

Vandiver key to alliance

A&M global ties improve

By Dawn Butz
Staff Writer

When President Frank E. Vandiver came to Texas A&M almost five years ago, he made a commitment to increase scholarly, scientific and technical ties with other countries, which he said were stronger and more lasting than political or military alliances.

In order to broaden and strengthen this global character of the University's varied programs, A&M began entering into officially sanctioned relationships with other countries in 1979.

Approximately 22 of 36 agreements have come under Vandiver's direction — 13 in the last year alone.

John Norris, director of A&M's International Coordination, said the agreements, called Memorandum of Agreements, recognize two things.

First, the agreements recognize each university as a center of excellence in a particular area. Second, because of this recognition, the two universities agree to work together to collaborate on research and possibly to exchange professors and qualified students.

Norris said the agreements are basically a way to formalize the relationships. Each agreement is signed by Vandiver as well as by the president of the respective university.

Norris said the backbone of the program is the professors. Agreements are not usually entered into with other universities, he said, unless an A&M professor has a colleague at the prospective university. Without this link, the agreements would have a poor chance for success.

Memorandum of Agreements has even brought countries together that, due to political conflicts, previously did not speak.

Norris said in 1983 the University of Haiti joined with A&M and the Universidad Nacional Pedro Henriquez Urenain, a university in the Dominican Republic, in a three-way agreement to work on a reforestation project. Before the agreement, Haiti and the Dominican Republic, which are located on the same island, generally did not speak. Norris attributed the newfound detente to hard work by A&M people.

Most agreements involve an exchange of professors, but Norris couldn't specify exactly how many exchanges are currently in progress. After the agreements are signed, he said, it's up to each department to carry out the program.

Presently there are five students at A&M from the China National Offshore Oil Corp. working on their master's degrees through the program.

Funding for visiting professorships is obtained through

grants and departmental. Norris said these exchange strength to proposals for grants that most departments set travel budget.

Many grants are awarded A&M's Fulbright Program, funded through annual appropriations by Congress through the Information Agency and other federal agencies. The program is set up to promote mutual understanding between and among the foreign governments, those of the United States.

Grants from the Fulbright program are made to U.S. citizens, nationals of other countries and national activities such as research and university research.

Although the entire program is involved in the program, the colleges of engineering, liberal arts, business and education are the most active.

Norris said Vandiver's attitude contributed heavily to the program's success.

"We have an incredible campus of an international re," Norris said. "This is the increasing number of international students... the attitude of Dr. Vandiver, a jurist, the Center's Jordan... good example of increasing international involvement."

Shoplifting case award upheld

AUSTIN (AP) — The Texas Supreme Court on Wednesday upheld a lower appeals court's split decision in favor of awarding \$375,000 to a woman who was jailed on a charge that she shoplifted pens.

Jurors decided that Dayton Hudson, owner of Target Stores, had to pay the money to Janice Altus to cover embarrassment and humiliation she suffered as a result of the Jan. 14, 1983, incident at a Target store in Houston.

A Houston appeals judge had called for a new trial because he thought the trial had racial overtones. The two store security guards who detained Altus are black. She is white.

"Awarding a person \$15,000 per hour for false imprisonment is excessive and could only occur as a result of passion, prejudice or improper motive on the part of the jury," said Kenneth Hoyt, associate justice on the 1st Court of Appeals in Houston.

Hoyt, however, was outvoted 2-1 by his colleagues. The Supreme Court ruled Wednesday there was no reversible error in the decision upholding the award.

According to court records, Target security guards saw Altus handling merchandise in a suspicious manner. They took her to a room where three pens and a glue pen were found in her purse. Houston police were called, and Altus was

jailed for nine to 11 hours before being released on bond.

Jurors later acquitted Altus of the shoplifting charge. She then filed the lawsuit against Dayton Hudson that resulted in the jury award of \$150,000 for actual damages and \$225,000 in punitive damages.

Altus said the detention caused embarrassment that forced her to quit teaching Sunday school. She also said her children were teased about the incident by other children.

In the Feb. 20 majority opinion for the Houston appeals court, Associate Justice Jack Smith acknowledged that the \$375,000 in damages is larger than usual in such cases.

But he said there was no legal basis to overturn the decision.

But Hoyt called for a new trial, adding that Altus' lawyer, Phillip Phillips Jr. of Angleton, a boyfriend, who testified, was necessary and improper to the races of the people.

Quoting from the majority opinion, Hoyt said, "To refer to the personnel as those black guards or 'two black people' contrast refer to (Altus) as a fearing Christian woman designed to inflame and prejudice the jury."

All members of the court were white.

Urine Ball planned to raise money to fight drug tests

AUSTIN (AP) — The first Urine Ball, an event to collect money to mount legal fights against drug testing, was announced Wednesday by an Austin man who sells drug-free urine and a Texas Civil Liberties Union official.

The fund-raiser is set for Dec. 17 in Austin.

"This is... showing the absurdity of making people's livelihoods dependent on urine tests," said Jim Harrington, TCLU's legal director.

Harrington represents an Austin

woman who sued to stop employer from making urine tests.

Jeffrey Nightbyrd, who has filled more than 200 drug-free urine, said the event features performances by local entertainers, including a seven-piece dance team introduced as The Urinettes. They performed a musical number entitled "Urine Money" to the tune of "You're So Vain."

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