

OPINION

THE BATTALION

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Dropping bad grades

Grade forgiveness concept should be incorporated into current Q-drop policy

For at least a year now, the Texas A&M Student and Faculty Senates have been considering a new grade policy, but nothing has been passed. Last spring, the proposed "Modified GPR Calculation Resolution" was stopped just short of being put into action, according to The Battalion. Although the Faculty Senate passed it, University President Robert M. Gates did not sign it because there were complications that the implementation task force ran into, along with some dissension from some Student Senate members. The resolution would have allowed a student to drop a class in which he had received a 'D' or 'F' during the previous semester, as long as he acts within 15 days of the following semester of the bad grade.

This topic, however, hasn't died yet. Along with the resolution from last year that's still up in the air, three concepts have been discussed. Of these concepts, grade forgiveness is the best fit for students.

As noted before, the first idea for consideration is grade forgiveness, where a student can just drop a poor grade from his transcript. This is great for getting rid of unwanted grades and getting multiple chances to start with a clean slate. This concept is partly embedded in last year's proposed "Modified GPR Calculation Resolution."

The second is grade replacement, where the student would replace a bad grade when he retakes that class, instead of just averaging out the two grades. For example, say a student had to retake a physics or calculus class. The first time he got a 'D,' the second time a 'B.' Instead of averaging the grades to get a 'C' for the class, he would walk away with a 'B.' This is fair because the student has shown that he knows the material.

The third idea is changing the current Q-drop policy so that a student may use a Q-drop at the end of the semester. Pretend again that this student is in a chemistry class and is sitting uncomfortably with an 'F' three weeks before the semester's end. His instructor has set up the class where the final is 50 percent of the course grade. So if the student can ace the final, he can wind up with

a decent grade. With this new Q-drop policy, he can sweat it out till the end of the semester to see if he passes. If he doesn't, then he may Q-drop the class on the last day of the semester.

The problem with all of these plans is that they can easily lead to abuse. Administrators and other critics say the policy changes will encourage laziness. But many students would say the University should encourage success, not punish them for a mess up during freshman year. Both sides have a point.

Ideally, the grade forgiveness component should be incorporated into the current Q-drop policy. Pretend this time that a student is trying to get into graduate school. As a freshman, he found himself making a few 'D's as a mechanical engineering major, so he switched to business. Since then, he has done well. He aspires to get an MBA, but his freshman past is coming back to haunt him. Those classes he made 'D's in are counting him down. They don't count for anything toward his major, just extra hours that show up on his transcript. But they are lowering his GPA significantly enough to where he might not be able to fulfill his ambitions.

If the grade forgiveness concept was incorporated into the Q-drop policy, students could erase a few of those needless classes with their bad-grade baggage. This new policy would help students succeed, without encouraging students to be lazy because they know that they only have a limited number of Q-drops. If nothing else, at least the "Modified GPR Calculation Resolution" from last year should be pushed through and signed.

With Student Senate elections coming up, voters should put pressure on senators to prove that they really do represent the students and support a logical new grade policy that helps students succeed.

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DAVID EGE

David Ege is a junior computer engineering major.



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MAIL CALL

Persecution is questionable

In response to a Feb. 24 mail call:

I found Mr. Moore's recent mail call in which he claims that Christians are persecuted just as much as homosexuals somewhat unconvincing. First of all, I question the accuracy of the statistics he quoted regarding the number of Christians killed in 1999. Although plenty of people mentioned it with varying numbers, I couldn't find the actual study anywhere; no one bothered to reference the actual source (other than saying it was from "Regent University"). Perhaps Mr. Moore could send me a copy, because I'd like to see their methods. The source is also questionable, considering Regent University is a Christian university run by Pat Robertson, one of the most fundamentalist Christians in America. I would be much more willing to accept a study by an independent group.

Second, those numbers, if correct, would be worldwide, not in America. They also say nothing of how many other groups are killed for their religious beliefs. Regardless, the issue is persecution in America, and I apologize if I'm not sympathetic to your claims of persecution when almost every political office is occupied by a Christian. If Christians are being persecuted here, then it is by other Christians.

Lastly, the difference between "straight pride" and "gay pride" is in connotation. "Gay pride" events are intended to teach tolerance, while "straight pride" events are about being intolerant. A straight person can go to a gay pride event and be accepted, while a homosexual attending a straight pride event would be insulted and told to leave.

That is why a "straight pride" day is bigoted.

Adam Kemp
Class of 2005

Gay men want to marry

In response to a Feb. 23 mail call:

Your argument is absolutely ludicrous, and I wonder sometimes if people who support your position realize how absolutely hypocritical you are being. Homosexuals don't want the right to marry. They want the right to legally marry the people who they love. It is pointless and absolutely stupid for you to say that a lesbian can marry a man, or that a gay man should marry a woman, because this is not who they love; this is not who they wish to enter a committed relationship with. This is about the government saying what homosexuals can and cannot do.

Until recently, the government dictated what gays and lesbians could and could not do in their own homes. What they want now is the power of attorney and to stop hiding who they are because of bias. It's like saying that an African American cannot marry a

white person. Nowhere is there a legal basis for this definition of marriage that you cling to and if you pull it out of scripture, realize that there is a lot in the law that Christians do not follow, and stop your hypocrisy before you show it to the world.

Sarah Fremgen
Class of 2004

Dot Snyder a good choice

On March 9, Aggies should cast their vote for Dot Snyder for Congress. When it comes to District 17, we need a representative who will truly represent our conservative values in Washington. As former Waco ISD board president and member, she helped take Waco from \$3 million in the red to \$14 million in the black.

Dot Snyder's work towards ending the practice of social promotion in WISD served as the example that then-Gov. George W. Bush used throughout the state of Texas. She was also appointed, by Bush, to the Texas Healthy Kids Corporation Board of Directors where she helped return \$9 million to the taxpayers.

As a rancher, Dot Snyder is passionate about protecting Second Amendment rights, private property rights and permanently repealing the death tax. Dot Snyder has a proven record of action with results and is an unwavering pro-life conservative Republican. Dot Snyder has the experience and wisdom necessary to resolve the problems facing District 17. I encourage all Aggies to cast their vote for Dot Snyder.

Charlie Leal
Class of 2003

Some courtesy rules to follow

As a TAMU bus operator, I have noticed a few things about campus that needed to be brought up. Look both ways before you cross a street. This simple rule should keep us from adding a name to the Silver Taps list.

Now, we are all grownups and do not need to be walked across the street, but we did learn in kindergarten to look both ways before crossing and do not step out into traffic. Also, for you bike riding Ags: Remember that bicycles have to obey all pedestrian and traffic laws. For example, STOP SIGNS. If you are riding in the bicycle lane and a bus is unloading or loading, please slow down or stop as to not mull over a passenger, especially if the doors are open and the flashers are on. These are common courtesies you can convey to your fellow Ags. Simply put, do not walk into traffic, and pay attention to what your are doing.

L. Reynard
Class of 2005

Despite the criticism, 'Passion' is accurate

Movie doesn't smear Jews or distort facts

News of Mel Gibson's much-anticipated movie "The Passion of the Christ" has been circulating for at least a year, and just about everyone has an opinion on it. A motion picture, something as regular in America as hamburgers and Coca-Cola, has taken on a fiercely controversial atmosphere because of the main character, Jesus Christ. The film is a graphic portrayal of the last 12 hours of Christ's life, from his arrest to his trial and subsequent execution. Many think the movie will be one of the greatest cinematic epics of our day. Others oppose its release, saying it might ruffle the feathers of various religions.

Many of the attacks on the movie come from the Jewish community. The Anti-Defamation League, a Jewish watch group, condemns the project's "poisonous accusations" saying that it is an inaccurate portrayal of the events and will cause animosity between the movie's viewers and members of the Jewish faith. The contention is that the movie portrays Jewish people as largely responsible for the environment and public opinion that led to Jesus' execution, and they say it is wrong.

This is an issue that the Christian Church has addressed in the past. The Vatican, in an attempt to foster respect and understanding between the two faiths, issued an opinion as part of the second Vatican Council of the 1960s.

The Vatican said, "What happened in His passion cannot be charged against all the Jews, without distinction; then alive, nor against the Jews of today."

Clearly, its mandate, which everyone should embrace, is that not all Jews in the world were responsible then, and more importantly, the Jews of today should not be held personally responsible for events that occurred more than 2,000 years ago. This principle is almost common sense and is extended to many other groups in society today such as descendants of slave holders or tyrannical governments.

Sadly, these arguments miss the point of the life and death of Jesus Christ.

"The Jesus of the Bible came into the world to

die," said Matt Graham, Class of 2003. "He died for the sins of all of mankind, so in that light we are all equally responsible for his death. It doesn't matter who was actually there that day."

Mel Gibson agrees, saying in an interview with ABC news that he would be first in line of people responsible for Jesus' death. In fact, the only place in the movie where Gibson appears is when his hand is shown in a close-up nailing Jesus' hand to the cross, a deeply symbolic role.

The next logical step for attack is to say the story that Mel Gibson followed in his development of the script is not historical fact. The story in question is the Biblical summary of Jesus' life in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Unfortunately, this argument hits a dead end here. The validity of the gospels has been proven repeatedly by historians and archaeologists. In fact, there are more than 100 times the number of manuscripts of the Bible as there are of the writings of Aristotle, 99.5 percent of which say the exact same thing, word-for-word, according to www.carm.org. This information led Sir Frederic Kenyon in his book "The Bible and Archaeology" to summarize, "The interval then between the dates of original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible... Both the authenticity and general integrity of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established."

With both the social acceptability and historical accuracy of Mel Gibson's movie verified, his film should be viewed and meditated on rather than attacked and feared. Since the original crucifixion took place 2,000 years ago, Jesus has been the most controversial figure in recorded history. Aggies should see this movie for the purpose of deciding for themselves whether they believe Jesus is who he says he is. The real question is not who killed Jesus, but instead, why did he die?

"With the social acceptability and historical accuracy of Mel Gibson's movie verified, his film should be viewed and meditated on rather than attacked and feared."



JOSHUA LANGSTON

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