

# Students get help deciding majors

**By ROBIN LINN**  
The coordinator of the year-old general studies program (GEST) at Texas A&M University understands the problems students have when they decide to change majors. As an undergraduate at Berkeley University, C.J. (Skip) Leabo changed majors nine times in five semesters. The former head of the Communications Department and present coordinator of GEST says the program is designed to handle Aggies in the process of changing majors, mainly on the freshman and sophomore level. "The change from high school to college is a disorienting experience,

and can weigh heavily on a student," Leabo says. Leabo does as much as possible to make students who come to him feel that the university is not an indifferent machine. His office, a remodeled lounge area on the first floor of the Harrington Education Center, is designed to be relaxing and informal. The desk that usually separates the student and professor in most offices is against the wall in his. The room contains such amenities as the memorial brick award (a cement brick given to him by his son), paintings done by friends and soft comfortable chairs.

Leabo says putting the student at ease is an important part of his job. "Most students who enter this office have a general worry that they are different from everybody else," he says. "They think somehow they are different because everybody else knows precisely what they want to do." Leabo says he usually explains to them that there were 1,000 students in the program last fall and that there are about 600 presently enrolled. He stresses that perhaps the most unique fact of the GEST program is that it is a part of the College of Liberal Arts, but works with all the colleges on campus.

"We consider ourselves as a good referral service," Leabo says. He says the program lets the students find out the real facts about a major and sends them to the right people. For example, a large group of students who come to him want to get into Business Administration, but they do not meet the 2.5 gpr requirement. Leabo sends them to talk with Ed Guthrie, who is in charge of admitting students to Business Administration. If they decide to go into that major, Leabo assigns them lower level classes in the college, along with the basic core of courses required by the state.

"We want to give them a taste of business, but won't commit them so much that if they don't make the 2.5 they can choose another major," he says. Leabo says he feels the student who is in the GEST program is actually in a good position. "It is a wise student who knows he is not ready to make a choice but gets the basic courses and explores with an elective." A&M has always been known for its student-faculty communications, he notes, adding that it is important for faculty members to be available to students. Leabo says the biggest problem is to get students to take the first step and visit with him if they are considering changing majors. "Students feel they are imposing on your time, but they forget this is what I am paid to do," he said. If you plan to visit Leabo next year he will not be located in the Harrington Education Center. Because of the increasing size of the program, the offices will be relocated in the Academic Building 106.

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# Dallas research center growing

A new multi-purpose building has been added to expand the largest facility research and extension center in Texas. The new addition to the Texas A&M University Research and Extension Center at Dallas has offices and laboratories for the extension service. It also has an auditorium, which seats 500, and two classrooms. The center also has four office and laboratory buildings and one

large field house that accomodates about 1,200 people. The Texas A&M University system owns about 380 acres for the center. The campus is built on 15 to 20 acres with the remaining land being used for research farming. The study of blackland farming started by the Texas Research Foundation about 15 years ago is still being conducted at the center. The soils at the center are the same as 26 million acres of blackland in Texas. The research land is

subdivided into many test plots and pastures. Fertilization varieties, row crops and efficient use of soil conservation are a few of the research projects being conducted. Research on ornamental horticulture is being aimed at the large urban population. Homeowners are being advised on lawn development and landscaping using native Texas varieties.

The Texas Research Foundation gave the center to Texas A&M in 1972. The center attracts about 20,000 to 40,000 people a year for meetings and seminars, said Dr. H. O. Kunkel, dean of the College of Agriculture at Texas A&M. Kunkel says the new building will provide for more short conferences and seminars.

# 'Life on board sailing ships' subject lecture

Texas A&M Archivist Dr. Charles R. Schultz will present a University Lecture Thursday, April 28, in the 1977 series. Schultz will speak about "Life on Board American Sailing Ships During the 19th Century," reflecting on his work before joining the University library faculty in 1971. The lecture is planned for 8 p.m. in 701 Rudder Tower. Schultz was keeper of manuscripts and librarian at Mystic Sea-

port in Connecticut eight years before becoming archivist at Texas A&M. His job involved acquiring, processing and cataloging materials of 19th Century maritime activities. Among the collections were ships' logbooks and seamen's journals. Schultz also started a union catalog of logbooks and journals in repositories throughout the United States. The catalog now contains records of several thousand voyages.

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