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Hilltopics Staff

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HILLTOPICS

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volume two, issue twenty-seven
week of may 01, 2006

Submission from abroad: Language mishaps in Paris, or how to be an intellectual badass

by Sterling Morriss and Clare Taylor

Sterling was eating dinner with her host family in Paris, France, and was trying to refuse more food they kept pushing her way. Not knowing the exact way to say she was full in French, she said, "Je suis pleine," the equivalent of the word for "full" in French. Little did she know, she was using a word in the context reserved for pregnant cattle.

Similarly, Clare was recently approached by a man trying to haggle her in the Jardin des Tuileries. She tried to say "I want to be alone," but thanks to the close pronunciation of the words in French, ended up saying "I want to be drunk."

These are only two examples of French mistakes we have made while living in Paris this semester. We're sure our host families keep lists and laugh over more of them when we're not around. Amusing mistakes aside, learning a foreign language is definitely not easy. But for every stupid thing we unknowingly say, there are ten language connections that make it worth it. For example, helping a French stranger with directions in a city you've only lived in for two months, saying "bonsoir" each night to the proprietor of the Indian store

next door to your apartment, or discussing Alexis de Tocqueville in French (or at least trying to) with your host father.

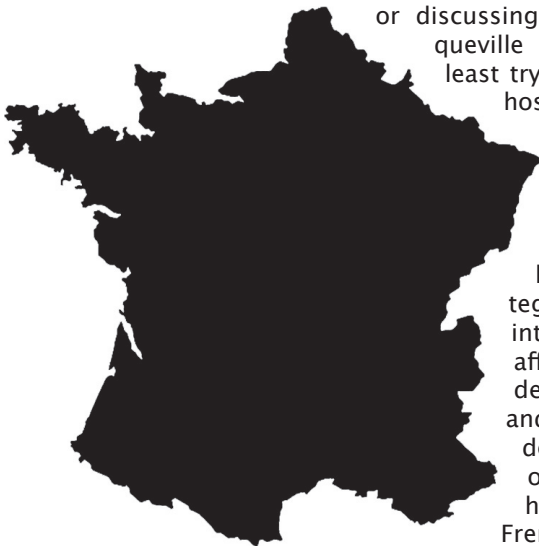
This semester has shown us the importance of learning a foreign language and integrating yourself into its culture. It affords you a much deeper connection and stronger understanding of another place. Living here and knowing French has put the

entire French culture within our grasp. We've been given a great opportunity in the SMU-in-Paris program, but even those who haven't studied abroad should value learning a foreign language. SMU should put more emphasis on both its language and study abroad programs as a way for students to comprehend the world around them in a new, more nuanced way that is not possible by simply being a tourist. Even though the world is growing smaller and English increasingly predominant, we as SMU students should take responsibility for becoming more informed and educated world citizens by learning a (or maybe two or three) foreign language(s).

Two weeks ago, Mark McDowell wrote an article urging students to look into SMU's study abroad programs because they are once in a lifetime opportunities. Our experience so far has been that this is 100% true. But this same student also said he did not want to risk his GPA by learning a foreign language. It's true, studying another language takes hard work, discipline, and self-confidence - it is not an academic exercise for the weak. It takes the skills of a true intellectual badass, one firmly committed to learning in all facets of life and at all costs. So, if you don't have the balls to test your mental brawn, then don't even try. For those of you who do, however, the rewards are manifold.

No matter what your major or career goals, consider learning a foreign language, and then be sure to consult yourself to see if you have even more kahunas to back it up by spending time abroad. You may not end up meeting that mysterious foreigner you've always dreamed of, but the benefits certainly outweigh the awkward mishaps. You will learn how to communicate in a foreign country, cultivate a deeper understanding of another culture, and augment your world view. But the most rewarding benefit of all is that, even while you are calmly explaining to your French family that Conan O'Brien *feels* like the President of Finland, you can still claim to be an intellectual badass.

Sterling Morriss is a junior art history major. Clare Taylor is a junior international studies and French major. The two are currently studying abroad in Paris.



INSIDE this issue

Media: Business school rankings seem to be totally illogical, and the problems are hurting SMU's reputation. Find out more on page 2.

School: James Longhofer says that Student Senate made the right move in voting down open meetings bill, despite hours of tiresome debate, page 3.

Be Heard: *Hilltopics* is always looking for good submissions on virtually any topic. Email your ideas, feedback, or articles to hilltopics@hotmail.com.

We welcome submissions from all members of the SMU community. Letters to the editor should be up to 300 words in response to a previously published article. Contributions should be articles of up to 300-600 words on any topic or in response to another article. Please email your submission to hilltopics@hotmail.com by Wednesday at 8:00 PM to be included in the following week's publication. Special deadlines will be observed for breaking campus events. The opinions expressed in *Hilltopics* are those of the authors solely and do not reflect the beliefs of *Hilltopics* or any other entity. As such, *Hilltopics* does not publish anonymous articles.

A longhorn pie in the sky: Why *Business Week* got their business school rankings all wrong

by Courtney Hebb

Students aren't the only people receiving grades this time of year. Some of the colleges of our university are receiving scores as well, the business school in particular. For the first time ever, *Business Week* has ranked undergraduate business programs and Cox has made the list. In fact, it is in the upper tier, ranking #20 overall.

I'm proud that SMU is one of two Texan schools in the top 25 in the nation, and it's great that we out-ranked T-C-"who?" by 13 places. However, I have a small problem in how it compares to the "other" Texas school. So here's my beef with the Longhorns' ranking. Before we discuss what UT's overall ranking is, let's do a side-by-side comparison of more specific areas. Each school received three letter grades on its student survey, facilities and service, and job placement. While Texas received "A, B, A+" respectively, SMU's grades were "A+, A+, A." On the "student survey" rank, SMU was #9, while Texas was #13. In academic quality, SMU ranked #20, while Texas ranked ten spots lower at #30. The faculty-student ratio at SMU is 1:13.2 versus Texas who has over double the student-to-teacher ratio with 1:29.2. The MBA feeder school rank is a bit closer, but SMU still came out on top, ranking #15 compared to Texas' #16. Even on SAT scores, SMU's average is higher than Texas': 1339 to 1304. In only two instances did UT beat SMU: first with the median starting salary, a measly \$2,000 more at \$47,000 compared to our \$45,000 and secondly, in the recruiter survey rank. So

based on all of the information provided and knowing that Texas did beat SMU in the rankings, what place do you think Texas received? Five spots ahead of SMU? Higher. Ten spots? No, Texas is ranked 9th on the list and eleven spots above SMU.

The one area where Texas had a huge boost was in the recruiter ranking. Texas was ranked #4 while SMU was miles behind ranking #52. This is where companies voice which schools they actively recruit from, how many people they have hired from each school, and rank up to twenty top schools. This creates an inherent advantage for larger schools like Texas' business school, which has 3,999 students compared to SMU's 939. This means more students are getting hired because there are more students to hire. As a company, it makes sense to recruit on a campus where you can reach a larger applicant pool. Therefore, Texas is at the top of the list and attracts more recruiters. Ironically, *The Economist* ranked Cox #7 in the world for "Potential to Network", making it the #1 American school on that list.

Clearly, by all areas measurable, SMU's undergraduate business program surpasses that of the University of Texas. Therefore, I hope you can agree that UT's rating is a cow pie in the sky.

Courtney Hebb is a senior marketing and political science major.

Letter to the editor

This letter is in a response to an article by Douglas Hill in last weeks issue of Hilltopics.

Mr. Hill,

Thank you so much for being one more SMU journalist to mention athletics in a story and then only talk about football. Perhaps if you had broadened the scope of this term to its full potential, you could ascertain that yes, in fact, SMU is better than TCU in athletics. In women's soccer, a team which I am proud to be a part of, we destroyed them 5-2. For the past four years we made an appearance in the NCAA tournament. TCU was nowhere to be seen. If they had a men's soccer team, I am confident that we would destroy TCU as well. We not only beat them in football, but in men's basketball and men's tennis as well. In swimming, as a team, TCU was not even present at either the women's or the men's NCAA championships where SMU placed 7th and 19th, respectively. SMU was able to send a representative for the women's NCAA Cross Country Championships. TCU sent none. These are only a few accolades for the SMU athletic squad this 2005-2006 season, and this success is not only limited to this year. SMU has had strong showings in many sports over the years, enough for me to say that SMU is better than TCU in this avenue as well.

Thank you,
Kelsi Dawe

Final Exam Schedule

Class time: final exam date, final exam time

COMBINED FREN/SPAN1401, 1402: FRI., MAY 5, 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM
9:30 AM TTH: FRI., MAY 5, 11:30 AM - 2:30 PM
11:00 AM MWF: FRI., MAY 5, 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM

12:30 PM TTH: SAT., MAY 6, 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM
2:00 PM MWF: SAT., MAY 6, 11:30 AM - 2:30 PM
4:00 PM MWF: SAT., MAY 6, 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM

8:00 AM MWF: MON., MAY 8, 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM
2:00 PM TTH: MON., MAY 8, 11:30 AM - 2:30 PM
5:00 PM TTH: MON., MAY 8, 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM

11:00 AM TTH: TUES., MAY 9, 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM
3:00 PM MWF: TUES., MAY 9, 11:30 AM - 2:30 PM
5:00 PM MWF: TUES., MAY 9, 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM

9:00 AM MWF: WED., MAY 10, 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM
NOON MWF: WED., MAY 10, 11:30 AM - 2:30 PM
1:00 PM MWF: WED., MAY 10, 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM

10:00 AM MWF: THURS., MAY 11, 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM
8:00 AM TTH: THURS., MAY 11, 11:30 AM - 2:30 PM
3:30 PM TTH: THURS., MAY 11, 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Don't forget: Classes end on Tuesday, 02 May. Wednesday and Thursday, the 3rd and 4th of May, are reading days--no class.

Despite hours of debate, Student Senate does the right thing and votes down open meeting bill

by James Longhofer

The last meeting of the 92nd Student Senate of SMU was the longest and most contentious meeting that I have attended during my brief tenure as a Dedman II Senator. At five hours the meeting was draining for everyone involved. In spite of this, your Student Senate did the right thing: they politely considered, debated, and then voted down legislation that would have been harmful to the institution.

Senators David Mingus and Ben Hatch proposed a bill that would have created an open meetings statement for the Student Senate, and after their bill was voted down, Senator Mingus wrote an opinion piece in *The Daily Campus* that mischaracterized some of the points of his opponents. There is nothing wrong with an open meetings statement; in fact, Senate should codify some kind of commitment to openness in its bylaws. However, that bill and its proposed statement would have created a host of problems for Senate without making the institution more open to students.

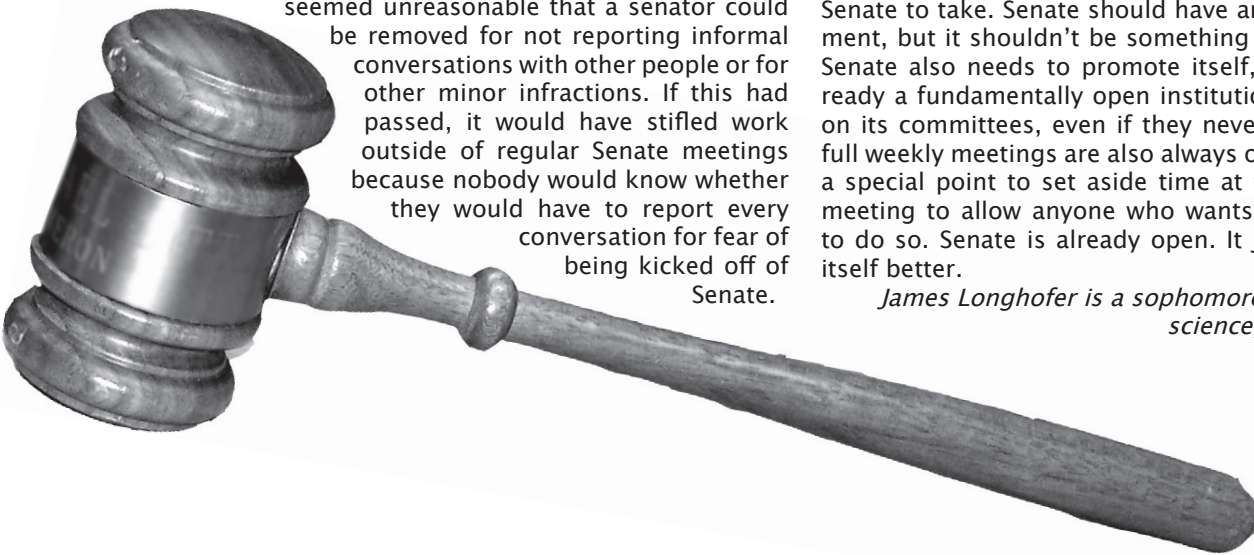
First, the bill was overly complicated. Senators Mingus and Hatch created unnecessary regulations that were confusing and possibly prone to abuse. As the bills' authors defined the bill in the Senate, it seemed as though any conversation, even informal get-togethers and friendly lunches, that had any impact on a decision made in Senate had to have minutes taken and then published on the website. Not only is this impractical, it is also unreasonable. If two senators happen to offhandedly discuss legislation outside of Senate, they cannot be expected to write down minutes as they talk! Even worse, this open meetings statement was backed up with the threat of removal for anyone who violated it. It

seemed unreasonable that a senator could be removed for not reporting informal conversations with other people or for other minor infractions. If this had passed, it would have stifled work outside of regular Senate meetings because nobody would know whether they would have to report every conversation for fear of being kicked off of Senate.

There were other ways that this bill would have harmed Senate. It could have seriously hurt the committee system. Certain committees must make recommendations to the full Senate about issues such as funding or an organization's charter status. These debates can get very heated, and because of this, they are often just limited to committee members. The committee then makes a recommendation which the Senate is free to debate and even ignore. This legislation would have taken away from the committees' ability to make fair recommendations. These recommendations are not binding and if a student disagrees with the recommendation, they are free to say so in front of the Senate. Additionally, it would have harmed a special committee on campus: the Executive Committee. Exec is made up of the Student Body Officers (President, Vice President, and Secretary) and the Senate Officers (Speaker, Chief of Staff, and Parliamentarian). This committee considers issues affecting the whole Senate and makes recommendations about resolutions. Because Exec considers sensitive topics affecting the whole Senate (and possibly the whole school), there is a special need for it to consider things privately without prying eyes. This is not because Exec wants to hide anything; instead it merely wants to be able to consider all options and make the best possible decision. In the end, this legislation would have harmed Senate's ability to do its job correctly.

David Mingus and Ben Hatch had good intentions when they wrote their legislation. They are two of the most active Senators and I know that they both care deeply about their constituents. However, their bill was the wrong path for Senate to take. Senate should have an open meetings statement, but it shouldn't be something that would create fear. Senate also needs to promote itself, because Senate is already a fundamentally open institution. Any student can sit on its committees, even if they never won an election. The full weekly meetings are also always open, and Senate makes a special point to set aside time at the beginning of every meeting to allow anyone who wants to address the Senate to do so. Senate is already open. It just needs to advertise itself better.

James Longhofer is a sophomore public policy, political science, and economics major.



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www.smu.edu/honors/

HILLTOPICS

Hilltopics senior editors say farewell and thank you to some of their favorite professors

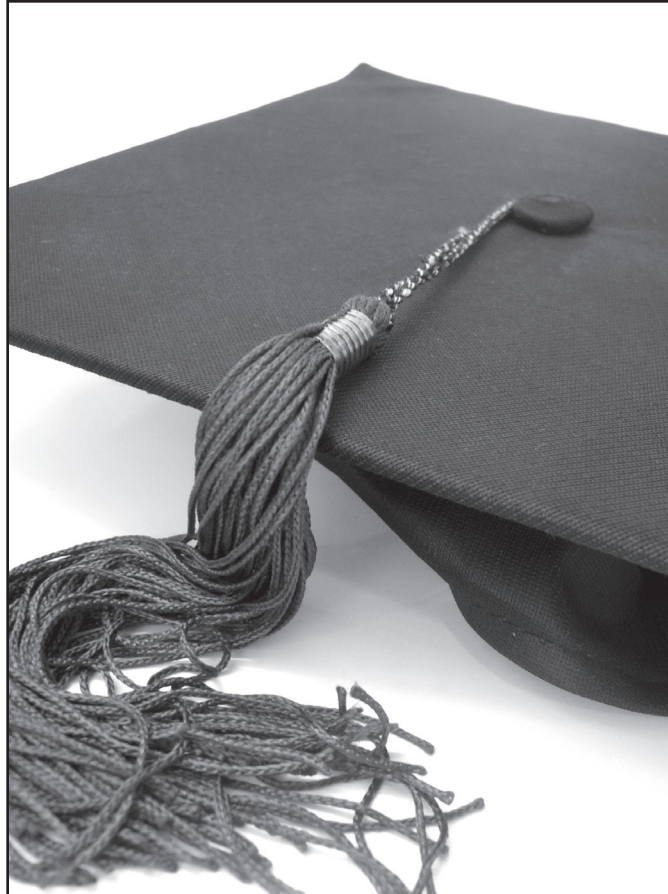
Kasi's Thank You -

Many thanks to: Dr. Alice Kendrick and my advertising and journalism faculty, who went way beyond their jobs as professors to offer me encouragement and support during difficult times; to the same faculty who took interest in my upcoming cross-country move and are helping me network my way to a job in San Francisco; to the President's Scholars program, for choosing me for the upper-class scholarship and reviving my college experience; to Leslie and Dan in Prospect Research, who made working on campus one of the best parts of my four years here; to professors like Dr. Joe Kobyłka and Dr. Hal Williams, who, even though I didn't study their disciplines, taught and encouraged me to expand my thinking; and to all the profs who urged me to speak up more in class because I had good things to say. These people, and others unmentioned, made SMU a great place for me, and for that I will always be grateful.

Michael's Thank You -

I owe much thanks to the political science faculty who took such a vested interest in me as an undergraduate, especially Professor Joe Kobyłka for his endless advice, challenges, and willingness to help students succeed, and Professor Dennis Simon whose tireless interest in today's culture and politics was contagious. An extended and heartfelt thank you is also due to Professor Jack Delaney and Professor Alan Wagner in the music department in Meadows for their patience and understanding. I'm forever grateful for the opportunity to continue to perform in the music school

by Kasi DeLaPorte, Michael Hogenmiller, and Rebekah Hurt after I'd taken on another academic field of study. Finally, I'd like to thank Professors Jim Hopkins and Dennis Foster, whose CF courses instigated a late-coming history minor and both of whom—despite the demands of chairing a department—still managed to change the way a young undergraduate looked at the world around him.



Rebekah's Thank You -

I owe my greatest thanks to Michael Householder for always, always being there, David Doyle for his amazing leadership of all things Honors and for the excellent sex and gender class that expanded my mind and my life, Ed Countryman for his expert advising in my pursuit of the Marshall Scholarship, Dennis Cordell for his superb course on the African diaspora, Ezra Greenspan for his supervision of my Richter research in Ghana, Suzanne Bost for her supervision of my English distinction thesis, Willard Spiegelman for his delightful personality and insistence on precision, Dennis Foster, Nina Schwartz, and the Creative Writing faculty, including David Haynes, Ven Begamudré, and Jack Myers for validating the self-expression that has kept me going. Many thanks to Cathey Soutter for keeping me sane and all my love to my wonderful hall-mates:

Cat, Davia, Judy, Lynn, and Allee for providing the companionship, conversation, and excuses for procrastination that have gotten me through my final year at SMU.

Kasi DeLaPorte, Michael Hogenmiller, and Rebekah Hurt are all senior editors and will all be graduating in May.

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