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Dean: Drop of applications in medicine reflects trend

By Amy Young
Reporter

The College of Medicine at Texas A&M has reported that the number of freshmen applicants decreased 8 percent this year from last fall.

Dr. William Ward, associate dean of the College of Medicine, said the figures reflect a national trend that has developed in the past few years.

"This year national applications were down 4.5 percent," he said.

Ward said a common explanation for the trend is the increased cost of a medical education. The cost probably will continue to rise, he said.

In 1985, tuition at A&M was \$1,200 per year. This year, tuition costs doubled. Ward speculated that by 1989 tuition will increase to about \$5,400, where it probably will stabilize. So by the time a medical student graduates, his debt usually totals more than \$45,000.

"We are seeing some interesting trends this year," Ward said. "It has been predicted that by 1990 there will be a surplus of doctors. However, we have not progressed to overabundance.

"This perceived oversupply of doctors may alarm students who are considering the field since an oversupply would mean they wouldn't make as much money when they graduate.

"We are behind at this stage in Texas. In fact, we are probably still an underserved state. We haven't

reached the predicted saturation. By 1990, we will probably still not be oversupplied. One of the reasons for this may be the immigration of people to Texas from other states and countries."

Ward also said, "Another factor contributing to the decline of applicants may be the perceived ability to

"The combined cost and period of time it takes to become a doctor may cause a lot of brighter students to choose a different course of study simply because it is quicker."

— William Ward, associate dean of A&M College of Medicine

get into a paying job quickly. For a medical degree it takes up to seven years. The combined cost and period of time it takes to become a doctor may cause a lot of brighter students to choose a different course of study simply because it is quicker."

In Texas, about 2,000 people apply each year to the seven state medical schools, and most people apply to all seven to increase their chances of being accepted at one of the schools, Ward said.

Therefore, he said, all seven Texas colleges are competing for the same students.

To be accepted into the College of Medicine at A&M, one must go through a difficult and lengthy process, Ward said.

The student's undergraduate grade-point ratio is considered, along with his score on the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT) and recommendations from the pre-med advisory at his undergraduate school, Ward said.

Once the scores and recommendations are considered, 125 to 130 students are interviewed by a committee. Along with the interviews, students must write a one-page essay on why they want to be doctors.

"The total background of a student is taken into account during the selection process," Ward said.

A&M accepts 48 students to the medical school each fall. This falls well below the state average of 200 students.

"We like our class size where it is," Ward said. "Our students get more academic attention since the classes are much smaller.

"(Students often select A&M) because of our small class size and our excellent academic record."

Ward said A&M has been ranked the top medical school four of its six operating years, based on the state licensing examination medical students take when they graduate.

Texas' original goddess to be on display

AUSTIN (AP) — The Goddess of Liberty will be on display today in Waco and then en route to Austin for a permanent resting place in the Texas State Fair in Dallas.

The original zinc statue, placed by an aluminum company that was placed on top of the Capitol dome in June.

Capitol Architect Roy G. Graham said former plans for a canceled tour of Texas cities because of the fragile condition.

Graham said the statue will arrive in Waco about 1 p.m. and will be in Temple at 2 p.m.

After its arrival in Austin, the statue will be placed in the entry chamber of the Capitol building until its installation in Dallas.

He added that funds have been begun for restoration of the chamber to its late-19th-century appearance.

Major changes will include restoration of the original doors, replacement of lighting with period-style lighting with historically accurate colors, and refinishing original woodwork, Graham said.

Students attend college through television

ODESSA (AP) — Cindy Patton decided to go to college this fall — in front of the television in her home.

"It's my first semester back after more than 10 years," the mother of three said.

Patton is one of 66 students taking telecourses through Odessa College this semester — 40 students are taking government, 14 are taking biology and 12 are enrolled in marketing.

Clayton Alred, the college's telecourse coordinator, said most of the students are from Odessa, with six from area towns including Crane, Andrews, Monahans and Midland.

Lessons produced in California are aired on KOCV-TV and picked up by cable companies for the outlying areas, Alred said.

Patton said the tapes are repeated several times per week, allowing students to double-check their notes.

Spring telecourses will be Introduction to Management, Introduction to Psychology, and State and Federal Government II, Alred said.

But the participants don't spend all their time in front of the television. Patton said they come to the college for review sessions and take examinations about every three weeks.

If she misses a lesson on television, Patton has the opportunity to review the tape at Odessa College's Learning Resources Center. The tapes also allow students to stop or pause at various points in the lesson.

Shirley Hill of Monahans, who is enrolled in the biology telecourse, receives her lessons via videocassettes from the Odessa College library, instead of on cable television that is not available where she lives.

Each cassette sent has 12 lessons, or four weeks worth, she said.

"I have a family and a job and I'm taking courses," said Hill, who is working toward a teaching degree. "This way I don't have to drive to Odessa every week for the class. I go every two weeks to take the test."

"I think it's a wonderful program. I grew up my dream of getting a college education."

Mid-management instructor Clinton Hill leads the review sessions and administration of the marketing course. He said telecourses are more demanding for professors than traditional classes are.

Don Huff, dean of science and health, supervises the biology telecourse, agreed.

"It doesn't lighten the work day," Huff said. "I still have to prepare and I spend time with them when they have a problem. I don't think any easier for the instructor."

Freshman & Sophomores '86

Oct. 6-Oct. 31



GET SHOT!

Freshmen and sophomore photos for the 1987 Aggieland will be taken from Oct. 6 until Oct. 31 at AR Photography, 707 Texas Ave., across from the A&M Polo Field.

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