



Campus All Faiths Chapel used for many purposes

By PAM BARNES
Reporter

"My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples." — Isaiah 56:7

This inscription greets all who walk past the thick wooden doors of the All Faiths Chapel on the Texas A&M campus.

The Association of Former Students dedicated the chapel to the University 26 years ago for people of all faiths and creeds to use. Today no regular religious services are held at the chapel but it's still used for prayer meetings, counseling, meditation, memorials and weddings.

Janie Metzger of Student Activities said the chapel is especially popular for weddings.

"From May until December there may be as many as four weddings a weekend," Metzger said. "Weddings at the chapel range from small to very elaborate with crossed sabers lining the aisles."

It's a first come-first served situation, Metzger said. Some people reserve the chapel a year in advance and others just a month ahead, she said. Reserving the chapel requires a

\$35 utilization fee and a \$35 security deposit. Requests can be made at the Student Activities Office in the Pavilion.

Since food isn't allowed in the chapel, Metzger suggests using the Memorial Student Center for the reception. If alcohol is included, she suggests an off-campus banquet room. She also helps with decorating ideas for the chapel and provides assistance in selecting a local minister.

The worn couches in the library and the chairs gathered in the corner of the meditation room indicate frequent use of the chapel for prayer meetings and counseling, as well as weddings.

The Campus Ministers Association conducts an informal counseling service at the chapel Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Richard Hume, campus minister and director of the Texas A&M Wesley Foundation, said the service provides a listening ear for anyone who needs it.

"Since the program just started last year it's hard to say if it is a success or not," Hume said. "We've seen a lot of people. We are there for anyone who is confused, lonely or hurt-

ing or for anyone that just needs someone to listen." A different minister is there every session and is willing to talk to anyone about anything, Hume said.

Hume is concerned that not enough people know of the program and he has been thinking of moving the counseling service to the MSC where it will be more accessible and visible.

"But we really aren't sure about that yet," Hume said.

He also said the groups that seem to use the All Faiths Chapel are the groups that aren't officially associated with a local church or denomination.

"For example the Methodists have the Wesley Foundation," he said. "And then there's the Baptist Student Union and many more. It's the groups that don't have a building of their own that really benefit from the chapel."

The chapel is undergoing small changes inside. The quiet hum of the new air conditioning system, installed last spring, is a cool beginning to future plans for interior renovations. A general interior facelift is planned by next spring.

Financial aid helps ends meet

By MICHAEL CANNATA
Reporter

The Texas A&M Financial Aid Department has added a counseling service and revised several policies to help students through the complicated process of applying for financial aid.

The main purpose of the student financial aid office, on the second floor of the Pavillion, is to provide college money to students who wouldn't be able to finance an education any other way.

Lynda Gilbert heads the counseling program, which begins in the fall. The counseling office is staffed by two full-time counselors, who see students on a walk-in or appointment basis.

"There has been an explosion of people coming into the financial aid office," Gilbert says, "and I think it is due largely to the economy. People are looking for aid now, who would not normally be looking for financial help."

Even though Texas A&M is an inexpensive school to attend compared to other large universities in the nation, at least 50 percent of the students receive some type of financial aid, Gilbert says.

"Texas A&M is probably the most inexpensive college in the country to attend," Gilbert says. "That is why many out-of-state students come here."

Gilbert is developing a step-by-step outline to follow in applying for financial aid. She also has compiled a list of the types of financial aid avail-

able on campus. The list contains a brief description of the requirements for each type of financial aid and the method of disbursement.

While Gilbert is making the application process easier, the government is making it harder, says Taft Benson, director of student financial aid.

In the past, students were required to keep a 2.0 or higher grade point average to qualify for financial aid. A change in federal regulations now requires students to maintain the 2.0 GPA and complete a certain number of credit hours for each academic year.

The new policy requires students to pass 24 credit hours per year for the first three years. After that, students must complete 30 credits per year to remain eligible for financial aid.

"During the first and second year a student can take or pass fewer credits and still be eligible for financial aid," Benson says. "Our purpose for this is to give students that are coming to the University for the first time a chance to make an adjustment."

He says that although standards for receiving financial aid are getting tougher and the costs of a college education are rising, the money available for financial aid is not keeping up.

"If you were to look at the actual overall dollar amount of financial aid available this year and compare it with the dollar amount available last year, the dollar amounts look very similar," Benson says. "I think what

has happened over the last four years is we've had an increase in the cost of education, but the dollar amount has remained constant. In essence, we have the amount of money available in 1984 equal to the amount of money that was available in 1980."

For the 1984-85 school year, the cost of going to Texas A&M is estimated at \$5,340. This includes tuition, books, room, board and miscellaneous expenses.

While the cost of education is rising, so is the number of people applying for assistance, Benson says.

"Every year we'll have a higher number applying for financial aid," Benson says, "and very often we end up with a higher number qualifying. I think this is a national trend."

For the 1982-83 school year 35,379 students received financial counseling or funding. A total of \$41,324,960 was spent to help these students meet educational costs at Texas A&M.

One revised policy for the new school year involves the Little Loan program, which provides loans up to \$50. Previously, applications and payment were handled by the student financial aid office. Now, students must apply for Little Loans at Student Financial Aid, but they will pick up their money at the fiscal office.

The financial aid disbursement procedure also has been changed. In the past, all funds had been paid out in cash, but now, if the amount is \$500 or more, the students may ask to be paid by check.



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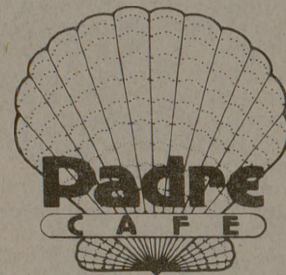
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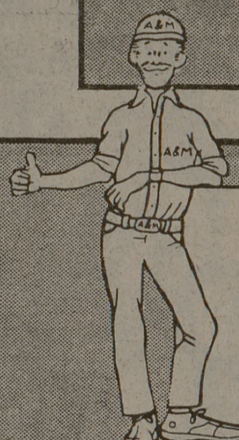
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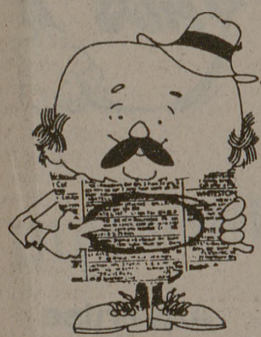
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