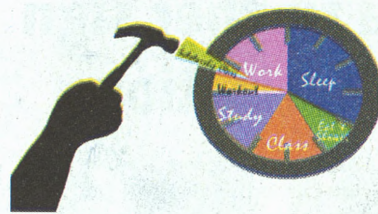


OPINION

Scholarship courses waste time



Frederica Shih — THE BATTALION

Good in theory, waste of time in practice: scholarships should not require students to attend additional class



Gracie Mock
News reporter

Scholarships offer students many benefits, but the joy of earning money toward college can soon be stamped out when scholarship organizations require students to enroll in a scheduled class during the day.

Starting in the fall, certain scholarships — such as the President's Achievement, Academic Achievement and Regents' — are going to require their freshmen recipients to enroll in a non-credit "scholarship course." The current organization my scholarship mandates I join requires inconvenient meeting and guest speaker attendances, and I believe the addition of a "scholarship course" should not be required because that time would be wasted when it could be put to much better use.

I understand that it is important for scholarship organization advisors to check on recipients, but having a scholarship class would be a waste of time. The time spent in a class like this could be put to better use, like studying for a class that actually matters for your degree. Not to mention, the timing of the class could completely throw off your schedule. Most students don't have a class around 7 or 8 p.m., making an evening meeting optimal, but a scheduled time in the afternoon could mean that a student does not get to take a class they need.

This class, while good in theory and only an hour a day, would add up to losing at least three hours of studying a week. The fact that scholarship organizations would do this is surprising, considering certain GPA requirements have to be met to maintain the scholarships. You would

think they would encourage more studying instead of forcing students to listen to the same topics they have heard multiple times already.

Don't get me wrong, the scholarship donors have good intentions. I enjoyed the fact that I can approach my scholarship mentor to talk to about both Aggie life and my scholarship. Bringing in guest speakers to help develop academic and life skills is great. All students should learn how to keep on top of their finances through Money Wise Aggie or the different organizations around campus. Even hearing advice from mentors is good, because they are college-aged and students are more likely to listen to someone who understands them.

But do we really need to hear about the personal life of the advisors for an hour? No, we do not. Do we need to sit through Money Wise Aggie during our New Student Conference and for another hour at a class every week? No, we do not.

A meeting a couple times per month for an hour or two in the evening is not that bad. Most of us spend at least that much time surfing the Internet or watching Netflix. But nothing effective is likely to get done in the scholarship class' situation. If you sit in the back you can pull out a textbook and get a solid hour of reading done, or do the studying you would like to do in the first place. Those responsible for creating the required class have good intentions by bringing in speakers, but it becomes repetitive.

I may complain when it comes to the large group meetings for my scholarship, but I am so glad I dodged the time-wasting bullet that is most likely about to hit those unsuspecting freshmen.

Gracie Mock is a communication freshman and news reporter for The Battalion

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Campus buses now require riders to show identification

By Katy Stapp

As of Monday, Spirit Bus drivers now require passengers to show a student or Brazos Valley Transit ID prior to boarding. Madeline Dillard, assistant director of transit, said non-students who want to ride the bus can purchase a Brazos Valley Transit ID for \$35 annually in order to use the service.

The new policy is part of an effort by Transportation Services to formalize its partnership with Brazos Transit District and qualify for federal money to go toward future bus purchases, Dillard said.

"We share our performance and ridership data with the district to be combined with their information to apply for federal money," Dillard said. "Combining the data from both systems will qualify the area as a 'transportation intensive' entity, with more possibilities for federal funding." Dillard said in order to formalize the partnership with Brazos Transit District, Transportation Services has taken several measures to inform the public about the new policy.

"We modified our website to specifically state that effective Feb. 16 anyone with an ID from TAMU, Blinn or Brazos Transit

can access our transit service," Dillard said. "We also modified our signage at bus stops to indicate the change, posted signage on each bus and tweeted the requirement and included the information in the spring email to TAMU students."

Travis Walters, biomedical sciences senior and Student Services chair of Student Senate, said no one will be denied a ride during the first weeks to allow passengers to grow familiar to the new policy and to allow non-affiliates of A&M or Blinn to purchase a BVT ID.

"The policy is expected to be fully enforced upon resuming school after spring break," Walters said.

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