

Vandiver will push for position

# A&M seeking space-grant title

**University News Service**  
 News of the space shuttle Challenger tragedy came only moments after Texas A&M President Frank E. Vandiver finished briefing the institution's Board of Regents regarding the search for federal legislation to establish a series of "space-grant" universities.  
 Vandiver said Sen. Lloyd Bentsen, D-Texas, has indicated he will introduce legislation during the session of Congress to create a network of universities with mandate to help the nation make the most of its potential for scientific, commercial and defense endeavors.  
 Rep. Jim Wright, D-Texas, also is supportive of the concept, Vandiver said. "In fact, we have considerable bipartisan support for the space-grant university concept," he said.

When notified of the first U.S. in-flight space tragedy, Vandiver responded, "We are shocked and enormously saddened by the news of the shuttle accident that took the lives of everyone aboard, and we are now even more determined to move forward with this new concept for greater cooperation and University involvement in all phases of space-related research."  
 Upon learning of the tragedy, Eller also expressed sympathy for the families of the shuttle crew and said the day's "sad events should make everyone concerned even more resolved regarding all phases of space travel and research."  
 Vandiver compared the proposed space-grant university concept to

that under which select universities have helped develop the nation's agricultural and marine resources under land-grant and sea-grant mandates.  
 A&M has had land-grant designation for more than a century and was one of the first four institutions to receive sea-grant designation 15 years ago.  
 Oran Nicks, director of A&M's Space Research Center, was at NASA headquarters in Washington discussing the University's involvement in space studies when announcement was made of the shuttle tragedy.  
 "It was a catastrophic event," Nicks said when contacted in Washington. "There is nothing to be said at this time. It was a catastrophic event of some kind, and it will take time to reconstruct the cause."

A&M officials said neither the University nor the Texas Engineering Experiment Station, the state's engineering research agency which is part of the A&M System, is currently involved in any shuttle research but is working on plans for a space station and artificial intelligence.  
 Involvement in operation of a space station would be one of the key elements of space-grant universities, Vandiver said.  
 "We hope that Texas A&M will be the first University so designated, but we envision several institutions being named at some point," he explained. A space-grant University would be good investment for federal research dollars because it could generate state contributions and private and industrial money, Vandiver said.

## Brief-stricken family members return home

**Associated Press**  
 SPACE CENTER — Grieving families of the Challenger astronauts returned home Tuesday to a somber, secluded reunion with friends and neighbors.  
 Four Gulf Stream II jetliners tied family members back to Florida's Kennedy Space Center to Houston's Ellington Field, from which six astronauts and schoolteacher Christa McAuliffe had left five days earlier.  
 Late Tuesday, NASA kept the shuttle's arrival secret and allowed only a few selected people to meet them. Others had to stand behind a heavily-guarded base. NASA refused to release information.  
 The planes landed about 10 a.m. behind a hangar at the base, away from the glare of cameras and reporters' questions.  
 NASA security guards and Houston constables stood watch at the homes of the ill-fated crew.

# Former astronaut: Redesign of shuttle may be necessary

**Associated Press**  
 HOUSTON — Former astronaut Alan Bean, who had the responsibility of training space shuttle participants in his last NASA job, said Tuesday the cause of the explosion that destroyed Challenger may require design changes.  
 Bean said he never imagined that one of the space shuttles would be devastated by an explosion. But he said the risks were inherent in a project on the leading edge of technology.  
 "We are talking about a failure of some fundamental part of the shuttle," Bean said. "It could be bad metallurgy, it could be overpressure of some sort or plain old metal fatigue."  
 A blast ripped apart the space shuttle Challenger 74 seconds after liftoff Tuesday from Cape Canaveral, Fla. Schoolteacher Christa McAuliffe and six NASA astronauts were aboard the craft.  
 "I have to be honest. I never thought this would happen. I knew it was possible," Bean said. "I never imagined we would have a failure

like that. I imagined that one engine could quit or two engines could quit or the hydraulics might quit working and you have to come home early. I did not believe that this kind of failure could occur."  
 "I have to be honest. . . I did not believe that this kind of failure could occur."  
 — Former astronaut Alan Bean.  
 Bean, who was chief of operations and training, when he left the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, said he knew most of the members of the ill-fated Challenger's crew.  
 "I got to know them all quite well," he said. "It is quite a shock after seeing all those faces on television that you won't see anymore."  
 Bean said he was confident that the cause of the explosion would be found.

"I believe we will find out something that was wrong, and it will require some design changes to some parts of the shuttle," Bean said. "It appears to be a design failure. I am postulating that it was some failure like that."  
 He said that NASA has done everything possible to prevent fatalities in space missions.  
 "I think that you can never prevent tragedies in equipment that is designed to go fast," Bean said. "We will never stop having car accidents, truck accidents, bus accidents or space accidents, because inherent with speed and movement is the use of energy."  
 Bean said the American space program will overcome the tragedy.  
 "It is bad and terrible but it is not something that in the long run will destroy us," he said. "We knew it might happen in the future. That is no reason when it does to get discouraged, any more than we stop driving when we hear of an accident in another car. We just get more careful."

# Texas reacts to deaths of Challenger Seven

**Associated Press**  
 The deaths of seven crew members aboard space shuttle Challenger plunged communities around the Johnson Space Center into mourning, drew warnings from former astronauts that space travel is still far from routine and evoked grief from teachers who saw one of their own die.  
 Former members of the United States' space program agreed that the disaster should merely end the shuttle program — not end it.  
 "Everybody knows it's going to happen sooner or later, and you just hope it's later," said "Deke" Slayton, one of the seven original Mercury astronauts selected in 1959.  
 Former astronaut Alan Bean, who trained shuttle participants in his last job with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, said, "I have to be honest. I never thought this would happen. I knew it was possible. I never imagined we would have a failure like this."  
 Bean said the risks were inherent in a

project on the leading edge of technology and he was confident the problem would be solved.  
 Hans Mark, deputy administrator of NASA from 1981 to 1984, said, "What happened today is what happened in all human explorations when we stretch the fabric of what's known. The important thing to remember on this day is that we should not stop. Obviously we have to find out what happened, but the thrust to explore has to be maintained."  
 The tragedy threw the suburban Houston area around Johnson Space Center into mourning. Flags were dropped to half-staff and motorists turned on their headlights in honor of the shuttle crew.  
 The most celebrated member of the space shuttle crew — New Hampshire teacher Christa McAuliffe — was remembered Tuesday by fellow educators.  
 Steve Warren, an Austin teacher who was one of the state's two finalists for the shuttle position, was at his post in a ninth-grade English class when he heard of the disaster.

"At this moment, I could have been dead," Warren said. But the tragedy would not dissuade him from applying again, he said.  
 "That could've been any of us," said Judy Vaughn, a third-grade teacher at Deer Park Elementary School. "I have felt so close to Christa. She was doing this for all of us."  
 Flags on state buildings were lowered to half-staff Tuesday to honor the memory of the Challenger's crew.  
 Sen. Lloyd Bentsen, D-Texas, said an investigation would take a back seat for the time being to the grief of the families and friends of the six astronauts and McAuliffe.  
 Sen. Phil Gramm, R-Texas said the crew members would be remembered for more than their dedication to the space program.  
 "As we go forward into space, we must always remember that these brave men and women routinely achieve the impossible and gladly face enormous danger on America's last frontier," Gramm said.

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