

EDITORIAL BOARD

Commander choice a further sign of recent Corps modernization

The Class of 2016 will see four Corps of Cadets commanders in its time on campus, including the first black man and the first woman to lead the 139-year-old institution.

With Marquis Alexander in 2012 and Alyssa Michalke in 2015, the makeup of recent leadership has reflected the wealth of experience on campus to an extent unseen in Corps history.

Michalke and Alexander were selected because they were the best and most-qualified candidates. Last year, Michalke became the first female sergeant major in Corps history; she earned the role on merit. Alexander, likewise, said he didn't know he was the first black commander until someone told him.

She and Alexander were shaped in part, though, by a Corps culture of modernization and growth instituted by Brig. Gen. Joe Ramirez, Corps commandant, when he assumed the post in 2010. The Corps has grown by more than 450 students since his arrival, resulting in seven unit reactivations. Corps GPA averages have risen and leadership has pushed against institutional hazing. For that, he and his staff deserve credit.

Still, the Corps has lagged behind similar university milestones. The first

black student body president was elected in 1976, the first female in 1994. And the most visible positions associated with the Corps — the student-elected yell leaders — have never been occupied by a woman.

When Final Review passes and Michalke takes the Quad as leader of what the Corps reports could be the most cadets in 45 years, she will make history. But unless it can be repeated, history like this becomes largely symbolic.

Michalke's job will be to lead her cadets. Ramirez and his staff will have a slightly different task — help ensure milestones like those achieved by Michalke and Alexander are signs of an inclusive culture, not outliers in the Corps' long history.

The Battalion's editorial opinion is determined by its Board of Opinion, with the editor in chief having final responsibility.

Mark Doré
Editor in Chief

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BATTASKS

What do you think the new Corps commander means for the Corps?



"It's a positive, progressive step for A&M."

Wendy Burdick
biomedical science sophomore



"My biggest concern is people not looking up to her because they are used to the male authority, but she's been an excellent leader so far. It will also be interesting to see how male authorities respond to her as well."

Trent Peters
sports management freshman



"I think it means a good beginning in the Corps. It's allowing us to see diversity in the Corps. She's a great, energetic person and I think she has the personality to lead the Corps to a great place."

Eunice Fafiyebi
biomedical sciences sophomore



"It's really showing the equality and how things have changed. It doesn't matter, male or female, it's just based off of your characteristics and leadership."

Carlos Machuca
business sophomore
Shelby Knowles — THE BATTALION

MICHALKE CONTINUED

wasn't a given, so we've been kind of thinking about that for a while but when it actually becomes a reality all of the sudden and your daughter is all over the news everywhere, it's pretty overwhelming."

Sydney Snell, biology senior and friend of Michalke's, said Michalke is a strong leader and a people person.

"She's great with other people," Snell said. "She always puts others before herself. If somebody needs something done for them, she is just selfless."

Michalke said in a university press release that she is honored to have been selected and will do her best to uphold the tradition of leading her fellow cadets.

"The Corps of Cadets has provided me a tremendous opportunity to grow as a person and to develop good leadership skills," Michalke said in the release. "More importantly, I've been able to mentor others and I will continue to do so in my new position as Corps commander."

Michalke's appointment coincides with the 40th anniversary of female inclusion in the Corps. Brig. Gen. Joe Ramirez, Corps commandant, stressed there is no correlation between the two events, but it is an interesting coincidence.

"We selected Alyssa Michalke to be the Corps commander because she is the best candidate for the position," Ramirez said.

Michalke was selected after a series of interviews with a board, members of which included outgoing Corps student leaders and Ramirez. Final approval was made by interim University President Mark Hussey.

"We went through a pretty long, arduous process to determine who was going to be next year's Corps commander and Alyssa was the one who was a clear choice to be the Corps commander next year," Ramirez said. "That is why she was selected. It had nothing to do with her gender, although we are very proud of the fact that Alyssa is the first female Corps commander in the Corps' 139 years."

Morgan Cochran, sociology senior and Michalke's friend, said anyone who says Michalke got the position because of her gender doesn't know Michalke at all.

"I've been thinking about it a lot today," Cochran said. "There are definitely people that feel that way. Honestly, it's just sad. Our university core values, one of them is respect, and she definitely earned her position and anyone who would say she didn't earn it and just got it because of her gender, that's just a shame."

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ASH WEDNESDAY

THIS WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18TH

MASS TIMES:

7:00 am at St. Mary's
12:00 pm at Blinn (Room E120)
12:00 pm at St. Mary's
12:40 pm at Rudder Theater
5:30 pm at St. Mary's
5:45 pm at Rudder Theater
7:30 pm at St. Mary's
7:30 pm at St. Mary's Activity Ctr (Spanish)

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Newsday Crossword

ACROSS
1 Wild guess
5 Conks on the head
9 Fem seed
14 Out of whack
15 Long, heroic story
16 Church music maker
17 Car horn sound
18 Flat-topped hill
19 Pure, as gold
20 Cheese on a Big Mac
22 Baking chambers
23 Brick worker
24 "Scat!"
26 Gets married
29 Join the military
33 Cooks in a kettle
37 Alda of M*A*S*H
39 Capital of Norway
40 Prefix meaning "against"
41 Cheese with holes
42 Suffer-free
43 Sunflower stalk
44 "up on a time"
45 Is introduced to
46 Gloomy
48 Suffix for kitchen or luncheon
50 Takes off the shelf
52 Typical Kuwaitis
56 Separated
59 Italian grated cheese
62 Cuban line dance
63 One of the Great Lakes
64 Give a nudge to
66 Basic belief

DOWN
1 Occupied a chair
2 Wee hir. of the morning
3 Pleasant scent
4 Computer storage measures
5 Valentine phrase
6 Oil cartal
7 Leaning Tower city
8 Reads a bar code
9 "Already?"

CHEESE, PLEASE by Gail Grabowski Edited by Stanley Newman www.stanwords.com

10 Cheese in an Italian hero
11 Look impolitely at
12 Baseball game delayer
13 Concludes
21 Lines of theater seats
25 Barnyard cacklers
27 Sunrise
28 Piece of bread
30 "Now it's clear"
31 Venetian-blind part
32 Preschoolers
33 Striped sport fish
34 Not fooled by
35 Line on a shopping list
36 Pungent German cheese
38 "I'd hate to break up..."
41 Feeling achy
45 Insignificant
47 Posh residence
49 Most docile
51 Complete in a bee
53 Pet-protection org.
54 British noble
55 Sleeper's noise
56 Performs on stage
57 Writer of rhymes
58 Tennis pro
60 Opera solo
61 Tears (apart)
65 Morning moisture on a lawn

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