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Plane crash in Burma kills all on board

RANGOON, Burma (AP) — A Burma Airways plane caught fire and crashed about 20 miles short of a popular tourist town in central Burma Sunday, killing all 49 people aboard, including 14 Americans, the government said.

The official News Agency of Burma said 36 foreigners, nine Burmese passengers and four crewmen were aboard.

It was the airline's second disaster in less than four months.

The agency said twin-turboprop Fokker Friendship 27 "caught fire in midair" and crashed southeast of its destination of Pagan, a town whose ancient Buddhist temples attract many foreign tourists.

The brief announcement did not give the cause of the crash.

The agency said besides the Americans, seven Swiss citizens, five Britons, four Australians, three West Germans, two French citizens and one Thai died.

The crash came one day after diplomatic sources reported increased police protection of the U.S. Embassy in Rangoon because of reports that an anti-American terrorist group had entered Burma.

Officials would not speculate on possible links between crash and terrorists, and no further information was available on the alleged arrival of terrorists.

Government sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the plane was on a two-hour, regularly scheduled flight from the national capital of Rangoon to Pagan, about 306 miles to the north.

Pagan has about 5,000 residents. It lies on flat terrain on the east bank of the Irrawaddy River, which crosses most of Burma. The town and surrounding area has hundreds of temples built during the 11th and 12th centuries.

Computer breakdown delays runoff results

A computer breakdown forced the candidates in the runoff election for freshman class president and vice president to wait until today to find out the outcome of last Thursday's election.

Brian Banner, vice president for administration in student government, said the election results, scheduled to be announced at noon last Friday, will be posted in the student government offices in the Pavilion this morning.

"We'll have the results out Monday for sure," Banner said.

Banner said the election committee will count the estimated 600 votes by hand if the computers are not working today.

The freshman candidates for president, Steven Werheim and Heather Glenn, and vice president candidates Steve Miller and Jason Wilcox, were told Friday they would have to wait until Monday for the results of the election.

Banner said the election committee will count the ballots first thing this morning.



Looking for daylight

Texas A&M tailback Keith Woodside (33) takes a handoff from freshman quarterback Bucky Richardson and prepares to run up the middle as Houston's Johnny Jackson (10) moves in. The Aggies managed

a 22-17 victory over the Cougars for their first SWC win. The win improved the Aggies' conference record to 1-1. The Aggies will face Baylor in Waco this weekend. See story, page 11.

Photo by Robert W. Rizzo

Legislators address student leaders

Study group sponsors symposium on higher education

By Drew Leder
Staff Writer

Texas A&M's Legislative Study Group brought together legislators from around the state in Dallas Friday to discuss higher education in Texas at a symposium of the Texas State Student Association.

State Rep. Richard Smith, R-Bryan, a 1959 A&M graduate, state senator Eddie Bernice Johnson, D-Dallas, and state Rep. Alex Moreno, D-Edinburg, addressed student government representatives from 20 Texas colleges and universities at a convention of the TSSA, an organization that tries to establish a network among student governments at higher education institutions in the state.

LSG directors Mark Browning, a senior finance major, and Carolyn Foster, a senior political science major, moderated the discussion that focused on legislation that affected higher education in the 70th Texas Legislature, which was from Jan. 1 to May 31 this year.

The three legislators agreed that the concerns of higher education met with success in the past session, but they made it clear that problems still exist in the area.

"Higher education fared well," Johnson said, but she also noted that no single item in higher education was funded at its request this year.

Overall, higher education received a 9 percent increase in funding over last year, Johnson said. General revenue funds allocated to higher education by the Legislature this year total \$27.1 billion.

Moreno said this year's increase in funding will make up for the cuts made in the area in 1985 and 1986, but he warned students not to think the increased funding will be enough to meet the demands of higher education.

"Do we have enough resources to provide a top quality education in every part of the state?" Moreno asked, and then answered his question, "The state doesn't. We are not going to be able to provide higher education without limits in all areas of the state. There are some dark clouds lurking on the horizon."



State Rep. Richard Smith

Photo by Drew Leder

Moreno said there have been proposals to merge, or even shut down, some smaller state institutions in order to eliminate the costs required for their operations.

In the past, higher education hasn't been a high priority when legislators have decided how to allocate the state's money, Smith said. In 1985 and 1986, while other areas of state funding — highway construction and maintenance, public education, prisons, and human services — received increases, higher education was left out, he said. This year's increase is because of more and better lobbying, he said.

"Higher education, in the past, has not had a strong lobby," Smith said, "but there was a strong effort in this session by people interested to reverse this trend."

One group that will benefit from the additional funding is faculty. The legislators agreed that faculty salary increases are needed to attract top researchers to Texas.

Johnson said, "We need to focus on more research so it could be commercialized, so we can get some revenues coming from that commercialization."

Smith also said getting and

keeping faculty researchers should be a top priority of higher education.

State universities in Texas have been losing faculty members in many areas because of their modest pay incentives compared to other states, Moreno said. Texas ranks 24th in money spent on faculty compensation this year, but the past Legislature adopted a plan designed to bring Texas' faculty salaries up to the average of the 10 most populous states by 1990. The plan calls for a 10 percent increase in funds available for faculty salaries in 1988 and a 15 percent increase in 1989. According to the plan, salary increases will be based on merit.

The legislators also discussed the possibility of appointing students to the governing boards of state universities, something the LSG and A&M's Student Senate have backed. Moreno said this is an issue that would not be accomplished any time soon.

"At the present time it would be unrealistic to put a student on the (A&M) Board of Regents," he said, "it would be much more realistic to put a student in an advisory capacity."

The regents fear they will lose some of their cohesiveness if a student is given a position on the Board, he said.

Although Moreno didn't address the legitimacy of the issue, Johnson vehemently opposed giving students a voting seat on the boards.

"Students are there for the curriculum," she said. "Sometimes students forget what they're there for when they want to run the universities."

It isn't the role of students to make long-range decisions, often involving huge amounts of money, that will have a major impact on higher education, she said.

Discussion also centered on how much authority the governing boards should have. In particular, undergraduate tuition-setting authority shouldn't be given to the boards, the three legislators said.

In the past session, the boards were given authority to set graduate tuition rates, a move the LSG opposed, but undergraduate tuition authority remained in the Legislature.

Smith said if undergraduate tuition authority was given to the boards, tuition rates would rise to whatever amount market forces dictated. He said although it would provide a way to raise tuition rates without voters holding the Legislature responsible, he is opposed to the idea.

"The fundamental issue is that there is a need to raise tuition," Smith said. "The purpose (of this proposal) is to get tuition out of the political arena and into the hands of some appointed officials who could stand the heat to raise tuition without having to be responsible to the people."

When asked what the most significant emerging issue in higher education is, Moreno said it is the failure of state institutions to desegregate. Pledges by colleges and universities in 1983 to increase the recruitment of minorities have not been carried out, he said, and he vowed to see that the pledges are met by filing lawsuits against the schools.

"In the same way the federal courts have forced us to deal with the issues of prisons and with the issues of the mentally ill, we are going to be forced with the issues of minorities in this state in terms of higher education," Moreno said.

A&M pays money to state in dispute over utility costs

By Doug Driskell
Staff Writer

A disagreement between state auditors and Texas A&M officials over a law regarding utility payments resulted in a \$167,871 payment to the state by A&M in August, an A&M official said.

This payment covered utility costs originally paid by the state for fiscal years 1986 and 1987, said Tom Taylor, controller of Texas A&M. But the auditors found that certain A&M areas used for non-educational purposes were using state-appropriated funds to pay utility costs.

This is illegal according to the state appropriations bill, Taylor said.

Since 1981, A&M has worked under guidelines, set by the state auditors, for allocating utility costs to non-educational enterprises, Taylor said. In 1986, the state auditors came back and reviewed the University process for allocating state appropriations.

"They reviewed us again and determined there were certain areas that had been added since that time (1981) which were not paying their share," Taylor said.

An opinion by the attorney general says any organization supported by student service fees should pay for total operating costs, Taylor said.

Such organizations include intramurals and the student programs office, he said.

"We feel intramurals should pay their share when they use Read Building facilities," Taylor said. "We don't feel like they should pay any for the facility when it is locked up from midnight to 8 a.m. The state auditors believe intramurals should be allocated for the full 24 hours."

This difference in opinion has resulted in discussions between A&M and state auditors on what a fair method of allocating costs is, Taylor said.

"We have maintained over the years that what student groups do on this campus are a part of the education process," Taylor said. "But, with the attorney general's opinion, it is hard to argue."

Previously, many non-educational areas, such as the A.P. Beutel Health Center, were paying their utility costs, Taylor said.

"If we were trying to get away with something, we wouldn't have been paying any of these utilities," he said.

Howard Perry, associate vice president for student services, said this crackdown by the state auditors is the result of the budget problems in Texas.

"In a tight money situation the state auditors are looking for every way in the world to reduce state expenditures," Perry said.

The Pavilion is a good example, he said. The second floor is divided between student financial aid and student activities. Student activities is funded totally by student service fees, he said.

"They may get around to finding out that there is another outfit up there that is being funded by student service fees," Perry said. "Student service fee organizations should be paying their utilities instead of the state of Texas. They will latch on to that and we will have to put something in that budget for utility costs."

Perry said it can only get worse if the state continues to have economic problems.

The fact that organizations often move around also makes it difficult to allocate utility costs, Taylor said.

"It may be that they were in an auxiliary operation some place else and they moved into a non-auxiliary enterprise," Taylor said.

An example of this is the Pavilion snack bar, he said.

"When they moved in and set up a snack bar it was an educational facility," he said. "We knew it was there, but from a utility allocation standpoint it never registered with anybody that they were now occupying that small area."

"We are working toward a procedure that will help us monitor this on a continuing basis."

To show the auditors A&M is cooperating with this problem, \$82,198 of the payment made in August was to cover fiscal 1987, Taylor said.

"Since they pointed out our past mistakes, we decided to go ahead and pay for 1987 so it wouldn't show up in their audit next year," he said.