

Department first phase for A&M self-study

Steering committee sets review guidelines

Editor's note: This is the second of a four-part series on Texas A&M's self-study program.

by Sandra Kay Gary
Battalion Staff

In an effort to keep up its reputation as a high quality educational institution, Texas A&M University must undergo a self-study every 10 years. This self-study is required by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, which is responsible for awarding accreditation to the university.

One of the first phases of the university self-study begins at the department level.

"Each department within the university, and there are about 90 at A&M ... must conduct a study of itself with regard to ... each of the major aspects, which the accrediting body says make up an academic program," said R.J.Q. Adams, coordinator of the University's self-study program.

The Southern Association provides the University with initial information to direct its self-studies.

But, Dr. R. William Barzak, editor of the self-study said: "When we looked through this (information) 10 years ago ... (it) had less than a page of suggestions for a departmental study. And it was so skimpy and so inadequate for an institution the complexity and the size of A&M

that the steering committee ... starting from those suggestions developed its own local guidelines."

The steering committee that conducts the self-study at Texas A&M developed a list of guidelines for the departments to use as a starting point for their individual studies. The list, Barzak said, includes 397 questions that



are designed to give the department committees an idea of what they should look for when doing research.

The questions are based on 12 major aspects or standards, which the studies at all three levels must address. These standards consist of: purpose, educational and administrative, financial resources, faculty, library, student development services, physical plant, special activities, graduate program, research and

computer services.

"(The guidelines) are organized under the same 12 standards ... so there is a mirror or a parallel division, shaping and outline for the University, the college and the department," Barzak said.

"The departments, however they're organized ... take these guidelines, and in effect, they're on their own to organize and to respond.

"I think most departments ... organized into ... an appropriate number of committees ... and wrote up their reports. Some of them just answered the questions, but we found in most cases ... the person in charge of (each committee) wanted to see what his committee counterpart did 10 years ago, and many of them are using that as a guide.

"We hope they are not slavishly imitating, just sticking to (the old self-studies). They should be free to add to or multiply and divide. Hopefully they're using the last 10 years' study as a model, as a suggestion or at least as a starting point ... and then they're looking at the current status (of the department)."

Most department studies show their financing is inadequate, their operating expenses are low and they're understaffed, he said.

Adams said: "Of course the reason every department finds that is because it's uniformly

true. Department operating funds are the first place you lose the battle of the budget in a time of inflation.

"In its report a department may say that we've been losing the battle of class sizes ... our class sizes get bigger and bigger and bigger, and we need more

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staff. Or they may say though we didn't realize it 'til we studied it, we are shy of 'X' equipment ... and in technical and scientific departments that may be a great need."

Barzak said: "The department reports ... are under the most immediate supervision of the college."

Each of the 10 colleges in the University have a coordinator and an editor who are responsible for keeping track of depart-

ment reports within their college and for generating their own college report. The college reports address the same matters the departments did on a wider scale and submit a draft to the steering committee.

The steering committee doesn't really concern itself with the reports until they reach the college level, Barzak said.

He said: "The steering committee will ... exercise its judgment on the drafts of the college report and send it back with suggestions or additions or changes or whatever, if necessary."

Adams said: "On the college level ... (reports) may say that because of our close examination of what's going on at the department level and feeling the pulse of the students, the faculty, the staff and so on ... we need a whole new degree program to meet ... a need.

"Ten years ago, there was no College of Liberal Arts and in the Department of Political Science, there was no Master of Public Administration. (From the self-study) it was obvious

that there was a need for such things because there was a demand. And there's a program which is enormously popular.

"A college may also discover that its physical plan is inadequate ... it doesn't have enough offices ... rooms to teach in ... laboratories. Or it may discover that it's been doing something wrong."

Once the colleges have conducted their studies, evaluated the research and submitted it to the steering committee, a self-study on the University-wide level begins.

Council authorizes machine for Cepheid Variable buttons

by Johna Jo Maurer
Battalion Staff

The MSC Council approved a budget revision Monday for the Cepheid Variable Committee that authorizes the purchase of a \$200 button-making machine to be used for publicity purposes.

Currently, the Print and Copy Center has a \$750 button-making machine that the various MSC committees use for publicity and promotion purposes. The need for another machine and its cost justification was questioned by Paul Fisher, council vice president of development.

Cepheid Variable has increased revenue from ticket sales in the past year and therefore can justify the \$200 cost of the machine, said Kirk Kelley, council vice president for student development.

This committee plans to use the machine for profit-making purposes, such as selling buttons at Aggiecon, an annual three-day science fiction convention held in the spring.

With the MSC Annual Awards Banquet coming up April 3, the Awards System Study Committee presented proposals for two new awards which the council approved.

The Harold W. Gaines Outstanding Service Award will recognize the student on the MSC Council and Directorate who has excelled in one area of the MSC organization.

A First Year Involvement Outstanding Service Award will be given to a student who has served one year in the MSC organization and has shown exceptional motivation and involvement.

Newly appointed council officers will begin their terms at the awards banquet.

The council also approved nominations of 16 committee chairmen and seven council projects chairmen, completing a continuing nomination and appointment schedule begun at the start of spring semester.

Newly appointed MSC committee chairmen are: Becky Laird, Aggie Cinema; Mark Belcher, Amateur Radio; Todd Stansbury, Arts; Todd Bonin, Basement; Kessel Thompson, Black Awareness; Deborah Molina, CAMAC; Angela Partain, Cepheid Variable; David Franz, Great Issues; Beth Ann

Hendrix, Hospitality; Michael Dewey, OPAS; Morris Salge, Outdoor Recreation; David Hamilton, Political Forum; Steve Daniels, Recreation; Mike Carson, SCONA; Darryl Heath, Town Hall; John Visser, Travel.

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