

Final exam policy debated

by Michelle Powe

Battalion Staff

The Faculty Senate spent a laborious session Monday passing and amending by-laws, approving curriculum changes and discussing the possibility of requiring future graduating seniors to take final examinations.

The Senate's Ad Hoc Committee on Academic Standards presented to the Senate a report which strongly suggests abolishing the policy of exempting Texas A&M degree candidates from final examinations, saying the policy "is a serious compromise of important academic values."

The Faculty Senate will vote on the issue at its January meeting.

During its evaluation of the exemption policy, the committee surveyed faculty members and interviewed leaders of major student organizations.

The student leaders interviewed represented the Student Government, Corps of

Cadets, Residence Hall Association, Graduate Student Council and Cap and Gown (a senior honor society).

Some of the objections that surfaced during the interviews and surveys were:

— By being exempt from finals, less of expected of graduating seniors in their last semester than in any other semester.

— Many graduating seniors stop attending class after the last regular examination and miss material presented after that time.

— Some students manipulate their degree plans by taking an unusually large number of courses during their last semester or delaying difficult or feared courses.

— The policy requires evaluating students on unequal standards. Degree candidates don't have the opportunity or the jeopardy that other stu-

dents have of raising or lowering their final grades depending on how well they do on the final exam.

— The policy limits the academic freedom of professors. It limits the types of assignments and projects that can be used.

Some arguments in favor of the policy were:

— The present policy allows graduating seniors to receive their diplomas at commencement, and allows graduation ceremonies to take place while school is still in session.

— The early commissioning of officer candidates allows candidates at Texas A&M to receive their commissions before candidates at other schools.

— Completing the final semester early allows graduates to interview for jobs or prepare for graduate or professional schools.

— The policy is a nice reward for being a senior, and may even be considered a right of graduating seniors.

While both student leaders and faculty members cited advantages and disadvantages to the policy, nearly all the students were in favor of senior exemptions and the majority of the faculty surveyed were opposed.

The Faculty Senate will debate and vote on the policy change recommendation Jan. 16, the first class day of the spring semester.

If the Senate approves the policy change, the issue will have to go through a few more channels, including recommendations by University vice presidents, before the Senate proposes the change to President Frank E. Vandiver for final approval.

The committee also recommended that the policy change, if approved, be put into effect no later than the graduating class of December 1985.

Board finishes up routine concerns

by Christine Mallon

Battalion Staff

The most exciting thing that happened at Monday night's CSISD school board meeting was when the meeting was temporarily recessed by Christmas carolers led by the principal of South Knoll Elementary School.

The second most exciting thing was when Board President Bruce Robeck introduced his parents from Oregon who were in the audience.

"They just dropped by to see how I spend my Monday nights," Robeck explained.

This was the last meeting of the year and the board was trying to get routine matters out of the way before the holidays.

The board voted to extend the use of district schools for new churches that will come to College Station in the near future. The churches are:

- Beautiful Savior Evangelical Lutheran which is currently holding services at South Knoll.
- St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church which is holding its services at College Hills Elementary School.

• Aldersgate United Methodist Church which will temporarily use the junior high school facilities.

• St. Francis Episcopal Church of the Redeemer which will begin holding services in January at Oakwood Elementary School.

In other action, Superintendent H.R. Burnett announced the appointment of Tommy Att-

away as the new personnel director for the district.

Durst, Wood, Milberger and Associates have completed the annual financial audit of the district which will be submitted to the Texas Education Agency this month.

The actual expenses for the general operating funds were about \$142,800 less than the estimated total in the 1982-83 budget.

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District Attorney joins others calling for new trial for Geter

United Press International

DALLAS — District Attorney Henry Wade Monday said he was joining defense attorneys in calling for a new trial for Lenell Geter, a black engineer sentenced to life in prison in a robbery case that has sparked allegations of racism.

Wade said that because of questions raised by news accounts of Geter's robbery trial, the Dallas County District Attorney's office was seeking a new trial.

"On behalf of this office, I'm joining with defense attorneys for Lenell Geter in asking that the courts grant him a new trial," Wade said.

The case gained attention, in part, because a number of Geter's co-workers at E-Systems Inc. in Greenville testified that he was at work the day of the robbery.

That went squarely against the testimony of five restaurant employees, who identified Geter as the robber, and Wade said he believed their testimony proved Geter's guilt.

"I have reviewed the record of the previous trial, which is lengthy," Wade said. "The evidence indicates his guilt since all the five witnesses who were robbed identified him as the guilty person, but in view of a recent television show and other media reports, I believe some doubt has been raised in the minds of many people concerning the fairness of his trial as well as his guilt."

Geter's attorney, Edwin Sigel, said he hoped Geter would be freed from prison by the weekend, and he predicted that Judge John Ovard would order a new trial Tuesday.

"We expect a new trial to be granted in the morning," Sigel said.

The Dallas chapter of the NAACP responded to Wade's announcement by saying members were "elated with the news. We really are. The NAACP has been contending that if the full facts of the case were reviewed, Lenell Geter would be set free."

An aide to Texas Attorney General Jim Mattox said Wade's announcement was a victory for fairness.

"We are gratified that the apparent new evidence in the case has prompted the district attorney to look again at the whole situation, to see if he got a

fair trial," said Elna Christopher.

"That's not to say he's guilty or he's innocent. It's just that there are enough questions about the way the matter was handled that the whole thing ought to be looked at again," she said.

"We've been working on this case for some time," she said.

Gov. Mark White said he was glad the case had been reopened.

"I am pleased with the decision of District Attorney Henry Wade to push for a new trial for Lenell Geter," White said. "A new trial will also resolve any questions about the impartiality of Texas justice. I look forward to a speedy resolution of this case."

Wade Monday said that his office would have Geter take a polygraph test, and if he passed,

the robbery charge would be dropped. But Wade said if Geter failed the test, he would be retried.

Geter, 24, a graduate of South Carolina State College, was convicted in October 1982 of robbing a fast food restaurant of several hundred dollars. He was sentenced to life in prison.

Wade said his office would thoroughly investigate the case and interview all witnesses.

60 Minutes, the CBS television news magazine, did a story on Geter's case Dec. 4, which challenged the validity of Geter's conviction.

Wade, in a prepared statement Monday, did not say that Geter was innocent or that his office had erred in its handling of the case. He merely said that he was calling for a new trial because of the publicity the case had gained.

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