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Tuition rates topic of Texas Legislature

by Rebecca Zimmermann

Battalion Staff
The Texas Legislature may act on precedent-setting bills for the establishment of new Texas colleges, funds for university systems and construction on campuses this session, said a member of the Coordinating Board, Texas College and University System.

"There are five things I think the Legislature will act on that will have a big effect," said Gwen Morrison, keynote speaker for a workshop sponsored by the Texas A&M chapter of the Texas Association of College Teachers.

Funds for construction on campuses, the Permanent University Fund, tuition rates, the foreign student issue and whether the University of Houston will get funds for a Woodlands campus probably will be major issues in the next legislative session, she said.

The Legislature's actions can't be predicted, she said. Since the legislative session begins after an election,

the political atmosphere differs during each session.

The proposed Woodlands campus for UH may receive much attention because of the amount of money involved in establishing a new campus, she said.

If this campus is established, a new precedent will be set, she said, because no new institutions have been created recently.

The Coordinating Board has been "taking the quality bent" in higher education, she said. Two philosophies for higher education exist: using resources for existing institutions or building more institutions.

The board has decided to use resources to "beef up" the two flagship university systems—Texas A&M and the University of Texas—and limit the establishment of new institutions.

Another trend may be set concerning construction on state campuses, she said.

Morrison said she also expects the Legislature to discuss state tuition rates, which have not been increased since 1957.

the allocations also asked the Coordinating Board to review these requests. These projects are in limbo because questions have been raised about the board's authority to approve or disapprove a request after the Legislature has approved it.

In addition, about \$800 million worth of construction project requests must be reviewed by the Coordinating Board before the Legislature can act on these requests during its next session.

The legislative session probably will include discussion of the PUF, Morrison said. The Council of Presidents and Chancellors of Public Senior Colleges and Universities of Texas has recommended that all Texas A&M and UT system schools share the PUF and that a designated fund be established for other state institutions.

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staff photo by David Fisher

Silent Protest

A protest was held in front of Rudder Fountain Tuesday by the General Union of Palestinian Students and the

Organization of Arab Students over the recent slayings, which took place in the refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila.

SAT exam scores are up, Board agency says

The 1982 SAT increase — two points in verbal and one in math — still left the average scores 87 points behind those of 1963, the year the great skid started.

Some observers linked the slight increase to the fact that students are being coached on how to take the test.

Robert G. Cameron, College Board executive director of research and development, questions that theory because scores also went up on College Board Achievement Tests, given for

languages and other academic subjects.

The verbal average rose to 426, compared to 424 in 1981 and 478 in 1963; the math average went up to 467 from 466 in 1981 and 502 in 1963.

Scores of 650 to 800 are required for admission consideration at the most prestigious universities.

The SAT is given to about 1 million college-bound students annually and the College Board said 76 percent of

the 1982 group planned to apply for financial aid. Information gathered by the Board showed only about one in five families could pay the full annual cost of education at a public four-year school and only 11 percent could pay the full bill at a private four-year college.

It said freshmen, especially females, are aiming for high-paying and technological fields of study and away from low-paying fields.

The median family income among

takers this year was \$26,800, up 11 percent from \$24,100 in 1981.

The College Board's study also said:

The most dramatic growth in intended field of study was in computer sciences. In the past year, interest increased by 38 percent. Since 1973, growth has been 381 percent, with interest virtually tripling since 1978.

For the fourth consecutive year, business and commerce was the most popular area of study.

Interest in engineering careers continued to rise for the eighth straight year. It is the most popular intended area of study for men.

A notable decline in intended areas of college study was for education — "interest has declined 50 percent since 1973."

The College Board is a non-profit educational association serving students, schools and colleges through programs designed to expand educational opportunity.

Rail strike is damaging to economy, Secretary says

United Press International
WASHINGTON — Transportation Secretary Drew Lewis, defending the administration against charges it is anti-union, said Tuesday Congress must end the nationwide railroad strike to prevent serious damage to the economy and to keep millions of union workers on the job.

Lewis said the 3-day-old strike by 26,000 locomotive engineers was on such a narrow issue — their desire to have a pay differential above other train crew members — and the potential economic damage so severe that "in the public good we are forced to take an action that we would not otherwise take." He made the remarks during testimony to the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

No face-to-face negotiations were scheduled Tuesday to end the walkout, which already has caused layoffs among Amtrak workers and in mines and auto plants, crippled passenger rail service and cut into freight deliveries.

The committee appeared to be generally sympathetic to Lewis' request that Congress impose on the engineers a settlement recommended by a presidential emergency board. The proposal would give engineers the same pay raises and benefits already accepted by other union members, but would deny them the right to strike before the contract expires April 30, 1984, to gain additional increases that would maintain their

traditional higher pay.

The average locomotive engineer now makes about \$36,000 annually.

Major dissenters on the committee were Rep. Marc Marks R-Penn., who accused Lewis and President Reagan of being anti-union and engaging in "union-busting" and Rep. Florio, D-N.J., who said other alternatives were available, such as a second cooling-off period. Florio, however, promised to keep an open mind.

Lewis reacted angrily to Marks' charges, saying the administration also was concerned with the millions of other union workers on the railroads, in auto plants and other industries who were being put out of work by a narrow issue.

Lewis also rejected comparisons to his tough stand against the Professional Air Traffic Controllers strike, saying the PATCO strike was clearly illegal. He said the administration believes in the right of private industry unions to strike and was taking action on the rail strike reluctantly, only because there would be such enormous damage to the economy.

Lewis said the walkout threatens to halt the flow of \$15 billion in commodities each month, and the layoff of more than 500,000 non-railroad workers after two weeks of a strike, in addition to the 400,000 rail workers already idled.

The secretary also said he agrees with a railroad industry estimate that

a prolonged strike would cost the economy \$1 billion a day. Initial administration estimates put the losses at about \$80 million a day.

The Senate Labor Committee also scheduled a hearing today to deal with the crippling rail strike.

There already have been scattered plant and mine shutdowns as the result of the walkout by the engineers, including a General Motors plant in St. Louis that laid off 2,350 workers. GM said more plants may be closed if the strike persists.

Amtrak issued layoff notices to between 3,000 and 4,000 workers across the country and estimated it was losing about \$600,000 a day.

Commuters struggled to get to work in Chicago, Boston and San Francisco — many having to turn to buses and car pools. More than half the normal number of freight trains ran, however, with supervisors filling in for strikers.

The railroads carry 37 percent of all freight, including almost all shipments of coal, grain, ore and heavy industrial materials.

Lewis said earlier Reagan "decided that we must act decisively to bring the strike to an end" because "the nation cannot afford a prolonged rail strike. It is clear that any longer-term rail strike could have a serious impact not only on the economy, but also on national defense."

Issues High insurance rates bring cut in income

by Diana Sultenfuss

Battalion Staff

Leroy Mynar and his wife were expecting their second child in August. Anticipating the extra costs a new baby would bring, Mynar took a part-time job at Wal-Mart. He worked there five evenings a week, in addition to his 40-hour week at the Texas A&M Printing Center.

Then Texas A&M raised its insurance rates — increasing the cost more than 100 percent for dependents on some plans. In Mynar's case, the increase — plus the insurance cost of a new dependent — meant he had to keep his second job three days a week.

Mynar said he considered insuring his children off campus but decided to remain on the University plan.

"I'll go ahead and pay the \$140 because I'm sure my kids are covered that way," he said. "If I go to off-campus coverage, those companies can cancel out on you. Then, if they cancel, you probably can't get insured anywhere else."

"I've basically just accepted it now. But I will be making about \$70 less on the check when the insurance is taken out than I am now even with my pay raise."

Mynar said he worries he also may be in a higher tax bracket because of the pay raise University em-

ployees received Sept. 1, which would take another chunk out of his paycheck.

"I took a cut in pay to come here (1½ years ago) ... for the benefits," Mynar said. "Now it looks like those benefits are shrinking."

Mynar's case is not unique. Almost every employee at Texas A&M University found something to grumble about in the insurance rate increase. The cut in income meant administrators and upper-level faculty faced the loss of vacations or long-awaited purchases. Staff and junior faculty faced huge bites being taken out of their main income. And all complained in unison about the abruptness of the move.

The average pay raise effective this semester for non-classified employees — faculty and administrative personnel — was 8.26 percent; the average pay raise for classified employees was 9.45 percent. However, insurance rates for an employee with no dependents increased 12 percent — from \$39.48 a month to \$44.25 a month.

The average pay raise effective this semester for non-classified employees — faculty and administrative personnel — was 8.26 percent; the average pay raise for classified employees was 9.45 percent. However, insurance rates for an employee with no dependents increased 12 percent — from \$39.48 a month to \$44.25 a month.

Larry Reynolds, an associate professor of English, paid \$83.55 a month on his old plan.

"Now, I pay \$149.58 a month," he said. "The insurance increase took up about half of my recent pay raise."

"I'm surprised, given the leverage

that the University should have because of the number of employees, that it can't get a better insurance package. If individuals can go out and get a better policy, why can't the University?"

John Honea, director of insurance and risk management, said employees probably could get a better rate on younger family members, but they may be buying a cheaper policy, not necessarily a better policy. He recommended employees make close comparisons between policies.

The Texas A&M System now has 14,000 employees with 28,000 dependents. Claims at the University nearly have doubled in the past four years, from 8,531 claims in 1978 to 16,391 claims in 1981-82. And the total of the System's claims has increased from \$4 million to \$13.5 million in a four-year period.

Other employees also faced large rate increases. For example, if a secretary earns \$14,000 a year, a 9.5 percent pay raise would increase his or her pay \$1,330. If the secretary had two children and wanted the deluxe plan, insurance rates would increase about \$1,400 a year — and the secretary would be \$70 behind rather than \$1,330 ahead. In this case, Honea recommended the secretary stay on the basic plan because

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that far," said Phillips, "and if the latest polls we've taken are accurate, we're only needing to pickup three votes to get it passed when the Legislature meets after the first of the year."

Phillips, owner of Phillips Ranch about 40 miles north of Dallas, said supporters of horse racing were encouraged by a number of factors, including approval of a non-binding referendum favoring parimutuel wagering in the May 1 Republican primary in Texas. The proposal did not appear on the Democratic ballot, a traditional source of support for racing interests.

Economic conditions also weigh in favor of the THRA, Phillips said.

Proponents of the bill claim legal parimutuel wagering will have an

\$12 billion annual economic impact on the state, including \$40 to \$60 million in new state income from direct taxes.

"And from everything I've been reading and hearing lately, the state could use the money," Phillips said.

He said other benefits would include an estimated 50,000 new jobs, particularly for unskilled workers; an increase in tourism; and expansion of the state's horse breeding and related industries.

"A lot of things are in our favor," Phillips said.

"For years, Texans have been going to tracks in Louisiana, Arkansas, New Mexico and across the border for horse racing — bettors and

horse breeders — and returning home wondering why they had to go out of state," Phillips said.

"Some of those tracks would close down it wasn't for all of the Texas people. That's money that is being spent by Texans at race tracks in adjoining states. It's a sham and the people realize it."

Phillips said he expected the proposed bill to be introduced within days of the Legislature convening in January.

"It should be out of committee by February and in plenty of time to get something done," he said.

"This time, it's going to pass," he said.

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forecast

Today's Forecast: High of 81, low in the high 50s tonight. Partly cloudy skies, drier, cooler day with less humidity.

Parimutuel horse racing bill forecasted to show or place, maybe win, in Texas

United Press International
Supporters of legalized parimutuel betting believe the odds of trotting a horse-racing bill through the Texas Legislature are better than ever.

Oklahoma voters turned out in strength Tuesday in becoming the 32nd state to approve parimutuel wagering, completing a circle of race track gambling ringing Texas.

"It's an idea whose time has come," said B.F. Phillips Jr. of Frisco, president of the Texas Horse Racing Association, whose membership is spurring a move to gain passage of a bill similar to that adopted by Oklahoma.

"The thinking of people in Texas is changing. The population of this state is changing," Phillips said.