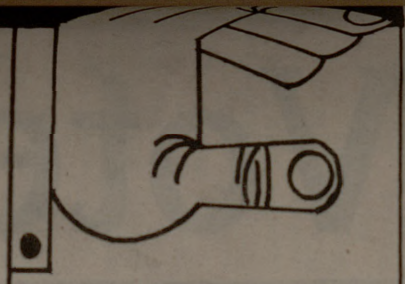


Candidates optimistic despite A&M's history of low turnout



By Drew Leder
Staff Writer

Candidates for the over 100 Student Government positions to be filled in Wednesday's general election have been frantically trying to get their messages out to students, but if past-voting trends accurately reflect student interest, few are listening.

With enrollment at more than 34,000 last spring, only 5,047 students cast votes in the general election, and some Student Government insiders say there won't be a significant change in voter turnout March 30.

Election Commissioner Bryan Tutt said the turnout Wednesday should be the same as in past elections, with about 5,000 votes cast, but, he said, it's hard to gauge student-voter interest before an election so there's always the possibility that a larger than usual number of students will head to the polls.

Jay Hays, speaker of the Student Senate, contends that voter turnout at this election will not follow the pattern of past elections. Hays, one of the two candidates for Student Body President, said the effect of only two candidates for the highest elected, student position will be either a rise or drop in the voter turnout. He says it can go either way.

Student Body President Mason Hogan says the vast majority of the 36,448 students enrolled

at Texas A&M this spring aren't concerned enough about Student Government to make a special trip out to the polls. Hogan estimates that one-fourth of A&M's students know something about what is going on in Student Government and the issues it is concerned with, while, he says, only one-eighth really care about what is happening in Student Government.

Lack of participation in elections and the day-to-day activities of Student Government doesn't necessarily mean A&M student's are oblivious to their elected representatives, Hogan said.

"A lot of them are in majors so that they can't afford to do anything else (but study), or they may not be interested in doing it themselves, but I think they appreciate that they have a place to go if they have a problem," he said.

Hays said students' apparent disinterest in Student Government is the result of a failure to communicate. He said many members of the Student Government think the general student population doesn't care about what they are doing, while the same is true on the other side.

"Our communication network has broken down," Hays said. "We don't hear from students, and they don't hear from us."

Many students agree with Hays that the voice of the Stu-

dent Government goes largely unheard.

Adrian Angove-Rogers, a graduate student, said he is unaware of any significant actions of the Student Government having occurred during the five years he has been at A&M. While this is partly the result of a communication problem, he said, there is little to communicate about.

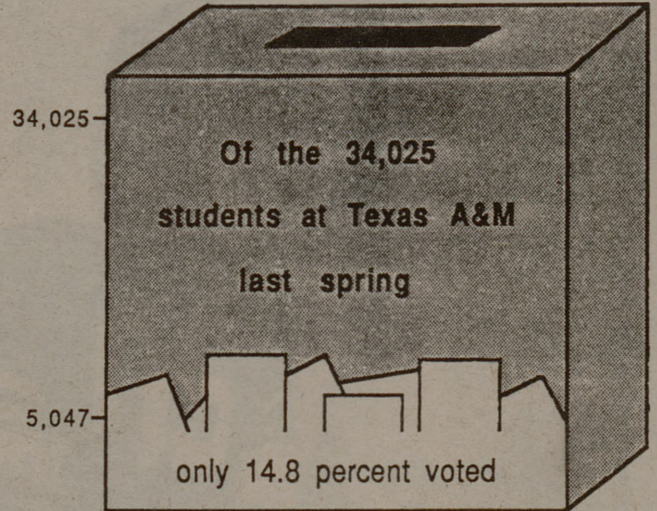
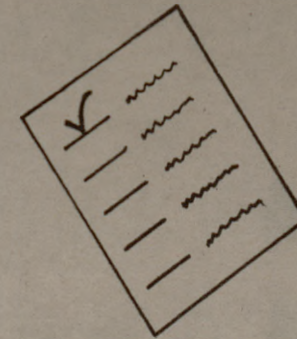
"Whenever they try to get something done it fails because they can't enforce anything," Angove-Rogers said. "They're a government for the people, by the people, but whatever they decide, they can't implement it."

Jeff Pollard, a staff writer for *The Battalion* who covers Student Government activities, said many reasons account for students' disinterest in their elected government.

"It's everything from sympathy to apathy," Pollard said. "People sympathetic because the government can't get things done to people who think they don't do anything."

While many students don't seem to be too concerned with the activities of their elected government, Hogan says they should be.

"There should be a general concern," he said. "Things that go on at this campus are going to affect everybody in one way or another and they are going to affect the future of Texas A&M."



Polling places

Students with a current Texas A&M I.D. can cast their ballots Wednesday between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. at the following locations:

Memorial Student Center, main lobby
Sbisa Dining Hall, outside near the Fish Pond, weather permitting. (Voting will be in the A-1 lounge in the event of rain.)

Kleberg Animal and Food Sciences Center, student lounge

Sterling C. Evans Library, in front of the library. This polling place will be open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.