactive workshop with representatives who can answer questions and provide information about financing a higher education.

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