

Texas A&M The Battalion

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A&M students march to protest apartheid

By Elisa Hutchins
Staff Writer

About 100 people marched from the College Station City Hall to Rudder Tower Friday afternoon carrying signs and chanting, "I, you, we all say, apartheid must go and it must go today."

The march was in protest of \$5.5 million (market value) that Texas A&M has invested in companies with holdings in South Africa.

Students Against Apartheid sponsored the event in an effort to gain attention from the Board of Regents and the community to stop supporting apartheid, organization President Waylon Collins said.

"News blackouts have made apartheid appear to have been solved in South Africa," Collins said. "People just aren't aware of the nature and effects of this evil government and the civil and criminal crimes that are being committed there."

He said the legalized South African government gives virtually no representation to the millions of blacks in the country and is analogous to the Ku Klux Klan setting up their own government.

The group marched along Texas Avenue and down University Drive to gain attention from motorists on their way home.

They made their first stop at the Systems Building where participants left a message for Chancellor Perry L. Adkisson attached to the front of the building.

The sign, with more than 100 signatures, read, "We, the undersigned, condemn apartheid and we urge the Board of Regents to divest from American banks and companies which have financial holdings in South Africa."

Norman Muraya, club divestment chairman, said A&M has a vast South African portfolio. Some current major holdings include \$282,000 invested with American Express Credit Co., \$251,000 in American Express Corp. and \$216,000 invested in Merck & Co. Inc.

Collins said the Board of Regents

has not been understanding with their cause. "When we formed in 1985, we drew up a resolution asking for divestment and the board responded that is wasn't in the periphery of the University and they felt they were being asked to take a political position," he said.

Many universities and cities throughout the country already have divested. Houston City Council members voted in 1986 to pull the city's investments out of South Africa and the University of Houston Board of Regents voted in July to divest UH of more than \$11 million. To date, the University of Houston is the only university in Texas to have pulled out.

Arthur Shaw, a member of the Houston Free South Africa movement, also participated in the march and spoke at the rally. Even though A&M's march had a relatively small student turnout, the march still could have an effect, he said.

"It is not how many people that show up, but how persistent they are," Shaw said. "At University of Houston anti-apartheid meetings, no more than six people ever showed up, but they got the job done."

David Lesmes, a graduate student from California, passed by the front of Rudder Tower while the rally was taking place. He said he did not see divestment as the solution.

Lesmes said he understood that some companies do not exploit the black workers, but treat them fairly, so their pullout would hurt the situation instead of helping it.

"I'm not convinced (divestment) would solve the problem," Lesmes said. "While I don't condone apartheid, some companies, like Kellogg's Corp., aren't using the same tactics as others in South Africa; they actually have a positive influence."

He also said the low attendance at the rally reflected the sentiment of other students. He believes nothing will come of the march because of the conservative nature of the campus.

Shaw said the argument that di-



A&M students protesting apartheid in South Africa march in front of the College Station City Hall Friday afternoon.

Photo by Jay Janner

vesting would hurt the black South Africans is ridiculous because the blacks have been victimized for decades. Any unemployment or disadvantage caused by divestment would be short term, he said, and the situation of the black workers would be ultimately improved.

Shaw also conducted a study using as an example the Houston municipal pension fund, the source of investment for the city. The study concluded that universities would not

lose money if they pulled their money out.

"Average yields on securities over a 3-year-period showed that dirty companies (those that invested in South Africa) had yields of around 5 percent and clean companies (those not doing business with South Africa) actually had a yield of 9 percent," he said.

Members from several anti-apartheid groups in the state also participated in Friday's march at A&M.

Jon Jackson, chairman of Black Student Alliance at the University of Texas, said many groups are getting together to build a stronger power base.

Collins said Students Against Apartheid at A&M will write another resolution for divestment and circulate a petition among students for the same purpose.

Ian DeSouza, who participated in the march, is a member of the Progressive Students' Association at

UH. He said students must get involved and present a strong front against apartheid if they want it changed.

"Student movements play a vital role in getting universities to divest and in disbanding apartheid," DeSouza said.

Sunday, two days after A&M's march, the sign participants left attached to the front of the Systems Building was found in the trash dumpster near the building.

A&M focuses on alcohol in activities

By Mary-Lynne Rice
Staff Writer

College students across the nation are urged to "celebrate responsibly" this week, which has been designated National Collegiate Alcohol Awareness Week.

Texas A&M has planned several educational activities and parties for the week-long awareness campaign, which is aimed at informing students about alcohol use and abuse, Student Affairs Chairman Jan Winniford said.

"It's part of a national awareness campaign on college campuses across the country to try to heighten students' awareness," Winniford said.

"We're not advocating drinking, we're not advocating talking about the evils of alcohol, but instead just trying to talk about misuse and abuse," Winniford said.

The activities began Sunday with an Almost Anything Goes contest, which brought co-recreational teams together for events including tug-of-war, egg tosses and Frisbee throwing.

Dinner for two and tickets to the Rice football game will be given away at the "Red Ribbon Celebration" at Graham's.

Bob Wiatt, director of traffic and University Police, will play the defendant in a mock DWI trial Tuesday night. The "trial," sponsored by the Office of Students' Attorney, will include a demonstration of a breathalyzer test.

Residence halls will square off Wednesday for a competition to test their knowledge of alcohol, drugs and other health-related issues. "Hall-y-wood Squares" guest stars will include student leaders.

Wednesday night, a theater presentation will dissect "The Anatomy of a Party." A discussion afterward will show the liabilities associated with alcohol and social situations.

"Mocktail Cocktails" (nonalcoholic drinks) will be served around campus Thursday.

MSC Political Forum and Great Issues Committee will sponsor an alcohol awareness forum Thursday afternoon. That evening, a dance and live entertainment will be sponsored by MSC Town Hall.

Only freshmen will get midterm reports

By Drew Leder
Staff Writer

Midterm grade reports will no longer be available for sophomores, juniors and seniors who want to check their six-week academic progress — and some Texas A&M students and administrators say they won't be missed.

The change — which ends A&M's practice of making midterm reports available to all undergraduate students — was approved by the Faculty Senate on March 9 and approved by President Frank E. Vandiver later in the spring.

Registrar Donald D. Carter said freshman midterm reports should be available for students to pick up Wednesday. The reports will be given out at the Pavilion as soon as they become available on Wednesday until 5 p.m. and from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday and Friday, he said.

Grades also will be mailed to students' parents who requested the

University to do so if the student is their dependent child. Carter said the majority of freshmen — defined as students with less than 30 hours — will have grades mailed to their parents.

"Midterm grades only reflected one exam and in many cases not even an exam. . . . If grades are not reported in a meaningful manner, what good can they do?"

— Donald D. Carter, registrar

The elimination of the reports was part of a revision of the University Rules and Regulations. Bill Kibler, chairman of the Faculty Senate's Rules and Regulations Committee, said the reason for the change was the small percentage of students picking up grades and the fact that grades were often inaccurate.

Carter said that in past semesters

less than half of the undergraduate students picked up their midterm grades. And the midterm grades sometimes did not reflect the student's true grade, Kibler explained.

"Many faculty members took mid-

terms seriously," Kibler said, "but others gave blanket grades (like all B's or C's), and in many cases they were making grades up."

Carter agreed that midterm grades were sometimes unreliable assessments of student progress.

"Midterm grades only reflected one exam and in many cases not even an exam," Carter said. "In sev-

eral instances in the past, they weren't reported at all. If grades are not reported in a meaningful manner, what good can they do?"

Kibler said a proposal to the Rules and Regulations Committee last spring originally called for the elimination of midterm grade reports for all undergraduate students. The proposal was amended to continue midterm reporting for freshmen because the committee thought the elimination of reports might benefit by knowing how they are doing at midterm, Kibler said. Faculty advisers of freshmen also need to know if the new students are having problems in their classes, he said.

Several upperclassmen also expressed doubts as to the usefulness of midterm reports and said they

won't miss them. Thanh Nguyen, a junior biology major, said midterm grades aren't important to him but agreed that they might be of some value to freshmen.

"To me midterms aren't a big thing because they're not indicative of what you will get at the end of the semester," he said. "As a freshman, though, it may help you re-evaluate the way you study. Some freshmen think they study enough, and midterms may let them know different."

Greg Deans, a junior psychology major, said that while midterms aren't necessarily useful to evaluate academic progress, they provided a way for students to check their schedules and grades.

"The only good reason for midterms is that they help you check up on your classes to make sure your grades are what you think and make sure you're enrolled in everything all right," he said.

Another student, James Neill, a junior computer science major, said he found midterm grades totally useless.

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University comes under fire for lack of protection

By Richard Williams
Reporter

Texas A&M is not providing its students with enough fire protection in its buildings, College Station Fire Marshal Harry Davis said.

"The University does not build enough fire protection — or as much as they should — into their buildings," Davis said.

Fire safety at Texas A&M Part one of a two-part series

But Harry Stiteler, the A&M safety and health officer, said, "We do feel like we are providing adequate life safety and complying with the codes as much as possible."

Because A&M is a state agency, State Fire Marshal Ernest Emerson said, the University does not have to follow College Station building codes, and since there are no state-mandated building safety codes A&M is free to adopt its own codes.

The codes in question include building codes like the Southern Building Congress Codes and the

National Fire Protection Association Codes.

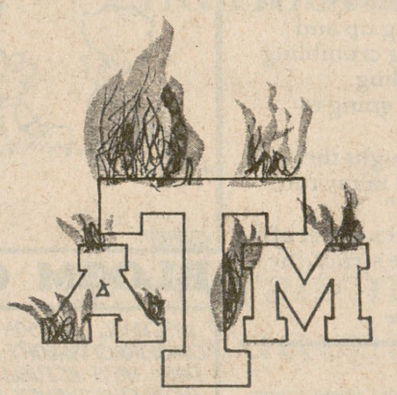
The SBC codes and the NFPA codes are codes both College Station and A&M use to help determine the proper design of structures.

However, College Station uses the codes and city ordinances as mandatory standards all College Station buildings must meet, while A&M uses codes only as guidelines.

Paul W. Stephens, manager of the A&M System Facilities Planning Division, said A&M designs all new buildings to meet the SBC codes and the NFPA Life Safety codes. The NFPA Life Safety codes are a section of the NFPA codes dealing with a building's personal safety requirements.

Wesley E. Peel, vice chancellor for Facilities Planning and Construction, said there are certain state-mandated codes A&M must follow, but outside of those, he said, A&M is free to adopt the building codes it wants to follow.

"We follow it (the NFPA and SBC codes), unless there is a valid reason not to," Peel said. "A guideline cannot cover every case. That's why people have brains."



Stephens said, "Building codes are guides and they have to be adopted by someone with authority."

But Davis said he was not sure how close the University follows the codes Stephens and Peel said the University is using as guides.

"We know for a fact they only use the portion of the building code they want to use," Davis said.

Peel said, "You would be doing a great disservice if you didn't (follow

the code). I don't know about any time at which we violate that (the NFPA Life Safety Codes)."

But Davis disagrees. "If he says they are following the NFPA codes 100 percent, he is wrong," Davis said.

Emerson, the state fire marshal, said that 75 percent of building code provisions relate to fire protection, so a unified state policy on fire protection is needed. He said he would like to see Texas adopt a standard policy that state agencies like A&M would have to meet.

Even if A&M does have unsafe conditions present, Emerson said, he could not force a change.

A section of the Texas Insurance Code gives the state fire marshal authority to order state agencies to correct or remove any hazard. But Emerson said there is a catch to that part of the code: because Texas has no state building standards, there is no standard definition as to what a hazard is, he said, so that section of the insurance code is difficult to enforce.

Peel said it is his responsibility to make sure building plans meet safety standards, and he said it is ul-

timately the responsibility of the chancellor and the Board of Regents.

However, Stiteler and Stephens, manager of a division under the control of Peel, both said they did not know who was responsible for assuring A&M's buildings were constructed to code.

When asked who was responsible for making sure A&M buildings meet the codes A&M has adopted, Stiteler said, "That has really never been defined."

Stephens said A&M relies on the architects and engineers involved with the project to make sure the buildings meet the codes A&M is following and he said A&M officials, architects and engineers work as a team to make sure codes are met.

"We are alert to things on a set of drawings when we see them," Stephens said. "If we see something that might not be safe, we take a closer look at it — that's common sense."

If something is not up to code,

See Fire safety, page 10