

A&M provides services focusing on 'wellness'

By Susan Stubing
Reporter

"Wellness," the mystery word that has been lurking in the minds of health educators and fitness promoters since 1950, is rapidly becoming a familiar term with a simple concept — feeling good.

Although the concept is basic, promoting the idea and educating the public on how to "feel good" is complex, says Buster Pruitt, associate professor in the health and physical education department.

Wellness focuses not only on feeling well now, but also on establishing a wellness program in schools so children can grow in a healthy environment with good health habits, Pruitt says.

The wellness idea suggests that to "feel good," a person must concentrate on the emotional, social and spiritual aspects of life as well as the physical aspects, he says, and these aspects reach beyond simple health care.

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signed to maintain this level of health, which Pruitt calls "preventive medicine."

"It's taking a well person and providing a service that will keep him well," he says.

Texas A&M provides this service in its \$130,000 human performance lab — housed in the Netum A. Steed

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Research and Conditioning Lab — and is available to all A&M faculty, students and staff, and to the members of the Bryan-College Station area.

Stephen Crouse, director of the conditioning lab, says a complete fitness evaluation costs \$120 and includes a stress test, a body composition reading and a measure of blood fats and cholesterol levels.

"The evaluation tells us how healthy your heart is," Crouse said.

Another program wellness promoters at A&M have undertaken is a series of "wellness weekends."

The events are designed for Texas school administrators, teachers and school board members to learn how to develop proper health education programs in their schools, Pruitt said.

Jane MacDonald, principal of Carl Schurz Elementary School in New Braunfels and one of 20 participants in a wellness weekend held Jan. 23-25, says, "We are starting with the teachers in the hopes of our examples filtering down to the children."

Students are the target population of the wellness idea, MacDonald said, so they may understand the importance of exercise and nutrition.

Karon Preiss, a nurse from the New Braunfels Independent School District, said she attended the wellness weekend "to develop an awareness of my own body and implement a program in my school."

Pruitt says the idea to implement a wellness program stemmed from research evidence that shows schools across the country lacked a strong health education curriculum.

State commissioner 'unsurprised' at Texas' poor education marks

AUSTIN (AP) — Texas Education Commissioner William Kirby said he is not surprised by the report issued by the U.S. Department of Education indicating the state educational system still lags behind that of most other states.

Despite a sharp increase in average teacher salaries, Texas' rankings fell among the 50 states and the District of Columbia on the number of students graduating from high school on time. The state also lags in the rate of increase of Scholastic Aptitude Test scores.

"Am I upset with what it says? I've been upset for a long time, especially with an increase in our dropout rate," Kirby said. "We've got to continue to work with our teachers and parents. The solution is not to expect less of our students, but expect more."

Kirby noted that Texas ranked 34th in the nation in the amount of the money spent per child in 1985. The most recent report placed the state in 37th place.

"Now is the time to watch more closely how legislators will respond to education in a financial crisis," Kirby said. "To have a first-class production we can't cut back on our resources."

Jim Butler, executive director of the Texas State Teachers Association, criticized the report, saying that

comparing test scores in Texas with those in other states is "like comparing apples with oranges" because Texas students come from a wide variety of cultures.

The state ranked 43rd in the nation in high school graduation rates, determined by tracking how many ninth graders graduate over the usual four-year period. In 1985, 63.2 percent of the students graduated on time.

In 1982, when the Department of Education began its annual national "report card" on education, Texas' graduation rate ranking was 43rd, with 63.6 percent graduating.

Graduation rates in 32 other states also fell, but education officials said the more important figure was the one that showed the trend over the past four years. In that category, 35 states increased while Texas declined.

Texas SAT scores have increased over the past four years, but its nine-point increase lags behind the national average increase of 13 points. In 1986, Texas students earned an average of 877 points out of a possible 1,600 on the college entrance exam, slipping one point from 1985's mark.

The national average was 906, putting Texas 17th of the 22 states that use the SAT.

Senate delays vote on White nominations

AUSTIN (AP) — The Senate Nominations Committee delayed a vote Wednesday on seven nominations by former Gov. Mark White until it can determine if White legally made them after being defeated by Gov. Bill Clements.

"We don't care to delay this any longer than necessary but we want all members of the committee to have a chance to review the law," said Sen. Chet Edwards, committee chairman.

The committee vote probably will

come today or next Tuesday, Edwards said.

After White was elected governor in 1982, he recalled a number of nominations made by Clements and made new appointments.

A bill passed during the 1983 Legislature generally said a defeated governor could not make any appointments after the November general election. There is a controversy presently over whether the law applies only to vacancies that occur before Nov. 1 or those vacancies after the election.

Edwards, D-Duncanville, said Clements had not asked that the names of the seven appointees be returned, but members of Clements' staff had talked with the committee.

Sen. O.H. "Ike" Harris, R-Dallas, made the motion to delay a committee decision until members of the Texas Legislative Council could brief the committee on the 1983 law.

Other White appointments, all made before Nov. 1, were cleared by the committee for later Senate consideration.

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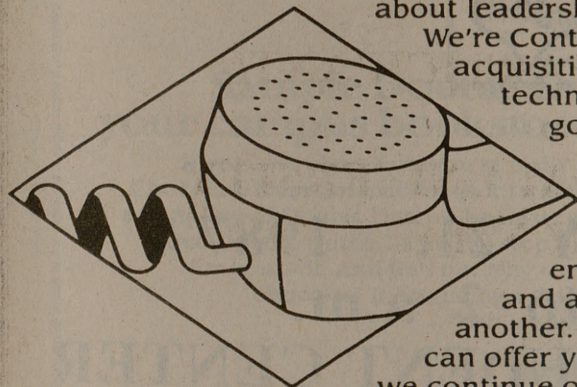
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