



Staff photo by Pat O'Malley

Free stickers

The Texas A&M Wheelmen have been helping students register their bicycles with the campus police this past week. The wheelmen will have a table set up in front of the MSC through today. The registration stickers are free.

Professor visits from Brazil

By Scot K. Meyer
Battalion Staff

Catching the Aggie spirit is easy to do. Students who attend Texas A&M University quickly learn that it has a unique culture and that being an Aggie involves making adjustments in order to fit in. Students are not the only ones affected. Dr. Heitor Gurgulino de Souza, a Fulbright visiting professor from Brazil, has only been on campus since June, but he said he "feels like an Aggie already."

The Fulbright program is an annual activity coordinated by the Council for International Exchange of Scholars in Washington D.C. Its purpose is to bring researchers from other countries to study at U.S. universities, and to provide support for U.S. professors who wish to study at universities outside the United States.

"I am probably the first lecturer to A&M from Brazil," de Souza said. Adjusting to Texas A&M has not been particularly difficult for de Souza, since "there are many similarities and common interests" between Texas and Brazil.

The purpose of de Souza's visit is to increase intellectual, technical and cultural exchange between the United States and Brazil. One of the specific areas of interest to de Souza is education.

"Schools in the United States and Brazil are facing similar problems in

educating students," de Souza, vice president of the Federal Council of Education of Brazil, said. "And that's producing not only more graduates, but better quality graduates."

De Souza said that Brazil has special problems because more than 50 percent of the country's population is under 20 years old. The shortage of teachers, combined with a student population of about 30 million, has led to larger classes and a lowering of standards.

The top priority in Brazilian education is to train more teachers, de Souza said. Brazil needs instructors in a variety of fields, "in order to diversify career options."

Some specific fields are engineering, medicine and agriculture, "which is why Texas A&M is particularly suited to having a larger exchange program with Brazil."

De Souza estimated over 3,000 Brazilian students studied in the United States last year, "which was a little more than one percent of the 260,000 students studying here from abroad (according to figures released by the Institute of International Education)."

Among the foreign students in American universities last year, he said 20,000 were Latin American, with the largest number coming from Venezuela. Since the population of Brazil (now reaching 120 million) is much larger, de Souza said many more Brazilian students

should be here, particularly for graduate study.

De Souza also said he feels some American graduate and undergraduate students should attend Latin American universities, particularly Brazilian institutions.

"You'd be well greeted there," he said, and added he hopes more Texas professors and specialists could go down to "teach, carry on research and exchange experiences with their Brazilian colleagues. Both our countries have a lot to gain from that."

What Texans have to gain, de Souza said, is an increased understanding of the Brazilian people, important because "Brazil and the United States are good trading partners."

Developing and expanding that trade would be good for both countries, and it requires each country understand the needs of the other.

Brazil is a heavy importer of wheat, oil and machinery from the United States, de Souza said. Twelve billion dollars worth of products come through Texas on the way to Latin America, which de Souza said is a good reason for Texans to pay more attention to Latin America.

"I think Texas A&M should increase its international programs more than it has," de Souza said. "Texas has a unique opportunity to be bi-cultural, and Texas schools should take advantage of that opportunity by teaching both Spanish and

Portuguese."

De Souza said he was disappointed to learn Texas A&M does not offer courses in Portuguese.

The professor said he "has been very well received" at Texas A&M and at other universities when he has mentioned closer ties between the nations. De Souza has attended seminars at the University of Texas, the University of Houston and Rice.

De Souza is from Sao Paulo, which he describes as the Texas of Brazil. "It's a beautiful country," he said. "You really ought to visit it."

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