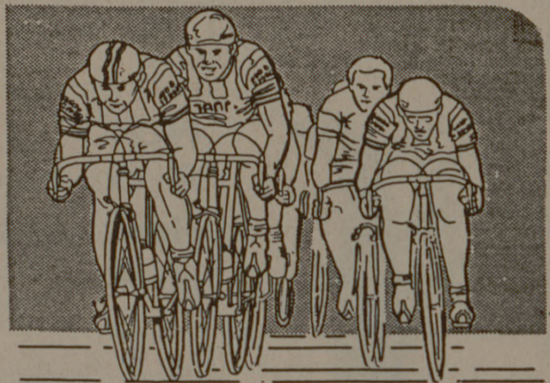


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A&M Emerging Leader's Seminars first step for aspiring freshmen

By **KELLI THOMERSON**
Reporter

Leaders are an important part of universities, businesses and government, and at Texas A&M, freshmen now have a chance to learn how to be leaders in college and after graduation, in the Emerging Leaders Seminar.

The program designed to help freshmen learn about leadership and is sponsored by Student Activities.

Tara Hulse, coordinator of the seminar, says its purpose is to help the student come to know A&M in ways most freshmen aren't able to.

"It's just to tell them what's available, what's going on, the history of A&M, why things are a certain way and give them an opportunity to ask questions," she says.

She says the seminar is mainly for freshmen who showed a potential for leadership while in high school. Only 20 freshmen can be enrolled in the seminar each semester, and each is hand-picked, she says.

"We sent a request to all 10 deans and asked them for five names out of their applicants," she says. "We told them what we were looking for, and then they sent us the names. Which means there were 50. We then selected 20 out of the 50 names."

The seminar was started about six years ago by Student Activities to help freshmen get involved in activities they might not have entered if they hadn't had the information or the incentive, Hulse says.

"They decided that they needed a course for freshmen, people who they thought would be potential leaders, to kind of help them on their way," Hulse says. "Freshmen don't just automatically know how to get involved in Student Government and things like that."

"What I hope to get out of it would be a better understanding of A&M and its organizations, and to find where my abilities would be of most benefit to help A&M..."

— *Kim Brezina, a freshman secondary education major.*

A&M is not the only University with a freshman leadership program, Hulse says.

"There are other colleges that do this," she says. "Our model program came from the University of North Carolina. They started one that was incredible."

The seminar has speakers who come and give information about leadership skills and A&M. Speeches given include interviewing skills, the counseling center, student services and the mentor program.

After the student's freshman year, he can still be involved in the program, Hulse says.

"I'm going to have them help me coordinate the class," Hulse says. "Not lead it or anything, but a group to kind of help me plan it, organize it."

The mentor program is the most important project coming up for the seminar, she says.

"Much of the time, all we can do really is give theories — how to be a leader, how to manage your time," Hulse says. "It isn't until they actually experience and go through to becoming a senior that they really know how things work."

by Jeff MacNelly

"The problem with that is, by the time they are seniors and graduating, we lose all that experience. So I arranged a program where we have junior and senior leaders, and some sophomores who have done a lot, apply to be a mentor."

"The 20 freshmen will choose their mentor and then once a week they get together and talk. The seniors then get a chance to hand down some of their experience and the freshmen get a chance to ask questions."

Kim Brezina, a freshman secondary education major in the program, says she wants to discover her leadership abilities and properly use them.

"What I hope to get out of it would be a better understanding of A&M and its organizations, and to find where my abilities would be of most benefit to help A&M or the students at A&M," she says.

Hulse says the seminar is given during the fall and spring semesters, with classes meeting 1½ hours a week.

The fall class is open only to the students that have been chosen by the deans, Hulse says, but during the spring any freshman can apply to be in the class.

"We give first choice, though, to the ones who had not been able to be in the class in the fall because we only had 20 spots," she says.

No credit is given for the classes, so attendance is voluntary, Hulse says.

"It's on your own," she says. "It's what you want to get out of it, basically."

"If you want to get the whole full semester work out of it, then you come all semester. If you don't, you miss out on a whole lot of things."

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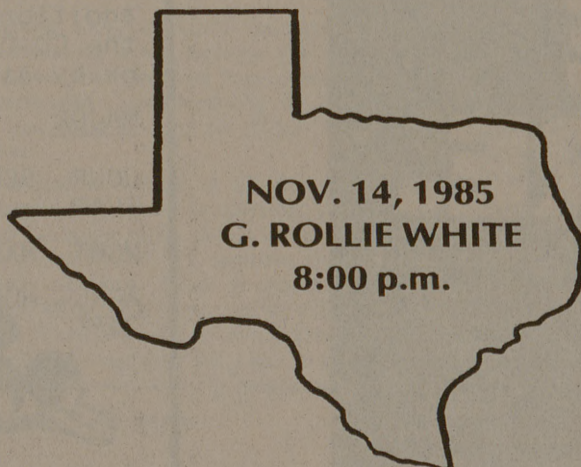
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