

College of Education to cooperate with school districts in research effort

By April Coventry
Reporter

Texas A&M's College of Education is forming the School-University Collaborative Research Committee to build a foundation for collaborative research.

At a conference Jan. 8-9, representatives from eight school districts and 30 researchers from the College of Education discussed constraints and benefits of collaboration to both school districts and the University and ways to enhance collaboration through field- and University-oriented research.

Dr. James McNamara, professor of educational administration and of educational psychology, said the committee found constraints including lack of funds, time factors, increased paperwork for teachers, relevancy of research to the school and prior-

ity of research to the researchers as opposed to the schools.

Some of the benefits, McNamara said, are to provide actual lab work in the schools rather than simulation, an increased relevancy of University courses, a broader base to bring about change, and a rejuvenation of learning.

The committee consists of 12 representatives from A&M and a representative from each of eight school districts: Bryan, College Station, Spring, Klein, Conroe, San Antonio, Highland Park and Richardson.

The committee is co-chaired by Robert Smith, superintendent of the Spring ISD, and McNamara.

Committee members will work together on a single project that both researchers and school districts agree on and is targeted for improvement of the schools, McNamara said.

"A problem well-defined is half solved," he said. For that reason the committee will study the project for a year to acquire a theoretical framework for its research and analysis, he said.

After collecting data from the schools in the fall semester, the committee will have achieved two important objectives, McNamara said.

"We'll have the research findings and we'll have learned how to work with each other, which is very important for us," he said.

The researchers and districts will know each other's interests and constraints in working together and, he says, more importantly, they will know the true meaning of collaboration: a cooperative effort to produce what neither side could produce alone.

"The bottom line," McNamara said, "is to become more proac-

tive than reactive." The committee will share its findings with school trustees, the Texas Education Agency and state legislators. The groups may then act on the committee's research.

The committee met again March 6 to determine possible projects for the collaborative research. McNamara said these projects include assessing teacher effectiveness, becoming more financially efficient and developing an annual report for school districts to communicate a school's success. The plan will be finalized in April, he said.

"The future for this group is bright," he said.

After conducting the pilot project, committee members will decide whether they want to continue in the effort for collaborative research.

"I think we will," McNamara said.

Pope plans short talk to 200 black Catholics at New Orleans stop

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Pope John Paul II has added a brief speech to black Catholics from around the country to his heavy schedule in New Orleans, Archbishop Philip Hannan announced Wednesday.

Hannan said blacks in the archdiocese asked for such an address after meetings with Hispanics and protestants were added to the schedule for the pope's 10-day, nine-city visit in September.

"Originally... he was not going to address any one racial or ethnic group," Hannan said.

He said John Paul's schedule in New Orleans is busier than in any other city he is to visit. Other stops are scheduled in San Antonio, Miami, Columbia, S.C., Phoenix, Los Angeles, Monterey, Calif., San Francisco and Detroit.

In recent months, planners added Detroit, where an estimated 600,000 Polish-Americans live, as the ninth

city on the itinerary. A Spanish at a San Antonio stop also was added to the pope's schedule.

"I felt he should also speak to representatives of black Catholics in the United States," Hannan said. He said he proposed the pope's meeting in Rome last week with the pope and cardinals.

Louisiana was the obvious choice for such remarks, he said, because it has the nation's highest concentration of black Catholics. Nine of 12 black bishops born in this country are from the Gulf Coast, he said.

Five are from Louisiana, one each from Mississippi and Alabama. Tom Finney, a spokesman for the Archdiocese of New Orleans, said the pope will visit about 200 black Catholics around the country.

The talk will be given in the chapel at Notre Dame Seminary, 12.

Jeffrey P. Marcon, assistant coordinator for the pope's visit in New Orleans, said preliminary call for a 15-minute talk will be about 8 a.m.

After that come events scheduled: remarks at St. Louis Cathedral, across town in the Quarter; a one-car parade there to the Superdome; a speech to Catholic school administrators and a rally; an open-air Mass, at which to half a million people are expected; and a speech to Catholic college and university leaders.

There won't even be time for supper before the speech, college and university leaders at University, Hannan said.

"We're counting on the pope to have an enormous amount of time just to get through his schedule here," Hannan said. "It's a

Texas inmate on death row hopes for new trial

HUNTSVILLE (AP) — Texas death row inmate Clarence Brandley said Wednesday he was pleased with a stay of execution that kept him from being put to death this week and hoped for a new trial that would exonerate him.

Brandley, 35, was to die by injection early today for the Aug. 23, 1980, rape-slaying of 16-year-old Cheryl Dee Ferguson at Conroe High School. A state district judge Friday granted him a stay and Brandley's attorneys insist they now have statements from witnesses who can clear him.

"I don't know any more than I'm hearing and seeing," Brandley said Wednesday in an interview outside death row. "I'm very hopeful something will turn up for the good for me. I feel better now that I've got a stay."

Brandley said he would prefer another

trial — which would be his third — rather than merely walk free.

"I think I'd much rather be retried because I think there would still be a lot of doubt in people's minds," he said.

The trial, however, should be anywhere but Montgomery County, Brandley said, because he did not believe he could get a fair trial in the county where the Ferguson slaying occurred.

Meanwhile, a former Conroe High School janitor, the focus of an evidentiary hearing last summer in the Brandley case, said he was harassed by defense attorneys trying to free Brandley.

James Dexter Robinson, 26, of Greenville, S.C., said investigators for Brandley's attorneys visited him last week.

Robinson said defense attorneys and their

investigators are trying to "make me look like a suspect" and free Brandley.

Brandley, who also was a janitor at the school, said Wednesday he was unaware of Robinson's possible new connection with his case.

Brandley said, "I never knew he was even at the school that day."

Defense attorneys said two former high school janitors witnessed the abduction of Ferguson. The janitors also said in videotaped statements that Brandley was not involved, the attorneys said.

Meanwhile, an attorney for Brandley said he met in Houston Tuesday with FBI agents to discuss the case.

Lawyer Mike DeGuerin said an investigation by authorities could crack the case and

catch the right murderer within two weeks, paving the way for Brandley's release.

Brandley said, "I'd like to see anybody come into this case to solve it."

He said he has not talked with federal officials recently but his supporters have asked for a federal probe. His case has generated widespread publicity, with supporters staging rallies and demonstrations alleging that Brandley is the victim of racism. Brandley is black. Ferguson was white.

Montgomery County District Attorney Peter Speers has branded the racism allegation as preposterous.

Brandley, who said he had no first-hand knowledge to identify the killer, said he would like to see Texas Attorney General Jim Mattox get involved because he thinks Mattox would be fair.



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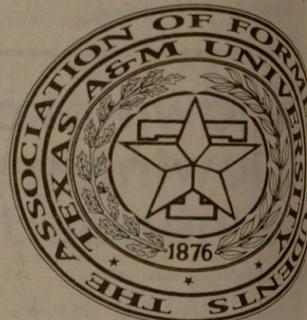
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