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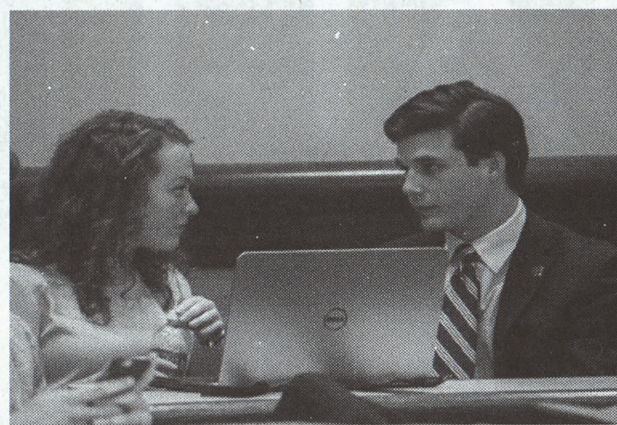
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thebattalion

Student Senate rejects pair of Benigno's executive cabinet nominations

By Jennifer Reiley

The first debate of the 68th Student Senate was held over the confirmation of positions within student body president Joseph Benigno's cabinet for the 2015-2016 school year. Hannah Wimberly, nominated for executive vice president, and Emma Douglas, nominated for operations executive vice president, were denied confirmation by vote. A special session has been called for 7 p.m. Monday to re-consider the positions.



Tim Lai — THE BATTALION

Hannah Wimberly and Joseph Benigno confer during the Student Senate meeting Wednesday night at which Wimberly's executive vice president nomination was blocked.

FULL STORY AT THEBATT.COM

MARCH OF DIMES CONTINUED

family."

Breanne Gorbett, community director of the Brazos Valley chapter of March of Dimes, said a portion of the money raised by March to the Brazos will go toward current university research efforts.

"Research is being done right here in Aggieland," Gorbett said. "A portion of the money that is raised is staying here to do research, and we are one of about a dozen places that can say that."

March of Dimes of the Brazos Valley annually appoints a local ambassador family to share their story within the community in an effort to gain local support.

Chanika Smith, University Dining

Services dietitian and the mother of the 2015 Brazos Valley March of Dimes Ambassador Family, said she understands firsthand the struggles associated with the birth of a premature child.

Smith said she first discovered March of Dimes after spending five weeks in a neonatal intensive care unit with her son Roman, who was born 10 weeks early.

"When you're a preemie parent, you are very terrified," Smith said. "You don't know when you are going to get that call saying, 'He's gone' or 'He's taking his last breaths.' When my husband and I would ask doctors questions, they would tell us about all of this research that had been funded and supported by March of Dimes, and it was exciting."

Roman, who is now four years old, is relatively healthy and few complications remain after his difficult journey.

"Roman is a fighter," Smith said. "He was born at three pounds and six ounces, but he doesn't know any of that. He just knows he is independent and can do anything."

Smith said by sharing her story, she is now able to provide support to parents who go through similar circumstances.

"Sometimes when you're a parent with a premature baby, you feel as if you are all alone, that this is your fault," Smith said. "With March of Dimes, we are able to go around and show support by sharing Roman's story."

Smith will be a part of the dining services staff that will serve the Corps in Duncan Dining hall Saturday.

"It is really exciting to be a part of something so personal to me," Smith said. "It's a celebration that we survived. These babies are true heroes and have shown that they can really make it through anything."

BOARD OF REGENTS CONTINUED

of Kyle Field, but specific names were not disclosed.

In response to the board's decision, Hannah Weger, speaker of the Student Senate, authored a last-minute resolution titled "The Preserving Tradition Resolution," stating that "the student senate requests the Board vote to revert the official seal of Texas A&M University to its former state." The resolution passed unanimously by the Student Senate during the 67th legislation's final open forum.

Weger said the idea of changing the seal is "ridiculous."

"I came to this school because ... I felt like the culture and traditions were frozen in time," Weger said. "Nothing or anybody could change them. And it's what made A&M so different. It's what makes us special. And so, sure, a lot of people are going to complain saying, 'Oh, it's not a big deal,' but it is a big deal."

The seal and the logo are meant to be two completely separate items, Weger said. She said the seal is used more exclusively and means more to people.

"One's meant to showcase the features of our athletics teams and marketing — that's the logo, the Block T A&M you see it everywhere or when we're playing football. People identify us by that, it's on the helmets," Weger said. "But the seal is more than that, the seal has everything to do with the academics of the institution, it has everything to do with the professionalism of this school and what getting a degree from here means. That's why it's not blasted on everything — it's kind of sacred."

Incoming Speaker of the Student Senate Aaron Mitchell said he was disappointed by the Board of Regents decision because people were only alerted 48 hours before it was approved.

"I was a little bit disappointed" in that, Mitchell said. "I know the Board of Regents has our best interest at heart at all times, I'd just like it if they were a little more transparent in the future."

Many students have risen up to protest the seal change, changing their Facebook profile pictures to the old seal and signing an online petition against the change. The petition has gained more than 4,100 signatures at time of press Wednesday.

In the description section of the change.org petition, Cameron Palmer, author of the petition and environmental sciences junior, said the "new seal does not reflect Texas A&M students or traditions and we believe that it needs to be changed."

Palmer said he decided to make the petition after seeing on his social media feeds all the anger and disappointment stemming from his friends on the decision.

"It just seemed like it was another peg that the Board of Re-

gents was kind of pulling out from underneath us to devalue the traditions and the things we hold dear here," Palmer said. "And aside from that we just thought the new seal was cartoonish and ugly, [and] we didn't feel A&M needs to be marketed."

Palmer said when the petition gets to the Board of Regents he hopes one of the members will speak to him and explain why they made this decision.

"My message is for the Board of Regents to stop doing things that the student body doesn't agree with," Palmer said. "Especially when the student body is backed by former Ags and even future Ags who don't like the direction that it's going."

Many students were also angered by the idea of renaming the Flag Room. Kathryn Fajfar, senior geography major, said military traditions like the meaning of the MSC were among the reasons she decided to leave Illinois to attend A&M.

"The MSC is a living memorial for all of the Aggies who have died serving our country in any war," Fajfar said. "It's been called the living room of the Texas A&M campus ... To have a place like that named after one specific person is like renaming the university after a corporation, like Samsung's Texas A&M University. I know it's an extreme example, but it proves a point."

Anthony Marich, agricultural leadership and development junior, said he thinks changing either the seal or the name of the Flag Room is a terrible idea.

"If they name it after a person, or a thing, it completely eliminates the purpose of the Flag Room, in my opinion," Marich said. "The Flag Room is the room in the MSC that embodies the units within the Corps of Cadets, and then represents the branches of the military. All of the members of the military. If you name it after someone it will eliminate that purpose. As for the seal, I can understand wanting to unify the brand, but why not unify the brand with the old seal?"

Other students have said they feel the Board of Regents has overstepped its boundaries. Kevin Knapick, renewable resources junior, said he feels the disregard given for student opinion by the Board of Regents is heartbreaking.

"I love and chose this university because of its traditions and to see the executives who are charged with its operations ignoring and belittling those traditions is heartbreaking," Knapick said. "Texas A&M holds six core values — excellence, integrity, leadership, loyalty, respect, and selfless service — and the Board of Regents is supposed to promote these, but by making these changes without input from the current and former students I believe they have torn our core values to shreds."

EDITORIAL BOARD

Regents again exhibit out-of-touch leadership with seal design change

A redesigned university seal and a renamed MSC Flag Room — just another day for a Texas A&M leadership that has shown a consistent willingness to change parts of this university with little notice or student input.

So while it's easy to focus criticism on the cosmetic changes the regents' decision will cause — particularly the seal — the problem runs deeper.

The Board of Regents and Chancellor John Sharp have too often put forward these sorts of decisions, the kind that come quietly and with no obvious prior input. The decisions Wednesday fall in line with the failed attempt to rename the Academic Building after former Gov. Rick Perry and the decision to house incoming A&M president Michael Young off campus.

The beveled "Block T" certainly looks a bit cartoonish in the seal. It seems better reserved for T-shirts. But *The Battalion* is not particularly invested in the debate over the beveled logo, which will now adorn the center of the university seal. We suspect, in the long run, the average fan — even the average student — would not know the difference. But some people put stock in things like this, and the regents seem not to care.

The new seal is, at best, a lateral move. The university's brand recognition will not see a marked improvement just because the seal matches its websites. So why tinker with it?

The regents would likely prefer not to see their names based on social media, which is why their approach makes no sense. If they want to appear like they are in touch with the Aggie community, like they have the university's best interest in mind, then the solution is simple. All they have to do is ask.

All they have to do is float the new seal on social media and ask for feedback. All they have to do is hold a focus group for Aggies of all ages to see how they feel about the Gov. Rick Perry Academic Building — a plan they squashed after public outcry. All they have to do is see how students feel about an off-campus A&M president. Many students are plugged in to this campus and have opinions to share. What's the harm in hearing them out?

One imagines the regents might be surprised to see their new seal mocked on the Internet. They seem to think the move was a good one. But somehow the online eruption after the Perry ordeal was not enough to show them there is a better way.

Most students will get over the seal. Some of us might grow to like it. But we would like to have a say. And judging by the about 6,000 Aggies who have signed an online petition against the change, we have a hunch they would not like our opinion.

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

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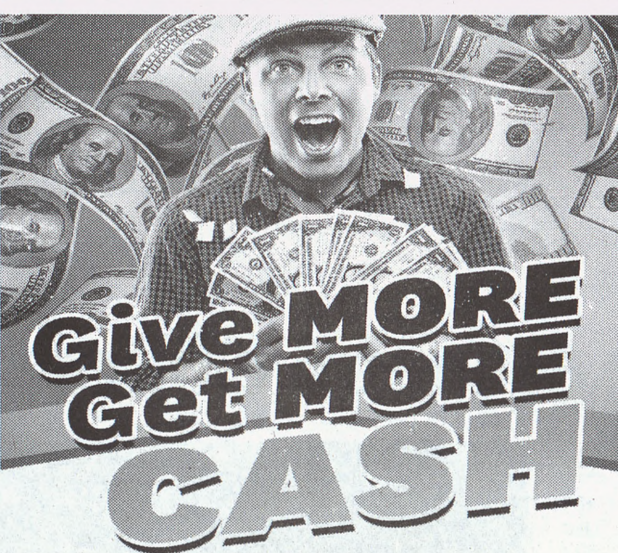
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