

## State and Local

# Honors classes attract quality students

By Juliette Rizzo  
Staff Writer

Students who are highly motivated and enjoy working in small classes and receiving personalized attention from professors often find the academic challenge they are looking for in the University Honors Program.

Dr. Dale T. Knobel, Texas A&M honors program director, said the program is designed to bring together outstanding students and faculty in a learning atmosphere that encourages creativity and independent thinking.

Students who graduate with academic honors from high school often look for a university that offers them the special attention and challenging courses they are used to, Knobel said.

"More and more students have had accelerated academic experience at the high school level," he said. "They go to college to be in classes where all the students are on similar levels and have the capabilities to grasp what the professor is saying."

"High quality students with proven academic ability and the desire to be challenged are placed in classes where they receive individual attention from professors. Students like the fact that the honors courses provide them with a closer connection to the faculty."

To qualify for the honors program, incoming freshmen must graduate in the top quarter of their high school class and score at least 1,100 on the Scholastic Aptitude Test or 26 on the American College Testing program exam.

Sophomores, juniors and seniors may enroll in the program if they have a cumulative grade point ratio of 3.25. To continue in the program,

a student must maintain an overall GPR of 3.25 and a 3.0 GPR in honors courses.

A student whose grades slip below the requirements can re-enter the program as soon as his grades improve.

"The program is a totally democratic system," Knobel said. "Staying in the program is based on the student's success."

Unlike honors programs at other universities, A&M's program does not require students to enter a four-year program separate from the regular curriculum.

Honors students can choose both honors courses and regular course sections that meet the requirements for their departmental degree plans.

One hundred honors class sections are available each semester to students in any major.

"The honors courses offered now can fit into anyone's schedule, regardless of major, because many are introductory classes," Knobel said.

Since 1985, enrollment in honors courses has more than doubled. In 1987, nearly 4,000 students were registered in the honors program.

"The demand for additional and more varied courses through the program has multiplied more rapidly than the total enrollment of the University," Knobel said.

The size and format of honors classes are what attract many students, Knobel said. Honors classes are small — usually 15 to 30 students. The limited class size allows for greater class participation.

"Honors professors don't teach by the traditional lecture approach," Knobel said. "They follow a discussion-based format. Instead of just being talked to, the students are involved in teaching their classmates through their participation in class discussions."

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— Dr. Dale T. Knobel, Texas A&M honors program director

An honors designation does not mean a class is fast-paced or accelerated, he said.

"The courses are highly challenging and participatory but not accelerated," he said. "A student can't cruise through the class and then cram in the end, because class participation is a daily requirement. The subject matter is more challenging and students can explore material in greater depth than they could in a non-honors course."

Honors courses rely on more than class discussions and textbooks, often including hands-on experience.

Oceanography students for example, cruise the Gulf on a research vessel. Philosophy of art students create their own artwork, and accounting students come up with solutions to actual business problems.

Knobel said students are more motivated in honors courses because they can express their creativity and study independently.

If a course is not offered in the honors program, a student who has completed nine honors credit hours may sign an "Honors Contract" to do advanced work in regular classes.

The student is required to meet with the professor for individual instruction and to do more challenging work than the other students in the class.

Honors students also can register for Honors Independent Study, personalized study or research supervised by a professor.

The honors program sponsors the University Undergraduate Fellows Program, a two-semester, independent research experience for academically outstanding juniors who have completed nine hours of honors courses. The research leads to a Senior Honors Thesis that can be judged for scholarships.

As participants in the most prestigious research program available to undergraduates, fellows participants are given graduate student privileges, including access to graduate research facilities, computer labs and faculty supervision.

Several student services are offered to honors students through the honors program.

The Honors Student Council gives students campus leadership experience and an opportunity to influence the development of the honors curriculum.

The honors program also provides students with academic counseling, preregistration services and assistance in applying to graduate school.

"Honors students can register in person in our office on the first day of preregistration," Knobel said. "This is definitely an advantage for freshmen."

The program is also a contact point for employers and student job placement.

"Corporations come and ask to see our honors rosters," he said. "Many law schools and medical schools say they look favorably on honor graduates."

To graduate with honors, a student must successfully complete 36 hours of honors courses with an overall GPR of at least 3.25.

All completed honors courses are listed on a student's permanent transcript as proof to prospective employers and graduate schools that the student has participated in a curriculum for the University's best students.

## Texan indicted on 14 counts enters plea

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — A Texas developer Tuesday pleaded innocent in U.S. District Court to 14 counts stemming from an alleged scheme to defraud a Beloit, Kan., savings and loan company.

Walter Judd Kassuba, 54, formerly a resident of Lake Conroe, Texas, was indicted in July in connection with the alleged fraud.

U.S. Magistrate G. T. Vanbeber set a \$25,000 unsecured bond for Kassuba.

His next court appearance is set for Oct. 28 before U.S. District Judge Richard Rogers.

The government alleges Kassuba conspired to defraud the First Federal Savings and Loan Association of Beloit by helping its former president, Neil Neiwald, and an associate, Paul J. Chainey Jr., make false statements to the federally insured institution and by sharing in benefits through transactions with the savings and loan.

All 14 counts against Kassuba are felonies.

## Dallas-area Christians join film protest

DALLAS (AP) — A group of Dallas-area Christians has launched an all-out attack on the company putting out the movie "The Last Temptation of Christ," announcing plans to picket the film's opening and boycott all MCA-related businesses.

"We're through begging. We're through pleading," said Russ Houck, founder of Christians in Action. "They (MCA) choose to declare this war and we're planning to fight it."

Houck, a talk-show host on a local Christian radio station, announced the group's strategies Monday during a news conference at Calvary Temple in Irving.

Houck said Christians in Action would protest the movie's opening at a theater in the Dallas suburb of Addison on Wednesday and would boycott all AMC theaters and MCA products and businesses through Jan. 1.

Officials with the theater said it's OK for the group to protest as long as it follows some guidelines.

"We worked out a plan so that people who wish (to picket) will be able to do so, and people who want to see the movie will be able to do so without being harassed or disturbed," said Rick King, vice president of operations for AMC's Southwest Division.

King said that if protesters assemble on theater property, including the parking lot, they will "be asked to relocate."

"There are public areas in the vicinity of the theater where they will be directed to go," King said, referring to sidewalks.

Houck said, "We're calling for the boycott of all AMC theaters and we're also boycotting Starplex Amphitheatre."

The Starplex Amphitheater is a popular concert spot near Dallas.

Houck said that among the targeted products were videocassette tapes made by Universal studios, which is owned by MCA. One of Universal's new tape releases is "E.T."

"The Last Temptation of Christ" has been a rallying point for conservative Christians since copies of the script began circulating in mid-July. Some critics called for the movie's destruction; others asked MCA to shelve it. The movie's opponents say the depiction of Jesus is blasphemous because he is portrayed as confused and lust-ridden.

Others disagree. Among them is the Rev. Terence Roper of the Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration.

### In Advance

Dogs and cats that have moved with their owners to new homes for the fall must be registered with local veterinarians or the Brazos Animal Shelter at 2207 Finfeather Road for Brazos County license tags.

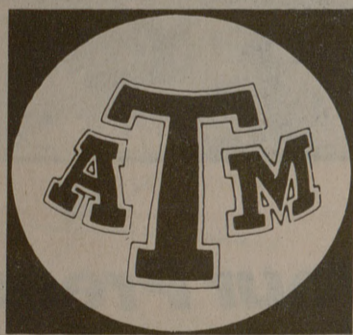
Rabies vaccinations are re-

quired before tags can be issued. A \$5 tag fee includes emergency rides to a veterinarian for lost and injured pets, a 24-hour lost and found phone line, a reduced impoundment fee for lost animals, and guaranteed extended impoundment while the animal's owner is located.

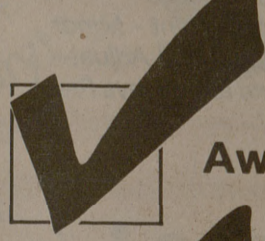
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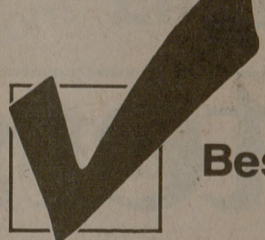
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