

# State and Local

## Official: Faulty design not to blame for students' falls from dorm windows

By Jennifer Friend  
Reporter

Another student died from massive internal and head injuries after he fell from his fourth floor window in Walton Hall. No one witnessed the fall.

A fifth incident occurred Feb. 2 when a cadet reportedly fell from his

backward through the windows. During renovations, the air conditioner will be moved away from the window.

Because there is no air conditioning, the ramp-style dorms have screened windows, but the screens

to mount platforms outside dorm windows.

"It was something that we didn't really like, but the students kept insisting that they needed it," he said. "The platforms used to get really elaborate. They would put plants on them and sit outside on them."

"When he fell, it confirmed our fears. We decided that we didn't want these any longer because of the danger, so we abolished them."

White doesn't believe the University should change the window design to make falling impossible, nor does he believe students want a change.

"Realistically, we can't hand-hold everybody," he said. "It's like, 'Don't run down these steps because you might fall.' I know that may sound heartless, but in my opinion we're dealing with adults who know what is dangerous and what is not dangerous."

"When you start changing the windows, you change a lot of the freedom that the students like to have. I think that everyone likes the windows that you can open up all the way and get a good breeze."

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— John T. White, housing services supervisor

fourth floor window in Dorm I2. Police are investigating the cause of the accident.

Dorms 10 and 12 will be the first of 16 Corps-style dorms to be renovated, White said, although the renovation plans do not include a change in window design.

But a change will be made that could prevent accidents.

In Corps-style dorms, many students sit on the air conditioners in front of the windows and risk falling

provide little protection from falls, White said.

"Really, it's too late now to build in any additional, substantial changes," he said. "Plus, all the dorms have had new windows put in within the last five years."

In the past, the housing department has changed its policies to prevent accidents, White said. For example, until the cadet fell while hanging on one, students were able

## In Advance

### Economic conference to be held in CS

The annual Brazos Valley Economic Outlook Conference, sponsored by the Bryan-College Station Chamber of Commerce, will be held **Thursday in the amphitheater of the Hilton Hotel.**

The one-day seminar features Texas A&M specialists in a variety of areas including real estate, energy, university research, agriculture and tourism. The 23 speakers will focus on the effect of current economic trends on the local market, says coordinator Dr. William Mobley, deputy chancellor of the A&M University system.

Featured speakers include:  
• Jim Adams, president of the Texas Division, Southwestern Bell Telephone and chairman of

Gov. Clement's Business Development and Jobs Creation Task Force.

• Dr. Duwayne M. Anderson, A&M associate provost for research.

• Larry G. Gresham, associate director for the A&M Center for Retailing Studies.

• Gary Maler, senior operations director, Texas Real Estate Research Center.

• Mark Money, vice chancellor for the A&M Research Park and Corporate Relations.

A limited number of openings are still available. Those interested need to contact Beverly Barron at the Chamber of Commerce by 8:30 Wednesday morning. The registration fee is \$45.

## Federal witness in drug trial killed; handgun to be tested

EDINBURG (AP) — Ballistics tests were pending Monday on a gun that may have been used to kill a government witness who testified in a drug trial, investigators said.

Antonio Espinosa, 39, of Edinburg, died Sunday afternoon after he was shot once in the head with a .38-caliber handgun while driving with his wife and 6-month-old daughter, said Hidalgo County sheriff's investigator Capt. Albert Garcia. John Bott, a spokesman for the Drug Enforcement Administration in Houston, said Espinosa was a defendant who turned government witness in the so-called "Cash Crop" trials in San Antonio last summer.

The case involved a drug ring that authorities believe smuggled methamphetamine and marijuana from Mexico into the United States.

Espinosa was killed by a shot that was fired from a late-model pickup truck that pulled up next to the victim's car, Garcia said.

"The passenger in the pickup truck rolled down the window, aimed a handgun at the victim, shot him one time," Garcia said.

Investigators have only Espinosa's wife, Rosa, as a witness, Garcia said.

A weapon was recovered from a pickup truck fitting the description later Sunday, Garcia said.

## Vandiver: Distribution of PAC form letter a 'clerical error'

By Amy Couvillon  
Staff Writer

A form letter soliciting contributions for the Higher Education PAC and bearing President Frank E. Vandiver's signature — which was sent out to Texas A&M faculty members over the weekend — was due to a "clerical error," the president said Monday.

In a Monday letter read at the Faculty Senate meeting by Speaker Sam Black, Vandiver apologized for the error, saying he had intended to leave the matter of soliciting A&M faculty support up to the Faculty Senate.

"This letter was not intended to be sent to the faculty," Vandiver wrote. "That it did in fact go to the faculty is an administrative error, and one that I greatly deplore. This letter was intended to be sent to administrators."

The letter, paid for by the Higher Education Legislative Political Action Committee and sent to about 2,500 A&M faculty members, called for "wholly voluntary" contributions to the PAC, suggesting amounts of \$100 to \$1,000.

The Faculty Senate at its Jan. 19 meeting had received an almost identical sample letter from Vandiver. The Senate then decided to put off sending that letter to A&M faculty because it lacked information about the newly formed PAC.

The Senate executive committee was authorized to research the PAC and send out a letter to faculty members before the February meeting. But because unanswered questions remained, no letter was sent, Senate Secretary Richard Shumway said last week.

Dr. William Mobley, deputy chancellor for

academic and resource development, came Monday to the Faculty Senate meeting to answer questions about the political action committee and its purposes.

Mobley listed many of the members of the PAC, which include corporate spokesmen for higher education as well as regents from A&M, the University of Texas, the University of Houston and other Texas universities.

Several senators raised questions about the PAC's intention to support certain political candidates. Others asked how the faculty's wishes would be brought to the PAC.

In response to questions, Mobley acknowledged that since the PAC is so new, support of it is a matter of "faith in the quality of the people on the PAC board."

Next year, he said, there will be a clear re-

cord of the committee's actions, and its budget will be subject to audit.

All letters sent to former students, faculty, staff and corporate individuals, Mobley said, have been paid for by the PAC, not with state funds.

After Mobley spoke, the Senate voted to endorse Vandiver's letter, although several senators suggested that the executive committee of the Senate meet with Board of Regents Chairman David Eller to discuss the Faculty Senate's relationship with the PAC.

Vandiver said he was greatly concerned about the reaction of the Faculty Senate, and said he hoped that a trust had not been violated. He reiterated support of the PAC.

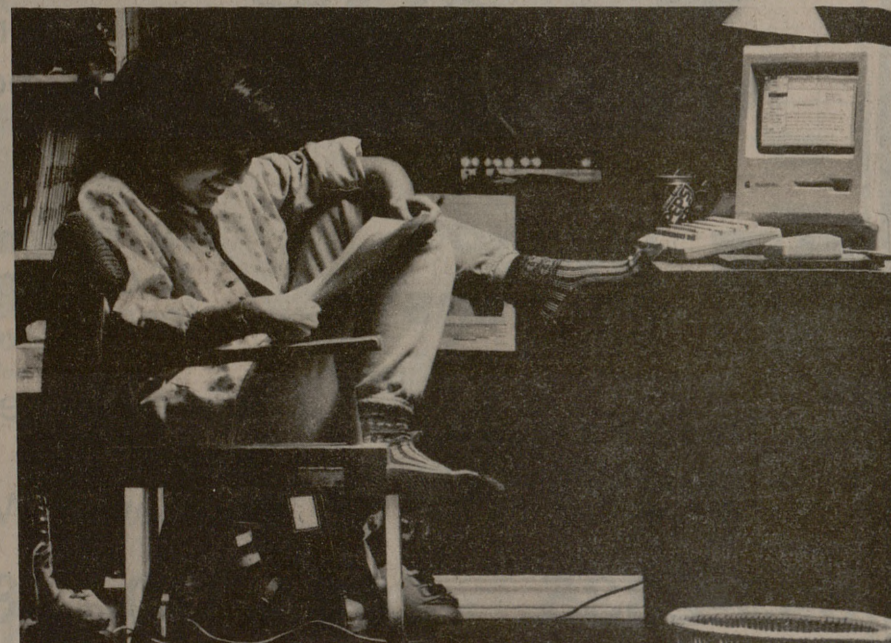
"I would hope that a clerical error does not tarnish the intent of this group," Vandiver said.

# It's eleven p.m.

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