

Reporter Women have needs that men

ery woman, she says. Rape awareness is another NOW goal.



don't, and it's time Texas A&M became aware of this, says Melanie Vanlandingham, treasurer of the A&M chapter of the National Orga-nization of Women.

The purpose of the chapter, which came to A&M in September, is the same as the national NOW organization - to promote awareness of women's issues and to promote the full participation of women on campus and in society, says Vanlandingham.

The chapter hopes to reach both male and female students, she says. Some men are very supportive, Vanlandingham says, and most of the opposition is due to a general hesitation to any new women's

group. "We're not a radical group," she says, adding that NOW wants to deal with issues concerning women at A&M

'A&M is unfortunately behind the times on these basic issues," she says, citing the example of the recent issue concerning women's health services at the A.P. Beutel Health Center.

"Our initial goal was to improve what they had, but now they're back



to square one," she says about the lack of gynecological services at the center

"We were trying to get better health care, and then they dropped it entirely. Being a new organization, it was timely for us because it allowed us to get started on our goals. "I think that it was the issue that

wasn't accepted, not the organization," she says concerning the opposition to better health services.⁴ So many people, including women, feel that these issues don't concern them, so why should they get involved?"

Vanlandingham says the organization wants to see improvements such as providing pamphlets on top-ics including rape, birth control and breast cancer. A&M needs a place on campus where women can get information on subjects that concern ev-

"Too often, universities like to overlook rape," she says.

'Any university official, anywhere, would claim that rape doesn't occur on campus.'

Vanlandingham says one of the group's goals is to get better lighting in certain areas on the campus, such as between the Sterling C. Évans Library and the Academic Building. Another goal is to offer classes on self-defense techniques, she says.

"Date rape has become more com-mon, and society generally assumes that this is not a real case of rape," she says. "It's usually not reported because the victim believes it is not really rape or because she thinks no one will believe her.

"Rape awareness and protection must be increased in today's society and especially at A&M.

"We don't want to stand in the background and not let our voices be heard.

Future NOW projects include improving women's education and pro-moting women's sports, she says.

"Even if there is bad feedback, they'll know we're here," she says. "If nothing else, maybe we'll make some people think for themselves."



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