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Budget cuts impact A&M colleges differently

By Chris Vaughn
The Battalion

Texas higher education fought 12 long rounds with the Legislature this summer, nearly getting the knockout punch several times. But thanks to some last minute maneuvering, higher education went the distance, only to come out the loser and sporting a Texas-sized black eye.

Higher education watched the Legislature trim its 1992-93 budget further in the areas it needed it the most, and increase its budget in the not-so-urgent categories. As Texas A&M assistant provost Dan Parker says, "It's a classic case of giving us money to buy a bicycle when we need new shoes."

Officials with higher education know the cuts could have been much worse, and caution that the Legislature hasn't

Budget effects on A&M colleges

AGRICULTURE & LIFE SCIENCES:

- \$500,000 cut
- leave associate dean position vacant
- delay faculty hiring
- reduce departmental operating expenses

BUSINESS:

- 10% lower in salaries than other schools
- delay replacing faculty and staff

ENGINEERING:

- 4% cut
- reducing faculty recruitment funds
- behind in salaries

GEOSCIENCES & MARITIME STUDIES:

- \$200,000 cut
- hardest hit are TA stipends and departmental operating expenses

LIBERAL ARTS:

- \$400,000 cut
- reduction in class sizes and offerings in spring and summer school

MEDICINE:

- search for 4 department chairmen delayed

VETERINARY MEDICINE:

- \$500,000 cut
- probably leave positions vacant
- worried about accreditation visit in '93

LIBRARY:

- no cuts; it was protected from budget cuts by administration

The educational and general budget funds what really is the heart of the University - classrooms, faculty and staff salaries, and the library.

Legislators did appropriate \$7.4 million more to A&M this year than last year, which led most of the public to wonder why A&M officials are complaining about making cuts.

But that \$7.4 million plus several million more was appropriated specifically for staff group insurance, Social Security contributions, longevity pay and workers' compensation insurance. Remove those categories, and A&M took slightly more than a \$4 million budget cut in its academic units.

"This will have an impact on all the programs of the institution," says Dr. E. Dean Gage, A&M's provost and senior vice president. "It will stymie a great deal of the momentum we created over the last

few years."

A&M's eight academic colleges suffered an average of a 2.5 percent cut in their budgets, while the administration took a 4 percent cut. The shortfall has affected each college uniquely, but the most damage has occurred in faculty salaries and recruitment, departmental operating expenses, and summer school.

The following is a brief look at how five of the eight colleges, two professional schools and the library have been affected by the financial crunch:

THE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND LIFE SCIENCES

One of A&M's most established and nationally recognized colleges swallowed about a \$500,000 budget cut.

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Poll shows Whitmire lags behind opponents

HOUSTON (AP) — A recent poll shows that incumbent Kathy Whitmire is trailing her two top contenders in the mayoral race, although many voters have not decided who to vote for in Tuesday's election.

The Houston Chronicle Poll, which surveyed 411 registered voters Oct. 29-31, showed Bob Lanier with 31 percent, Sylvester Turner with 21 percent and Whitmire with 16 percent. The remaining third was undecided.

If no candidate gets the majority of votes, the top two finishers would meet in a runoff election. The poll's results, published in the Chronicle's Sunday editions, indicated Turner would meet Lanier in a runoff.

However, the poll's margin of error was six percentage points, meaning Whitmire was statistically within range of edging out Turner.

In a similar poll conducted in September, Whitmire was favored by 31 percent, Lanier had 26 percent and Turner had 14 percent.

The 411 respondents in last week's poll were among the 500 polled in September. The remainder couldn't be reached, the newspaper said.

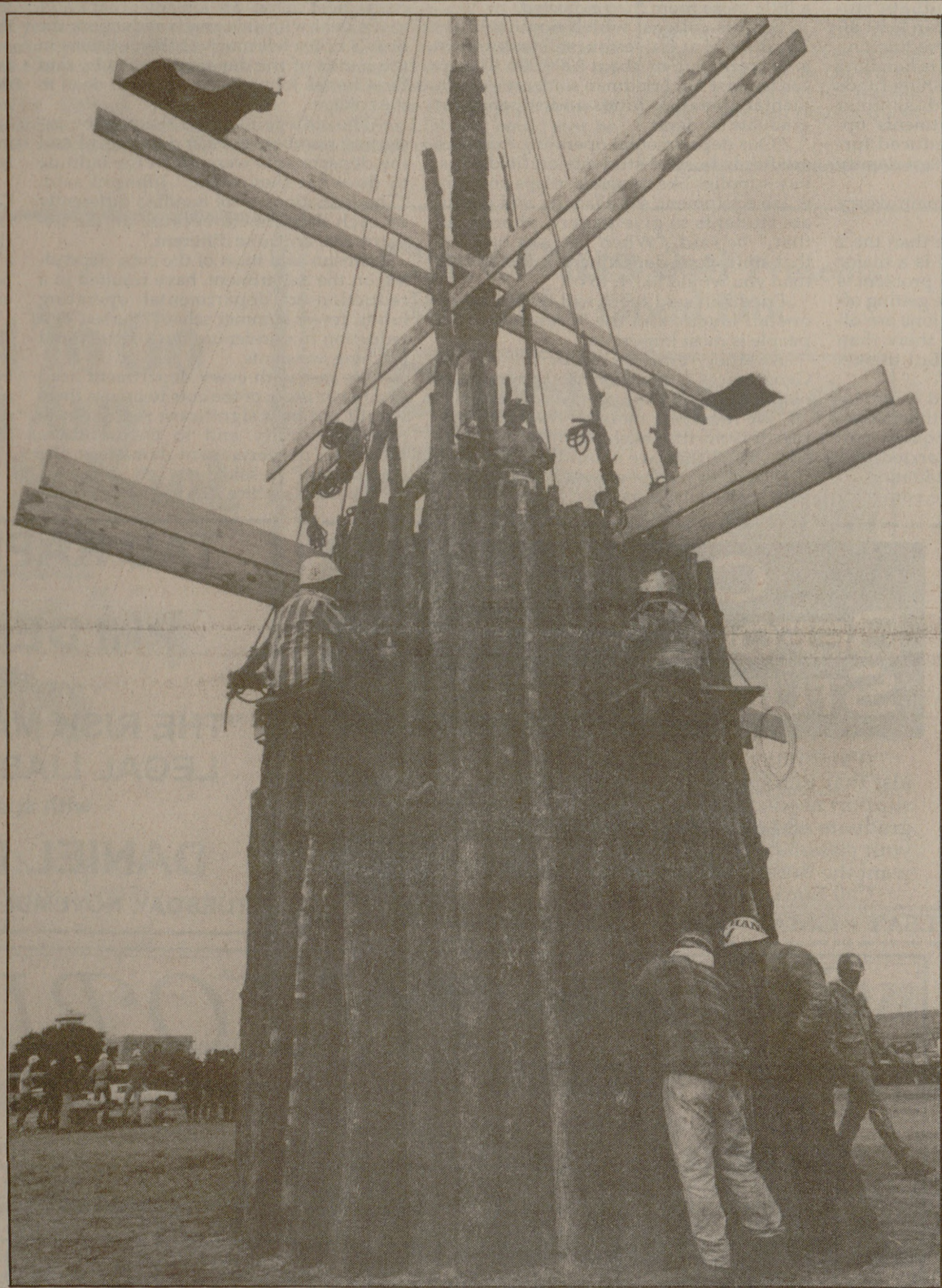
University of Houston political scientist Richard Murray conducted the surveys for the Chronicle through the university's Center for Public Policy. Murray said part of Whitmire's sharp drop could be blamed on bad news in Houston involving sensational crime and job layoffs.

The 411 responses were adjusted to reflect a voter turnout that is 60 percent Anglo, 30 percent black and 8 percent Hispanic.

According to the poll, Turner had 35 percent of the black vote, compared to 18 percent for Whitmire and 1 percent for Lanier. Forty-six percent of the black respondents were undecided.

Whitmire led Turner, a black lawyer and state legislator, among blacks in the September survey.

Lanier, who once chaired the Texas Highway Commission and the Metropolitan Transit Authority, attracted the support of 47 percent of the white voters surveyed last week.



KARLA A. STOLLEIS/The Battalion

Stack 'em up

Crewmembers from various dorms work on the first level of bonfire Sunday afternoon. The centerpole was raised Thursday. Stack starts at 6 p.m. daily until bonfire is complete.

Talks conclude amiably

Israelis meet with Syrians, Lebanese, after 5-hour session with Palestinians

MADRID, Spain (AP) — Israelis and Palestinians on Sunday held "good, businesslike" direct talks — their first ever — and pledged to try to move on to more substantive issues such as Palestinian autonomy within a few days.

In another milestone, hard-line Syria overcame hesitations and opened its one-on-one meeting with Israel late Sunday night — the first talks between the arch-foes in 43 years. A Lebanese delegation also held separate talks with Israel.

Following their nearly five-hour session, the Israelis and a joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation displayed an amiable spirit, in contrast to a week of confrontational speeches and snubs during last week's ceremonial opening phase of the historic Madrid talks.

Still to be settled is where the substantive negotiations will be held. In a joint statement, the two sides said they would consult about when and where to hold substantive talks, "which it is hoped will take place soon."

Secretary of State James A. Baker III, speaking of the site and timing of future meetings, said: "This is an open question." But he told reporters the peace conference marked a "good beginning" to ending regional conflict.

"There have been, and as I have said, there will be obstacles," Baker said. "They have not deterred us until now and they will not..."

After the Israeli-Palestinian talks, the participants shook-hands for photographers, and the chief

Israeli delegate, Eliakim Rubinstein, referred to his Arab counterparts as "my friends here." At one point he answered a question both in Arabic, with the word "Inshallah," and in Hebrew, with the words "Mirtzeh Hashem" — both meaning "God willing."

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James A. Baker III,
Secretary of State

The participants mingled in the hallways outside the meeting room during breaks, drinking coffee together and chatting, Israeli delegates said. And Palestinian Elias Freij, the mayor of Bethlehem, said "there were many light moments," including a few jokes.

As if to underscore the high stakes, however, PLO chief Yasser Arafat said in Tunis: "If the negotiations do not lead to a positive outcome, we will continue the jihad," or holy war.

He added that the intefadeh, the Palestinian uprising against Israeli rule in the occupied lands, would "go on, wave after wave."

Drug dealers see jail time as cost of doing business

DALLAS (AP) — For some drug dealers, a short stay in the penitentiary is merely the cost of doing business in Texas and is no longer viewed as a deterrent, authorities say.

Take the case of Verlean Crow, for example. Crow was convicted of dealing cocaine in Dallas, and prosecutors wanted to him to spend several years behind bars.

Last June, the 47-year-old felon received a 15-year prison sentence on four counts of selling cocaine.

But like thousands of others convicted on drug offenses, Crow's sentence didn't mean much. He was paroled last

month after serving only 18 months.

Crow's case isn't the exception in Texas — it's the rule, according to a study by The Dallas Morning News. Results of the study were published in the newspaper's Sunday editions.

The study involved 635 inmates released from state prisons during the week Sept. 9-13.

Interviews with state officials and annual parole statistics indicate that the public outrage about drugs and crime has not led to longer sentences for those convicted of drug offenses.

Campaign '92

Democrats await Cuomo's election intentions

MANCHESTER, N.H. (AP) — There's one more Democratic shoe to drop in — or out — of the 1992 presidential campaign, and it's the big one.

New York Gov. Mario Cuomo could become the instant frontrunner over the current six-man field if he says yes and runs. Democratic leaders wish he would at least say when.

The Cuomo question lingered over a weekend that launched the final "pressure cooker" phase of an abbreviated campaign for New Hampshire's leadoff presidential primary election Feb. 18.

Sens. Tom Harkin of Iowa and Bob Kerrey of Nebraska, Govs. Bill Clinton of Arkansas and L. Dou-

glas Wilder of Virginia, and former Sen. Paul E. Tsongas of Massachusetts matched campaign styles and proposals before the state Democratic convention on Saturday. Clinton, Wilder and Tsongas shared an hour on statewide television Friday night. Former California Gov. Edmund G. Brown Jr. didn't attend.

Chris Spirou, the state Democratic chairman, said the pressure is on now in a campaign that will be waged over less than four months, instead of the year and a half to two years that past candidates have spent organizing and hunting votes.

Spirou said that's why 80 to 90 percent of the Democratic activists

at the boisterous midterm convention Saturday hadn't decided which candidate to back.

"There aren't 10 percent of these people that are committed," agreed J. Joseph Grandmaison, a former chairman who's been organizing and managing primary campaigns for 20 years. Thus far, he's uncommitted for 1992.

Cuomo's possible entry was a factor; some Democrats said they were waiting to see what he'd do.

Dennis Murphy, a state lobbyist for the National Education Association said Cuomo could "express a vision" for Democrats the way Ronald Reagan did for Republicans.



Mario Cuomo