



**Mr. Postman...**

Liz Tisch, a sophomore special education major from Klein, picks up mail at the MSC Post Office Monday.

Students who checked mailboxes Monday found them empty because of the Columbus Day holiday.

Photo by Jay Janner

## New center helps minorities apply to medical programs

By D'Ann Marie Aviles  
Reporter

Preparing for medical or dental school is a difficult process for anyone, but for minority or disadvantaged students, the task can be even more difficult.

Texas A&M is now home to the Application Center for Summer Programs in Texas. The center streamlines student applications to summer medical school enrichment programs for minority and disadvantaged students.

Students can apply for all the summer programs in Texas with a single application instead of filling out an application for each program.

The summer programs are intensive four- to six-week courses that strengthen students' backgrounds in the sciences as well as introduce them to what medical school will be like.

Billy Rankin, assistant dean of A&M's College of Medicine, is director of the center.

Rankin pioneered the application consolidation process while he was at the University of Texas. At UT, he consolidated applications to the medical and dental schools.

The Application Center for Summer Programs in Texas is six years old. Before coming to A&M, Rankin and the program he helped develop were used at UT-Galveston and Baylor University.

"When you say minority, you have to say in what context," Rankin said. "When we talk about minority and medicine and affirmative action, the affirmative action in admission to medical school is aimed at those groups who are underrepresented in medicine."

In the United States, Rankin said, the underrepresented groups in medicine are Latin, Mexican-American, American Indian and mainland Puerto Rican.

Summer programs do not limit themselves to these minorities, Rankin said. The key word, he said, is disadvantaged.

In addition to A&M's medical school, other participants include the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston, Baylor's College of Medicine in Houston, the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio and the

University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston.

Each school has its own summer program. A&M's program is called the "Bridge to Medicine Program."

It began in 1986 in order to help minority students who wanted to attend medical school, but were lacking in the proper background.

Although the Center's headquarters is at A&M, each school makes its own decisions about accepting students. A&M serves only as a clearinghouse for the program.

Filomeno Maldonado is the director of the Bridge to Medicine Program and assistant director of the application center.

In addition to chemistry and biology, Maldonado said the Bridge to Medicine Program focuses on writing and the humanities.

"This is a service profession," Maldonado said. "It's important to have the necessary skills to relate to people who are ill or dying."

Maldonado stresses that the program isn't only for Black or Hispanic students. By including the phrase "disadvantaged students," Maldonado said she hopes white students who are economically or academically disadvantaged will apply.

"It's an enrichment program, not remediation," Maldonado said. "But people see the word 'minority' and think of that stereotype."

Maldonado directs the program in addition to his administrative role.

"I'm involved with the students," Maldonado said. "I counsel the students. I also teach. I'm in the forefront, and I'm always there."

Although Rankin's role as director of the center is primarily administrative, he works with the Bridge to Medicine Program whenever he is needed.

"I would be happy to go and present a seminar," Rankin said. "But it's Filo's program, and if I went, it would be as a guest."

Both Rankin and Maldonado say they believe programs give minority and disadvantaged students a great advantage.

Application to a summer program is similar to an application for medical school. From the start, the students get a

chance to see what medical school will be like.

"We want to impress upon them that these programs are in every way credible, genuine and authentic," Maldonado said.

The programs give students an intensive course in biology and chemistry. Students experience classroom, laboratory and hands-on approaches to learning.

At A&M, students in the program visit hospitals, meet with physicians and get an introduction to what their first year of medical school will be like.

"Two-thirds of the time, you're in the classroom," Maldonado said. "The other one-third, you're given the opportunity to experience what's going on in terms of research in the College of Medicine."

Federal funding supports all programs. Students receive room and board and classroom materials. They only have to provide their own transportation.

To apply, students must show proof of being disadvantaged if they are not members of minority groups. They must fill out the application and indicate the programs they are interested in attending. The application is sent with a college transcript and an evaluation from the student's health professions adviser to the A&M center.

That information is fed into a computer system which distributes the information to other schools.

Of the 200 students who apply to the program, about 100 are selected to participate. A&M takes 15 students for the Bridge to Medicine Program.

Maldonado said that last year, 14 of the 15 students who took part in the 1987 Bridge to Medicine Program applied to medical school. The one student who didn't apply is going to graduate school to get a master's degree before applying to medical school.

Maldonado and Rankin strongly encourage students to take part in the program because they think it is a way to get a head start on the competition in medical school.

Students interested in the program should contact Maldonado at the Office of Student Affairs in the Medical Sciences Building.

## Presidential candidates prepare for last debate

From Associated Press

George Bush and Michael Dukakis courted the support of Italian-Americans in competing Columbus Day appearances Monday that left plenty of time to polish their lines in private for this week's second and final presidential campaign debate.

It was a day that mixed campaign rhetoric with colorful made-for-television images.

Dukakis proposed a plan to make it easier for first-time home buyers to finance their residences before marching in a Columbus Day parade up Fifth Avenue in mid-town Manhattan alongside Gov. Mario Cuomo, New York Mayor Ed Koch and John F. Kennedy Jr.

Bush took a turn at a pool table in an Italian neighborhood in New Jersey, bouncing the No. 4 ball in the corner pocket while the morning patrons cheered. After that came a speech on crime.

Their daily campaign rounds over, both men hustled back to their political lairs to resume preparations for their prime-time debate later in the week.

Both camps said they expected the 90-minute debate to be held at 9 p.m. EDT Thursday night on the campus of UCLA, and the presidential rivals were flying to the West Coast on Tuesday to prepare.

The candidates exuded confidence as they began the final four weeks of campaigning.

The vice president, a step ahead in the polls, said he was heartened by surveys showing him the leader across the South and in other key states.

Countered Dukakis: "This one is out there to be won. . . . We can taste it. We can feel it."

Indiana Sen. Dan Quayle was the only vice presidential candidate with appearances scheduled.

He was in Ohio and Michigan, where he offered another refinement of the answer to the question in last week's debate that plagued him — what would he do if he suddenly became president.

He said he would make a request to speak to the nation and would consult with U.S. allies.

"Obviously you do different things under an assassination," Quayle said. "The first thing you do in an assassination — I would still say a prayer for myself and the nation — but the first thing you do is you get on the phone and call the head of the CIA and see what he thinks it was. You don't convene a Cabinet meeting right away."

"You get your secretary of defense, your national security adviser, your Secretary of State and meet with them immedi-

ately," he said. "In the situation of an illness it would be a different type of situation."

Dukakis attacked Bush's record on housing issues in his first stop of the day.

"George Bush has no housing program," the Democrat said in a speech in Levittown, a Long Island community that was the embodiment of the post-World War II boom in affordable housing. "He has no solutions. He has no new ideas."

But the vice president got the endorsement of *Il Progresso*, an Italian-language newspaper, which said the "traditional values of Italian-Americans can be found in the electoral program of Vice President Bush."

Italian-American Cuomo answered for Dukakis, saying, "Then they ought to change their name. From going forward — progress — to going backward," he said.

The vice president street-campaigned in New Jersey, walking through an Italian neighborhood in south Trenton before delivering a speech on crime.

"Frankly, law-abiding Americans are fed up with the cruel and unusual punishment inflicted on them by those who are soft on crime," the vice president said.

He proposed making it easier for victims to collect civil judgements for restitution and allowing them to receive more money automatically if a convict's financial situation improved.

While refraining from the type of harsh attack on Dukakis' crime record that has become a regular part of his campaigning, Bush criticized "liberal thinkers" who he said thought it was compassionate ease sentencing and allow early releases and furloughs.

That was a muted remark directed at the Massachusetts prison furlough program that Bush has repeatedly criticized during the campaign. In one infamous incident, a murderer out of jail on a furlough escaped and brutally attacked a Maryland couple.

Bush told reporters aboard Air Force Two en route to New Jersey that he favors a review of the federal furlough program but said he doesn't have anything specific in mind. In a job at Dukakis, he added he wants to make sure the federal program doesn't "slip into the Massachusetts model."

There was nothing muted about Dukakis' attack on Bush in his speech on housing.

The Democratic presidential candidate outlined a plan that he dubbed "Home Start" that would allow first-time home buyers to use their Individual Retirement Account or tax-deferred pension savings for a downpayment on a home.

## Researcher looks to rats for cocaine abuse study

By Melissa Naumann  
Reporter

While cocaine abuse is difficult for most people to overcome, a Texas A&M researcher is attempting to determine how rats react to cocaine use.

Learning the difference between rats that abuse cocaine after being exposed to it and rats that abstain from the drug is a project Dr. Susan Schenk of the psychology department has been working on for five years.

"I want to figure out what's different about rats that do and those that don't," Schenk said.

Research is intended to point to reasons why some humans become addicted to cocaine.

Schenk divides the rats into two groups — "social" rats and "isolated" rats.

Rats that live isolated from the others use more cocaine when given the opportunity, she said.

"In fact, there's quite a remarkable difference between them," she said.

Schenk's discoveries have come as a shock to many drug researchers.

"People have reported for years that all rats take cocaine," Schenk said. "This is because people have traditionally housed rats in isolation. Therefore, we've been worried about this animal model we use. If all the rats exposed to cocaine become addicted, will all humans exposed become addicted?"

Schenk's modification of the traditional drug research, studying both social and isolated rats, emphasizes the importance of environment in research.

"There is some environmental component to this," Schenk said. "By modifying their social environments, I think we've changed their brains. So the question is what parts of the brain does it affect?"

To administer the cocaine, a small piece of plastic tubing is surgically implanted into the jugular veins of each of Schenk's 40 rats. Each rat is taken out of his housing environment daily and put in a box with some cocaine, Schenk said.

The rats obtain the drug by hooking themselves up to a tube of cocaine solution and pushing a lever to get a "hit." Each dose of cocaine is comparable to the average amount a person would take. The "high" lasts 12 seconds.

Most isolated rats take about 100 infusions during their three hours in the box.

"The record is held by a Canadian rat," Schenk said. "He regularly had 600 infusions in three hours."

Schenk began her research in Montreal and came to A&M in 1987 to continue her work.

The experiments, funded by the psychology department and a new federal grant, are approved by the Animal Care Committee.

After studying why and how the rats use drugs, Schenk thinks the next step will be to reverse her results.

"Once we create these drug-abusing rats, can we 'un-create' them?" she said. "This might tell us where drugs work in the brain. The more we know about how cocaine interacts with the organism, the better off we'll be."

Eventually, Schenk hopes her research will be useful in treating people with drug problems.

"Right now, we don't have very good treatment programs," Schenk said. "Maybe this research can be applied and change things."

Since the rats are not born with addic-

tive personalities, the issue is why cocaine appeals to some of them, Schenk said.

"I think that if you can solve the vulnerability problem of why they want it, you can solve the rest of the problem," she said.

Although the similarities between people and rats are a vital element in the research, the comparison shouldn't be taken too far, she said.

"Some people have interpreted that because the rats are stressed, they're taking more drugs, but I don't agree."

## Faculty Senators set high standards for transfer scores

By Laura White  
Staff Writer

All courses transferred to A&M from other institutions must have a grade of at least "C-minus," the Texas A&M Faculty Senate unanimously agreed in a resolution passed yesterday.

During a regular meeting, the academic affairs committee reasoned that the practice of accepting transfer credit for courses in which a "D" grade has been received puts A&M students at a disadvantage because transferred courses don't have any impact on the students' GPA.

The Senate also voted to support the administration in improving funding to the Sterling Evans and Medical Sciences Libraries.

A&M libraries currently rank 48th in the nation in terms of quality but rank 7th in university endowments, according to the Chronicle of Higher Education.

The total amount budgeted for the libraries in 1988-89 is 3.23 percent less than in 1984-85, and is the lowest since 1981-82.

In 1988-89 the budget for books and periodicals will have decreased 18.69 percent from 1984-85.

The Senate discussed and sent back to the scholarship committee recommendations for complying with House Bill 1147, which will limit the number of nonresident students who will pay resident tuition rates at public universities in Texas.

In other business, the Senate approved a resolution pertaining to the University practice of substituting

four semesters of upper-level ROTC curriculum for history and political science.

The practice will be discussed by the University Curriculum Committee and possibly will be altered or dismissed altogether at a later date.

The Senate also approved the proposals to add a drug policy to the 1988-89 University Regulations handbook.

The addition to the handbook will contain information about drug education, prevention and treatment available at A&M, as well as the legal aspects and consequences, and the university disciplinary process.

Also added to the handbook is a section explaining the new final examination schedule.

In other business, the Senate recognized the Faculty of Plant Physiology as an Intercollegiate Faculty.

The academic responsibilities of the Faculty of Plant Physiology include teaching undergraduate and graduate courses as well as administration of the graduate programs in plant physiology.

The Senate also approved a request by the graduate council to authorize a Master of Arts degree in speech communication.

Development of the program has been designated by the Dean's office as a first priority within the College of Liberal Arts, and is responsive to a demonstrated interest in speech communication at A&M.

In further business, the Senate approved requests for three new graduate courses: Humanities 685, Music 685 and Sociology 681.