

STATE AND LOCAL



Newest Ag

Photo by ANTHONY S. CASPER

Crane Operator Mike Murphy of B.B. Anderson hangs a sign Wednesday that names one of their cranes "Aggie." The crane is

one of the two being used in construction of the new chemistry building. The other crane is named "Ichabod."

# Innovative student tutor unscrambles chemistry

By KIRSTEN DIETZ  
Staff Writer

Michael Coad's shirt says it all. The slogan "Chem Busters" and a red-slashed symbol of a ghost wearing chemistry goggles cover the shirt's front. The back reads, "learning is an exciting adventure."

Coad, a graduate student in education, tutors 413 students from Chemistry 101, Fundamentals of Chemistry I and Chemistry 102, Fundamentals of Chemistry II. According to his students, his tutoring methods are the key to learning material they couldn't understand in class.

Freshman Danna Schraeder says, "He shows us ways to do things that just stick in our minds."

Two and one-half years ago Coad began tutoring one student.

Since then, the number of students seeking Coad's help has grown to 20, then 38, then 187 students last semester before reaching the current total of 413 students.

Coad's goal is to put chemistry on a level his students can understand by using simple terms. Also, he says the current chemistry book is arranged illogically, so he teaches several chapters working from the back of the chapter toward the front.

"Mike's explaining from the end to the front makes twice as much sense," Freshman Meg Cloyd says.

Coad says his students have three basic complaints about their chemistry classes.

• Homework problems are not corrected and returned to the student but show up on the tests.

Freshman Michael Johnson says, "Some of the questions on the test

are out of the ordinary and aren't like the homework."

Coad says, "They get two points at the end of the semester for turning in a pile of paper. Great. But they never learn anything from it."

• Tests are too long to complete in 50 minutes.

Schraeder says, "I don't feel like I'm dumb, just pressed for time."

Coad tries to combat this by teaching shortcuts to working the problems.

"A lot of my methods are shorter, but they aren't fake," he says. "They're used in industry."

• Questions on the tests are too challenging and most of the students don't understand them.

"It seems like they're teaching chemistry I never saw until I was in upper division classes," Coad says.

Scores as low as 46 are curved to passing grades, he says, when 60 used to be considered passing. Coad doesn't think this is a good policy.

"A student who gets a 46 feels like crap," he said. "It's only 14 points (between 46 and 60), but it makes a difference."

Basically, Coad says the freshman level chemistry program is run as if all the students were chemistry majors. He says he thinks that, because so many students are required to take the two freshman classes, they should be more general.

Coad sees a lot of confusion among his students about what is expected of them on the tests.

"How can they measure up to a standard if they don't know what the standard is?" he asks.

Coad compliments several fresh-

man chemistry teachers' instruction methods.

"As far as I know, the chemistry department is trying," he says.

Coad's success is measured by his students' improvements. Freshman Daniel Penaloza says he made C's and D's before attending one of Coad's sessions at the end of the fall semester. He made a B on his final.

Schraeder earned a 90 on her final after making a 40 on her previous test.

Besides his successful teaching methods, Coad's price has helped to draw students to his sessions. He charges \$25 a semester, which he says averages out to 60 cents an hour for tutoring after material costs are subtracted. Material costs cover the printing of sample tests and booklets he provides to the students.

Coad says his low prices have just about drained other tutors' businesses.

"Doing this for \$25 a semester has pretty much wiped out the rest of the people," he says.

Coad says \$8 an hour is the average price for an hour of chemistry tutoring, and one tutor even charges \$50 an hour.

"I can't see charging someone \$8 an hour when I can do it, and they can get 34 hours for \$25," he says. "The comparison is ridiculous."

Sophomore Tony Riggs says, "For the price and the quality of teaching, it's very well worth it."

Each session is once a week for two hours. Coad also holds extra free sessions before each test. He tutors nine Chem 102 sessions and one Chem 101 session.

## Student government program

# Forum builds leadership

By TAMARA BELL  
Staff Writer

About 300 student government leaders from 65 universities across the nation will be at Texas A&M to participate in a nationwide leadership program on Feb. 23-26.

Texas A&M's student government annually hosts the Conference on Student Government Associations, a leadership program designed for student government leaders around the country to come together and exchange ideas.

Julie Troy, director of COSGA, said the conference allows the delegates to talk over solutions to similar problems within the different student governments.

"This is a time for different

schools to discuss problems that face all student governments," Troy said.

"For example, if Penn State has an apathy problem, then they can find out how Arizona State deals with it."

Through scheduled workshops and round table meetings, the students discuss adopting programs that other colleges have found effective in dealing with campus-wide problems.

"The freshman aid program at A&M has been adopted by several other schools because the delegates discovered how well it works during a conference," Troy said.

The program is not only an arena for exchanging ideas, but other universities are also exposed to "the A&M way of life."

"During their stay, the delegates will be housed in dorms with A&M students, and some will stay with the Corps," Troy said. "Students from other schools are fascinated with the traditions of A&M and this is a way for them to not only learn ways to improve their student government, but to learn about the school as a whole."

During the conference Dr. W.C. Newberry, a professor of philosophy at Southwest Texas State University, will speak on human potential and personal motivation. Pat Kirschner, director of student activities at Ball High School in Galveston and a state leadership consultant, will discuss the importance of communication in working with others in government.



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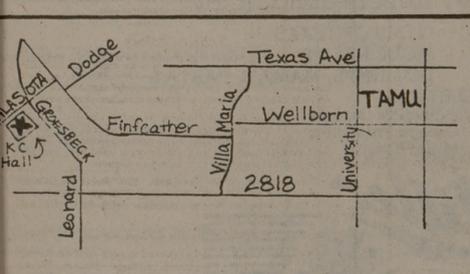
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## Student to flunk if prize is taken

Associated Press

ARLINGTON — A ninth-grade student has been told he will be flunked if he skips school to take a trip to London he won in a magazine contest.

"I'm going to go anyway," said Dudley Hamilton, who won the

prize for his talent at selling newspaper subscriptions. "I really want to go. I've never been there before."

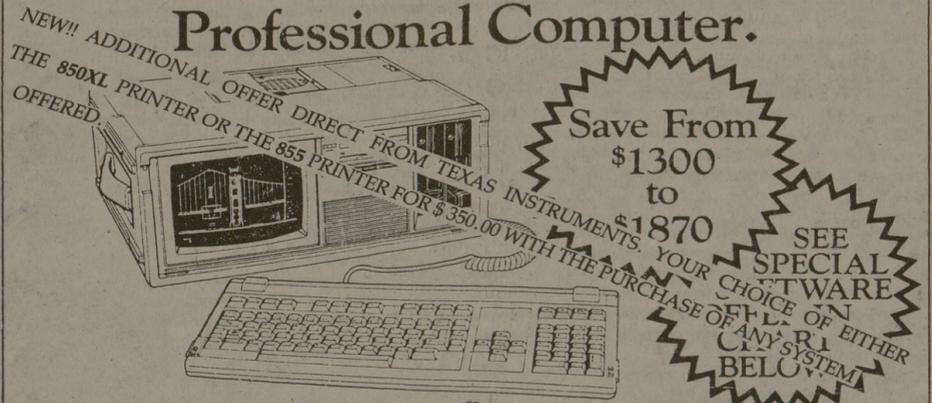
Hutcheson Assistant Principal Earl Hinson said the eight school days Hamilton will miss during the April trip will be unexcused absences, three more than allowed by

the state law strictly enforced by school officials here.

Hamilton's mother said she is angry. She says the trip, which includes visits to Shakespeare's birthplace, Parliament and Madame Tussaud's wax museum, will be educational.

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