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Clements 'sorry' for his actions in SMU scandal

AUSTIN (AP) — Gov. Bill Clements, saying Southern Methodist University is wracked by agony over its pay-for-players football scandal, apologized Tuesday for his role in continuing the payments.

"To those rightfully upset and angry about the decision, I am truly sorry," Clements said. "We made a mistake at SMU. I made a mistake at SMU."

Clements, a former SMU student and twice chairman of the school's board of governors, made his comments at a news conference.

He renewed his call for other school officials involved to come forward and promised to cooperate

with a Methodist Church investigation of the affair.

Last week, Clements touched off a wave of new investigations at SMU by saying he and some other school governors and administrators knew in 1984 or 1985 of booster payments to football players. He said they decided to continue some payments while trying to "phase out" that system.

Payments eventually were reduced from 26 players to three, he said.

The NCAA has banned SMU from playing football this year and limited its 1988 season to seven road games for rules violations which occurred while the school already was on a probation handed down in August 1985.

Clements said Tuesday that continuing the payments was a mistake and that the school has suffered a tragedy because of it.

"The decision to phase out the system of payments to SMU players was wrong," he said. "In hindsight, it is clear we were wrong. SMU is the victim of a system we should have stopped immediately."

"It is a tragedy what has happened. . . SMU is a great institution, and I am distressed that it is going through such agony."

Clements again refused a request from the current SMU Board of Governors to "name names" of others involved in the continued payment decision. But he predicted those people eventually will speak up, even though some board members have disputed his allegations.

"These are people that occupy those positions on the board and have for some time," Clements said. "They are really part of the problem at this point and not part of the solution. They're going to have to make this decision for themselves. I think that in due course they will."

The governor noted that one other SMU board member, Dallas banker Robert H. Stewart III, had confirmed his story.

Clements said he never made a payment himself or raised money for such payments.

He voiced support for a bill now in the Legislature that would penalize college boosters for making such payments, and he called on the NCAA to strip athletic eligibility from players who violate the rules.

Clements said he brought the affair to light last week because he believed it was necessary to get SMU moving in the right direction.

"It is critical . . . that the truth prevail," he said. "Once all the facts are out, SMU then will move forward."

Credit rating lowered on Texas' bonds

AUSTIN (AP) — Moody's Investor Service lowered its credit rating on Texas' general obligation bonds from Aaa to Aa, the first time it has fallen below the top rating in a quarter-century, the company said Tuesday.

Moody's cited the state's troubled economy for its action.

"The strongest and singlemost factor is the economic shock that's happened to Texas over the last year . . . and the magnitude of the financial problems," said Claire Cohen, an analyst with Moody's.

The oil-price drop since November 1985 has created state government budget deficits and sent the Texas jobless rate soaring. Cohen said Moody's believes the state is in for a long-range shakeup.

"The economy seems to us to be making a fundamental change in Texas and seems likely to have an effect for a long time," she said.

State Comptroller Bob Bullock said a reduction in bond ratings can cause borrowing costs on newly issued debt to rise one-half to one percentage point a year.

Moody's said Texas has enjoyed a Aaa bond rating since 1962. The Aa rating is in the firm's second-highest category, and only 11 states currently have assigned the Aaa rating, she said.

The Aaa rating is followed by Aa-1, Aa, A-1, A, Baa-1, Baa, Ba-1, Ba, B-1, B, Caa, Ca and C, the firm said.

Bullock spokesman Tony Profit said the state's rating remains solid: "Aa is still high-quality bonds. There's no question about that."



Photo by Tracy Staton

In Control

Dr. Robert Tribble, head of the A&M physics department, sits at a control board while working on an experiment at the Cyclotron Institute.

The control board for the cyclotron fills a room at the institute, which is located at the corner of Spence Street and University Drive.

Student leaders express objections

New finals policy draws criticism

By Christi Daugherty
Staff Writer

"I think this is one of the most asinine things to happen at this University in the last five years." Jim Cleary's voice reflects the frustration accompanying two years of bucking both the Faculty Senate and the Texas A&M administration on the issue of senior finals.

Senior finals Part two of a two-part series

Cleary is the Student Government representative on the Faculty Senate and former vice president of the Student Senate Academic Affairs Committee. He said he did everything within his power to prevent the current plan of common finals from being chosen, but to no avail.

Cleary considers the finals situation an example of the severely diminished political clout of A&M's Student Government.

"Everyone got the short stick on this one," Cleary said. "There are better alternatives."

Cleary, like many Student Government members, said the Faculty Senate exerted a disproportionate amount of influence over A&M President Frank Vandiver in this case, and he thinks the wishes of the students were virtually ignored.

Jerry Dingmore is chairman of the Student Senate's Academic Affairs Committee, which has been studying the senior finals issue. He also was the student rep-

resentative on the Academic Calendar Subcommittee last year.

Dingmore said the administration handled the whole situation badly by ignoring protocol and never attempting to disguise the fact that the students' wishes were being steamrolled.

Calendar Subcommittee members never heard from Vandiver after releasing their findings, which conflicted with the ideas of the Faculty Senate, Dingmore said, and Student Senate members working on the issue couldn't get an audience with the president.

The letter in which Vandiver revealed his decision on senior finals was addressed to Dr. Sam Black, speaker of the Faculty Senate, and Dingmore considered that insulting.

"When you're working on something this big you need to consult with the committee appointed to study it, and Vandiver didn't," he said. "The president made the only decision I think he could, based on the process he took."

"He chose to ignore the Calendar Subcommittee and surround himself with (Provost Donald) McDonald, (Associate Provost Dr. Jerry) Gaston, and Black."

"As I sit here today, I wonder if he ever knew the subcommittee existed."

Dingmore said that after attending Faculty Senate meetings where the senior finals issue was discussed, he felt most senators

were uninformed about the issue and had already made their minds up without studying available information.

"They said the staggered finals plan suggested by the subcommittee gave the students everything they wanted," he said. "If it was what the students wanted, there would have been no finals."

"I was sitting there talking to the Faculty Senate about a report 99 percent of them didn't bother to read."

Dr. Jon Bond, an associate professor of political science, was one of the Faculty Senate members most strongly in favor of senior

"If it (staggered finals plan) was what the students wanted, there would have been no finals."

— Jerry Dingmore, Student Senate's Academic Affairs Committee chairman

finals. He said the Senate didn't exert any undue influence over the president.

"We showed President Vandiver the problems we had with the Calendar plan and he said, 'Yeah, you're right, that's unwelcome,'" Bond said. "The students' views were not ignored. The Faculty Senate talked to them, and the Calendar Commit-

tee had a student member.

"But playing a role doesn't always mean you're going to get your way."

Bond said he's not completely satisfied with the finals plan, but he considers it an acceptable compromise, and better than the previous situation.

"What was irritating about senior exemptions was that here was a rule, justified largely on the basis of tradition, that said you can't make decisions about your classes," Bond said. "The issue of commencement is important, but the ceremony is a symbol of what's gone on for four years."

"It seems a perversion of priorities to put more emphasis on commencement itself than the education."

Bond said the Calendar Subcommittee didn't study the idea of staggered finals thoroughly enough to know that it's more than a minor inconvenience, especially for professors who have 20 to 30 graduating seniors in one class.

Black agreed, saying the subcommittee limited itself by trying to protect tradition, and therefore didn't study all conceivable options.

"They were acting under certain assumptions that some things had to be preserved," Black said. "We didn't act under such assumptions."

Faculty reaction to the plan has been mixed, he said, with some

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Official: Don't grant immunity in Iran affair yet

WASHINGTON (AP) — Lawrence E. Walsh, the independent counsel investigating the Iran-Contragate affair, asked Congress on Tuesday to wait at least 90 days before granting limited immunity to key witnesses.

He vowed to challenge in court any attempt to act sooner.

"The danger is substantial," Walsh said, that his probe would be compromised by any effort to move quickly to grant immunity to former National Security Adviser John M. Poindexter or his fired aide, Lt. Col. Oliver North.

Key lawmakers in the House and Senate have said in recent days they hoped to move quickly to grant limited immunity from prosecution to Poindexter and North.

But Walsh said if Congress moves before 90 days, "we would then have to do whatever we could to get ourselves as much time as possible to perfect our case" against anyone who might be indicted.

Walsh said he would deliver a similar message when he met with the Senate investigating committee Wednesday.

Under federal law, Walsh would be able to delay a grant of immunity for roughly 30 days. Any court challenge by him would create a conflict with congressional investigators that both sides have sought to avoid.

Earlier Tuesday, Senate committee chairman Daniel Inouye, D-Hawaii, said the panel should not wait until July to arrange immunity to force testimony by North and Poindexter and perhaps others.

"If you want the full story, there's no question" that immunity will have to be granted to key figures, he said.

Leaders of the House panel were also meeting Tuesday with their Senate counterparts, in part to deal with disagreements over when to bring up the immunity issue for the investigation's central figures.

Walsh said his request for a delay covered any grant of immunity to retired Air Force Maj. Gen. Richard Secord, who, according to investiga-

tors played a key role in the Iran arms sale.

The independent counsel said that he was not sure all loose ends in the investigation could be tied up in 90 days but that the time period represented "a fair balance" between his need to develop evidence and the

need of Congress and the public to resolve unanswered questions.

Walsh said he also had discussed with congressional investigators the possibility of granting immunity to other, lower-level witnesses, but that no names had been cleared so far beyond an initial list of three, including North's secretary, Fawn Hall.

MSC Council asks for aid in acquiring computer system

By Carolyn Garcia
Staff Writer

If the MSC Council gets its way, the Memorial Student Center will be the proud owner of a new \$200,000 state-of-the-art computer system to help the organization in a variety of ways.

After extensive studies into need, productivity and accessibility, the MSC has found what it is looking for — if it can just find the money to get it.

The council submitted a proposal to Student Government requesting the needed amount, Council President Bobby Bisor said.

The money, if granted, will come from student service fee reserves, he said.

The proposal was sent by the Student Senate to Vice President for Student Services John Koldus for approval, Bisor said. Koldus will review the request and consider whether the reserve fund can handle the expenditure.

The need for a new system has arisen from several factors, the first being the existing needs of the MSC, including the operating needs of financial services.

Bisor said financial services, which operates as a banking system for more than 500 student organizations, would greatly benefit from the new system.

"It prevents organizations from writing hot checks to local businesses," Bisor said. "Our relationship with these businesses is very important and it is imperative that we don't abuse it in any way."

Office automation is another area in need of an upgrade, said James Randolph, senior associate director of the MSC.

"Word processing and desk-top publishing is very important to us — not to mention a whole set of database activities," Randolph said.

The new computer system would allow a more efficient system to maintain records of those who contribute money to the MSC.

As part of the MSC expansion plan, Randolph said, the council is planning a computer lab, which will

accommodate 24 computers and printers for use by student organizations. The lab would make it easier for organizations to prepare memorandums, projects and reports.

Should Student Government move back into the MSC, Randolph said, there is a possibility that the two organizations could share the computer system.

The MSC currently uses three computer systems. Randolph said the systems used by the MSC have ei-

"We're overloaded. We literally have to take things off the computer to use it."

— James Randolph, MSC Senior Associate Director

ther reached capacity or are no longer serviceable because they are just too old.

"We're overloaded," he said. "We literally have to take things off the computer to use it."

"The Balcones system is five years old. That is a long time in the computer world. We can no longer get service agreements on this system and parts are getting very hard to come by. We will continue using this system as long as we can. When we can no longer get parts, we will just have to surplus it."

When the council set out to investigate its computer possibilities, it called in a campus computer specialist and an independent firm to examine the situation.

The investigation resulted in two decisions, the first being that the MSC must find a software package to best serve its needs, and the second, to follow up with a hardware choice to accommodate that package. The choice was an IBM PC compatible Wang computer.

"We are at the point now where we can either update and modernize or just limp along," Randolph said.