

MSC offers many things to many people

Student Center a world in itself

By KARL SPENCE
Reporter

The director of Texas A&M University's Memorial Student Center is an enthusiastic admirer of the place where he works. He also has strong feelings about the students and alumni who have brought its facilities and programs into being.

James R. Reynolds says there is a lot to appreciate. Along with the adjoining Rudder Tower and Theater Complex and the Regents' Annex (which together make up the University Center), the MSC provides more space for student meetings than any other college union, Reynolds says. And its Student Programs Office oversees what Reynolds calls "the largest student center programming organization in the world" — 1,800 students in 35 committees running 1,400 programs.

Those programs operate on an annual budget of \$3.4 million, 70 percent of which is self-generated, the rest coming from student fees.

Reynolds estimates total participation in the center's programs last year at 430,000. When the University is in regular session, as many as 20,000 persons enter the MSC every day, and sometimes more than 100 meetings are held in the University Center's conference rooms daily.

Apart from size, what does Reynolds find most special about the MSC?

"The students," he says. "The reason we can have what we do is the kind of students who come to A&M. For example, one of our goals here is to provide works of art for the stu-

dents to enjoy. That couldn't be done if the pieces were going to be stolen or defaced."

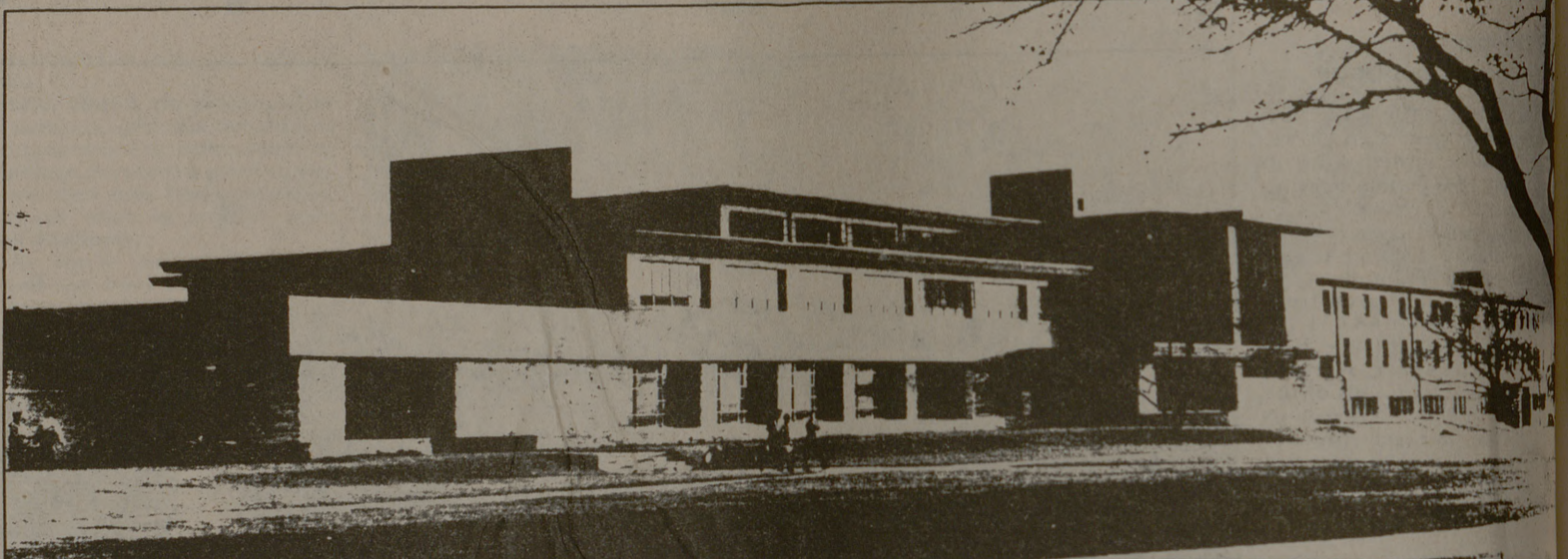
The same goes for the rest of the center's decor, Reynolds says. The cave Aggies take of their building enables the MSC to escape the concrete-floor appearance of many other college unions around the country.

The MSC opened in 1950 after the student body had expressed, two years earlier, a desire for something besides barracks and drill fields to relax in. Construction was financed partly by the Permanent University Fund, partly by student fees, and partly by contributions from alumni, who gave their donations in memory of the Aggies who had died in the two world wars. Hence the observances of doffing hats while in the building and keeping off the grass outside.

The center was renovated and expanded to its present size in 1974.

A first-time visitor to the MSC will need no help in discovering the Student Lounge, the Aggeland Station Post Office, the longhorn-hide couches, the cafeteria, the bookstore and gift shop, and the basement bowling and games area and snack bar. After a few weeks, new Aggies may have noticed that guest accommodations and check-cashing services are available at the Main Desk, and they may also have located the basement barber shop and beauty salon, the first-floor art gallery, the Schiwet Lounge with its original oil and watercolor paintings, the Forsyth Alumni Center, and the second-floor browsing library.

But a student might attend school



This picture of the Memorial Student Center was used in the 1952 Aggeland. Many changes have been made since then.

here for many semesters and never inspect the Metzger-Sanders Gun Collection at the top of the staircase by the Main Desk; or have a drink in Rumours, the coffee shop next to the MSC's south entrance; or catch or give a ride home and back with other Aggies through the Hitching Post by the Student Lounge; or step into the Student Programs Office above the bookstore and become involved in an activity of interest.

More than the facilities and services the MSC provides, the programs of the MSC Committees spark Reynolds' enthusiasm. Films, arts, travel, outdoor recreation, games, concerts, fairs, lectures and more are brought to Texas A&M by programs which, he points out, "are basically conceived, planned and produced by volunteer students."

Student involvement, Reynolds says, fulfills the fourth goal of the MSC: providing opportunities for students to develop their abilities as

leaders, managers, marketers and accountants in organizations which they themselves create and sustain.

"This experience makes the MSC one of the most efficient educational programs on campus," Reynolds says.

The value Reynolds places on student programs explains the emphasis he places on their growth. When he became director of the MSC in 1978, about 600 students participated in 400 programs. After another eight years, he hopes, 3,000 students will be engaged in 2,000 programs.

Reynolds says that right now the MSC could use half again as much meeting space as it has. By 1990, the demand for space could be for double that of today. Consequently, a push for center expansion is in store this year.

At the same time, the MSC must adjust to the fact that a coming stabilization of enrollment will put a sp-

on student-generated revenues (fees, textbook and food purchases, etc.). Effectively, that income will shrink because of inflation.

The MSC, therefore, must operate more efficiently and look more toward generated revenues such as those brought in by outside conference groups, Reynolds says.

Civic and business groups use the meeting rooms during the day while students are attending classes, he explains. They pay for the room use and purchase food and other services. In return, the University, fulfilling its responsibility as a land-grant institution, provides a valuable service to the community and state.

One project that especially interests Reynolds this year is the expansion of Texas A&M's Endowed Lecture Series. The MSC gets \$230,000 each year in private donations from businesses, foundations, and individuals, \$60,000 of that is earmarked for the lecture series. To

date, the series has concentrated on foreign policy, bringing to campus such speakers as Gerald R. Ford, Helmut Schmidt, Alexander Ha and Henry Kissinger. Reynolds wants to add endowments for other series, to focus on economic food and water, and national defense.

Like so much else about the MSC, such a program would stand among universities world-wide, Reynolds says.

To new Aggies and those who come back to school this year, here are these words of wisdom:

"Your academic program at Texas A&M is the most important reason you're here. But if you manage your time well, you will have time to participate in those programs where you can put into practice what you learn in the classroom. My advice to you is: Get involved."

MSC Council president plans ahead

By MICHAEL CANNATA
Reporter

MSC Council president Pat Wood III is a civil engineering major who never stops moving.

The fifth-year senior's involvement with the MSC Council began after he was president of his sophomore honor society. At the end of his term, he went to his adviser in a panic. Wood says he thought his political career could go no further. His adviser told him about the MSC Council.

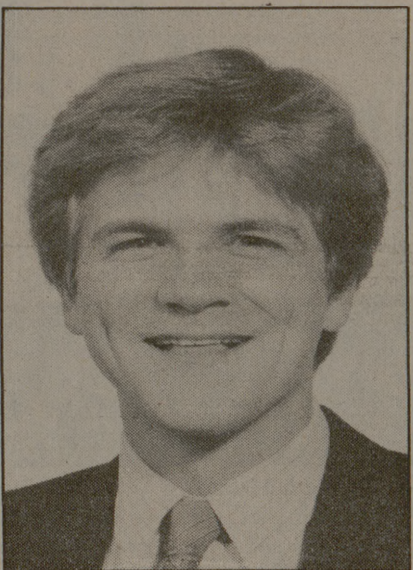
Wood was vice president for public relations his sophomore year, then became executive vice president for programs his junior year. As a senior, Wood had to choose between graduating or staying a fifth year and seeking the council presidency.

Wood says his only regret was moving into the purple-painted office of past president Greg Hawkins. Wood hesitated to change the color and has joked about it with Hawkins. Humor is typical of Wood's way of dealing with people.

Nothing moves fast enough for Wood. He calls himself a six-month planner. He says this is a problem because many of his duties call for one- and three-year planning schedules.

"I have to think not what I am going to get done in my year but what I am going to set up for the future of the MSC Council and Texas A&M," Wood says.

He says many of the other MSC committees have short-term goals



MSC Council President Pat Wood

with fixed objectives, but in his job continuity is important to make sure that long-range goals are met. He calls long range planning the most inspiring and fun.

As MSC president, Wood supervises members, arranges external business and works with council members. Wood says the president spends about 30 percent of his time supervising members, which includes reviewing progress reports of executive vice presidents and attending other committee meetings.

About 40 percent of his time is spent working with other groups on and off campus. Wood says most of his time is spent working with administrators in fund-raising, and at social events. The remaining 30 percent involves working within the MSC Council and its branches. The rest of the time, Wood says, he meets with individual council members and attends meetings.

Last year 280,000 people attended MSC functions, Wood says, and this year more are expected. He estimates that the MSC is now reaching about 75 percent of the student body with its programs.

He says he enjoyed learning about plans for the university, but he also is concerned that some administrators cannot think past their own personal needs.

"It's exciting to see the direction which Dr. Vandiver hopes to see A&M move in," Wood says, "but it is disturbing to see the upper level administrators with set schedules and their own agendas who don't think beyond their own term in office or their own range of interests."

Wood says high-handed politics really bothers him. He says that when decisions affecting students are made without asking their opinions he gets very angry. Wood says administrators sometimes ignore student opinion because they think it represents only one individual, who will be at the university only a few

years. But, he says, students will always be here and their needs must be considered in the long term goals.

Wood also is unhappy with what he calls "the wave of mediocrity" that has swept through Texas A&M in the last few years. He is both by the disappearance of "Howdy" and a reduction of attendance at school-related activities. Wood says he has always been impressed with the high quality of students at Texas A&M. He says the University should not have to be promoted because it sells itself.

"From a student's point of view there is a lot we can do to promote our own university and have to rely on paid personnel to do it," Wood says.

The students should be able to use the programs offered, he says, and suggest new ideas, he says.

Wood says the MSC Council has established a committee to look into leadership and management training for students. He says the top of his list of long-term goals is the desire to make Texas A&M a school to be proud of.

"I remember having alumni tell me 'Go out there and make people see that ring a then make them anxious to see after,'" Wood says. "A&M has outperformed on that and that's one tradition we should continue."

Resume help to interviews offered in Rudder

By Karen Bloch
Reporter

Officials at the Texas A&M Placement Center say they are ready for the annual assault of graduating seniors looking for a job.

The placement center, on the 10th floor of Rudder Tower, provides students with many employment related services, including counseling and interview scheduling.

"At the center we offer counseling in career planning and job search," Louis Van Pelt, director of placement, said. "We also teach students how to write a resume and how to research a company. Our job is to do everything we can to see that a student is properly placed."

"The center's main purpose is scheduling students for their initial interviews with recruiting employers."

This semester the placement center will begin the second year of using a system of bidding points for the assignment of interview slots.

Until the fall of 1983, students had to wait in line — often longer than three hours a night, five nights a week — to sign up for interviews which were granted on a first come, first served basis.

With the new system, interview requests are made by filling out a computer-read interview sign-up card and depositing it in one of the drop-slots in the Placement Center lobby. Since this can be done any time prior to the deadline for a particular inter-

view week there is no advantage to signing early, there is seldom a problem bidding.

The center checks the qualifications of student against those requested by the recruiting company. Qual students are then scheduled interviews in order of the number of points they bid.

"Every student is given 400 points to use before they graduate. Several schools use similar systems," Velt said. "Students are given points a year at Purdue, while the University of Texas School of Business students 200 points every year."

"The number of points students get is variable. Bidding points just gives students a better chance of getting interviews they want the most," Velt said.

Students who graduate in December or 150 points during the Spring semester prior to their graduation, 250 points in the Fall. May dates are given 200 points during the two semesters preceding their graduation.

For the students closest to

graduation a better chance of getting interviews. Van Pelt said, "The closer a student is to graduating, the more they need interview opportunities. By giving them (graduating seniors) a 50 point relative advantage, we increase their chances of receiving those opportunities."

Students interested in finding summer employment follow the same procedures as graduating students and are given 75 bidding points each semester.

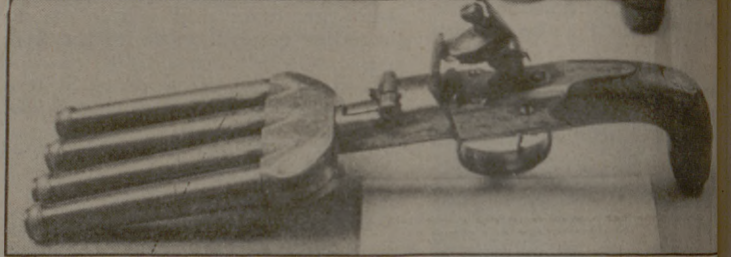
Points are deducted when a student gets on an interview schedule that fills. No points are deducted if the schedule does not fill or if a student does not get on a schedule.

When a schedule does not fill, qualified students can sign up for vacant time slots. This is done on a first come, first served basis and no points are deducted.

Students are placed on a waiting list if they do not get on an interview schedule they have requested. Interview times that become available are assigned — in order of the number of points initially bid — to those on the waiting list, but no points are deducted. Even if a student is not assigned to a schedule, he can request that the Placement Center send a copy of their resume to the company.

"Some people are confused by the system at first," Van Pelt said. "We hold hour-long orientation sessions to familiarize students with the point system procedures."

"The system (of bidding points) has been well received by business, industry and patient students. There



This rare English "duck foot" flintlock multi-shot pistol made by Barbour in the late 18th Century can be seen in the Metzger and Sanders Gun Collection

\$3.5 million budget

By JULIA NUNNALLEE
Reporter

The MSC Council is the student governing body of 33 Memorial Student Center committees with interests ranging from opera to outdoor recreation.

The council, which is responsible to the vice-president for student services, was formed in 1951 as a group of student volunteers who represented the MSC committees. Today, the council determines the budget, operations and public relations policies of all student committees.

"Every potential interest on campus is sitting around one table with the council," said Denis Lee Davis, executive vice-president for marketing and personnel for the council.

The MSC Council in 1983-84 supervised more than 1,300 programs,

such as the MSC All Night Fair and the MSC Madrigal Dinners. About 250,000 people attended those programs last year.

"The council has an impact on every person who walks through the doors of a program," Davis said.

The 27 council members are elected through a nomination and interview process beginning each spring semester. Students are nominated on leadership, college philosophy and purpose and general New executives take office in April.

The MSC Council had a budget of \$3.5 million last year. Most of the money comes from fundraising, student service fees, with corporate and individual gifts providing support.

"A good portion of that is provided by the committees themselves," Davis said.



The Forsyth Alumni Center is on the first floor of the MSC, across from the Post Office.