

Ocean program develops new drilling technique

COLLEGE STATION — Engineers of an ocean drilling project headquartered at Texas A&M have developed equipment that makes it possible to gather samples of the earth's core that were previously inaccessible.

The engineers are part of the international Ocean Drilling Program, a 10-year scientific cruise seeking new information about the Earth's origins.

The ship's crew is using new technology to drill near the axis of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, the world's largest underwater mountain range, said Dr. Philip Rabinowitz, an A&M oceanographer and director of the program.

Rabinowitz said the core retrieval has been made possible by a specially designed guide base that keeps the drill bit from spinning off the hard, rocky surface.

Traditional drilling methods have depended on thick layers of sediment to provide stability for the drill bit before it hit bare rock, but because the ocean floor at this site doesn't have a protective sediment layer, drilling into the newly formed crust called for an innovative technique, Rabinowitz said.

The crew from the drill ship has lowered the 40,000-pound guide base onto the bottom of the seafloor and pumped an extra 100,000 pounds of cement into bags inside the base to add stability.

A television camera is attached to the outside of the drill string and lowered to the seafloor to beam back images to the ship. Televising the underwater terrain allows scientists to view the rugged topography of this section of the seafloor, according to officials.

Deposits due before Dec. 13 for study abroad program

By TAMARA BELL
Reporter

Students who want to participate in Texas A&M's study abroad program this summer need to turn in a \$300 deposit before Dec. 13, says the associate dean of the College of Liberal Arts.

Dr. Candida Lutes says the program is unusual this year because there is so much American tourism overseas. Lutes says she has had to press for deposits before the semester ends in order to secure airline tickets and hotel reservations.

She says if the students don't make a deposit now, she can't promise that there will be space available for last-minute additions.

If students decide to study abroad this summer, the total cost of the trip is around \$3,000, Lutes says. Students will make three equal payments next spring, and have the de-

posit applied to the total cost of the trip, she says.

The actual cost to the students depends on which program they choose. The cost includes the airfare, most museum entrance fees and hotel rooms.

Students have a choice of four programs, Lutes says. One program takes the students to Great Britain. Another allows students to study in Italy and Greece. The third program takes the students to China, Japan and Hong Kong. The fourth includes a visit to Dublin, London, Paris, Berlin and Vienna.

Each program lasts one summer session or six to seven weeks, Lutes says. Students will leave before the official summer session begins at A&M in order to get themselves situated in the country before classes begin.

One reason students would travel thousands of miles to attend classes

is that the different setting sparks a revived interest in studying, Lutes says.

"It's different from learning about literature or art in a classroom at A&M," she says. "The students go on field trips to museums to see first hand the art they've only previously seen in books."

Another reason Lutes advocates studying abroad is the new experience available to the students, she says.

"A different setting renews an interest in learning; it generally makes students more creative," she says.

Although students will have free time to shop and take in unscheduled sightseeing, Lutes says the program isn't a party on the Riviera.

So that students understand what is expected of them while they are out of the country, they must fill out an application at the same time that they make their deposits, she says.

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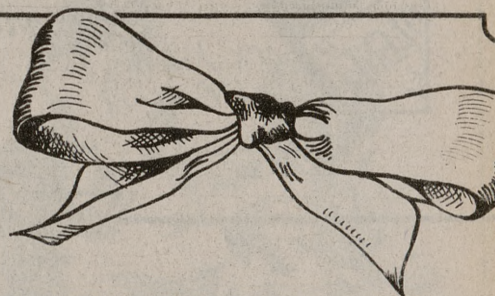
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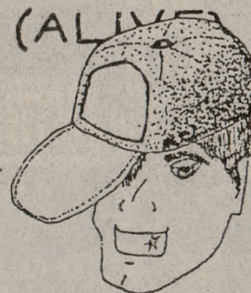
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