

Co-op students get job experience

By Shelly Schluter

Special to The Battalion

The Cooperative Education Program is attracting more Texas A&M students because it gives them the opportunity to gain on-the-job experience and make professional contacts in their career field while earning some money.

Dr. Steve Yates, director of the Texas A&M co-op program, said the hands-on experience gained through the program is invaluable.

"More and more students are getting involved in co-op because they, along with parents and faculty, are realizing that the best learning comes by doing," Yates said.

Co-op is a program that offers undergraduate students a chance to combine academic theory with practical application, as long as they maintain a 2.5 grade-point ratio and a minimum of credit hours depending on a student's major.

Students apply for jobs and interview with organizations as if they were applying for a job after graduation.

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student participants, but also the organizations that employ the students, Yates said.

"More employers are realizing that co-op is a good business for them, because their organizations are getting long-term training, development and recruiting programs," Yates said. "Many organizations are making co-op one of their primary recruiting tools. The CIA, IBM, NASA, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services, Dow Chemical and Texas Instruments are just a few of the more than 176 organizations that are recruiting students from A&M through the co-op program."

Dr. Bernard G. Carbajal III, a senior member of the technical staff at Texas Instruments, said the program helps his organization in two ways.

"Co-op is a way for Texas Instruments to get short-term technical help from students, but it is also a major asset to us as a recruiting tool," Carbajal said. "The best recruiting tool we have on this (A&M) campus is a satisfied Texas Instruments co-op student."

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— Dr. Steve Yates, director, Texas A&M Cooperative Education Program

mesters, until two or three co-op terms are completed.

Students benefit from the program because they get a head start in the job market and a "competitive edge" over students who do not co-op.

Eddie Zavala, a junior aerospace engineering major from El Paso,

18 High Angle of Attack Research Vehicle for NASA.

Zavala said he has above average grades, but because of the work experience he received as a co-op, he will be able to compete in the job market with students who have higher grades than he does.

The co-op program not only helps

Del Rio residents fight to keep water safe

WASHINGTON (AP) — Del Rio is fighting to protect the springs that make the city an oasis in the Chihuahuan desert from Pentagon plans to rock a nearby ranch with a series of massive underground explosions.

Designed to simulate the impact of nuclear blasts on subterranean missile silos and military command centers, the explosions on the Buck King Ranch are an important element in "our nation's strategic deterrent capabilities," officials from the Defense Nuclear Agency say.

But 12,000 Del Rio residents have signed petitions asking the Pentagon agency to take its explosives elsewhere, saying they don't want to take any chances with the Texas border city's only water source, the San Felipe Springs.

"We depend on San Felipe

Springs for survival," City Manager Jeffrey Pomeranz says. "The city of Del Rio is not willing to play a what-if game with our water and the future of our city."

"No one in Washington has offered us any guarantees, nor can they, that if our water supply was adversely affected, the federal government would step in and correct the situation."

Mexico has also expressed concern to U.S. officials, including Secretary of State James A. Baker III, about the potential impact of the explosions, said Leonardo Ffrench, a spokesman for the Mexican Embassy.

Defense Nuclear Agency officials, however, hasten to point out that a decision to conduct the tests hinges on geological and environmental as-

sessments of the area that have yet to be completed.

The agency spent two years choosing the site 25 miles north of Del Rio from several around the country. Today, it is the only location under consideration for the graduated series of explosions.

The explosions would start with a 1,000-pound charge in 1990, increasing to 470 tons by November 1992.

DNA spokesman Cheri Abdennour said the tests would be performed with the same conventional explosives used by the mining industry, and do not involve nuclear or radioactive devices.

Jack M. Bachkosky, director of plans, programs and requirements for DNA, said the tests are "important to the continued credibility and

viability of our strategic deterrent."

"As an agency, our primary responsibility to the Department of Defense is to ensure the survivability of our strategic assets and the effectiveness of those same assets, when used against anyone who might threaten our security," he said. "Everything we do is in the context of that sentence."

But because of the sensitivity of the tests, Bachkosky would not say exactly why they were being performed.

Del Rio officials, however, had been told the purpose was "determine the survivability of underground missile silos and other underground military facilities," Pomeranz said.

"They haven't gone into too much detail. It's just been very general," Pomeranz said.

Parasitology prof of 37 years retires

By Robert Marraro

Special to The Battalion

As he leaned back in the chair of his half-laboratory, half-office, amid a collection of assorted beakers, test tubes, a microscope and the trademark of all doctors — a white lab smock — the simple but scholarly-looking man talked about his life, from his childhood through his many years at A&M.

Dr. Ruel R. Bell, professor of parasitology, retires this month from the Texas Veterinary Medical Center after 37 years of teaching and research.

Bell, 65, was raised in Gibson, Ga., as the youngest of three brothers. He picked cotton and did farm labor as a child.

After graduating from high school in 1941, Bell went to the U.S. Navy Officers Training Camp for two years. Two years later, he re-enlisted in the U.S. Army during the height of World War II, serving two years in Panama on guard duty with an infantry unit.

"I think I'm the only one in World War II who didn't do something glamorous," Bell said.

In 1952 Bell came to A&M to do research after he received his D.V.M. from the University of Georgia. He became the 24th faculty member of the College while working on his master's degree. He received the degree, in veterinary parasitology, in 1955.

"We didn't have specialists in those days (the late 1950s)," he said. "If we got it narrowed down to parasitology, we were doing well."

"Specializing is necessary today, because of the vast amounts of knowledge now available."

Bell's students must have considered him to be an exceptional professor; he has received two plaques of appreciation from the students. A banner reading, "Happy Retirement, Dr. Bell, from the Class of 1992," decorates his office.

Brian Poteet and Bruce Lyle are third-year veterinary students who took Bell's veterinary parasitology class.

"He told a bunch of stories and anecdotes that reflected on his experiences, which applied to what was being taught," Poteet said. "He taught from the hip and everything came from his notes and personal experiences."

Lyle also praised Bell as an instructor.

"He was really good about drilling in the necessary day-to-day stuff you'd need to know," Lyle said. "He taught by example and told many stories, but his tests were really challenging and tough."

Outside of class, Bell makes himself available to students and said he enjoys working with them.

"You couldn't have asked for a nicer man," Poteet said. "He'd do anything out of his way to help you learn."

Carbajal said he is a strong supporter of co-op because he sees it as his company's way of investing in the future. Texas Instruments hires 75 percent of its co-op students after graduation.

"Any company not involved in the co-op program doesn't know what it's missing," Carbajal said. "Co-op is an investment that pays."

Co-op does pay, and this is a factor many parents consider.

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