Campus

Residence halls to improve security through I.D. card

Amy Browning/The Battalion

Laura Jimenez, a freshman from Pharr, uses her student ID to unlock the main doors of Neeley Hall. Neeley is one of eight halls on campus currently equipped with ID scanners.

By Juli Rhoden
The Battalion

Students in residence halls will no longer be required to carry keys once a new computerized card access security system, in which students utilize their ID card to gain entrance, is fully installed.

After testing the system on Neeley and Spence halls this semester, the Department of Student Affairs has decided to install the system campus-wide. During spring break, Clements, Crocker, Haas, Hobby, Lechner, McInnis, Moses and Schumacher Halls were added to the system.

Dan Mizer, the assistant director of residence life, facilities and operations, said the system is designed to enhance campus security and for students' convenience.

"Eventually, we would like to move to a one-card system," he said. "Students would use their ID cards for entry to the dorms, meals, library check-outs and everything else on campus."

Mizer said the system tested positively with students in Neeley and Spence.

"It's much easier to carry a card than it is a key," he said. "And we haven't had many problems with people lending their ID to friends to gain access."

Sgt. Betty Lamay of the University Police Department said the new security system is a step in the right direction.

"Students want to feel safe in their dorm rooms," Lamay said. "With the new security system, there is less room for theft and other crimes and that makes both students and parents feel safer."

Besides theft, Mizer said propping doors open was another major security problem.

"There were 1,462 documented cases of propped residence hall exterior doors in an 18-month period," he said. "And those were the ones reported, so we estimate the true figures to be somewhere around 3,000 or more."

The new security system features a number pad and an alarm that sounds when the exterior doors are left for more than 45 seconds.

Mizer said this will decrease the number of doors propped open and help students gain more responsibi

"If the doors are left open too long, a message wi to the UPD to dispatch an officer to the dorm," he "And when the doors are shut again, the system re message to the UPD that it is shut."

All residents are entered by ID numbers into a com that monitors the number pads on the doors. The sy records times and locations of entry by the ID numbers

There are also infrared motion detectors on the insi each exterior door that sense when students are appro ing the door.

"It's not like 'Big Brother' is watching, that's no idea," Mizer said. "It's just to help the system release 45-second timer on the doors so the alarm won't sound

Many residents of Neeley and Spence are satisfied w the system. Some students said the card system is m convenient and safer than a key.

Mizer also said the system could save money becau is easier and less expensive to replace an ID card than a k

"If a resident loses a key, all of the outside locks h to be changed and all of the residents must be issue new key and that gets expensive," he said. "With new system, if a resident loses an ID card, they just g new one made and the old one is immediately cance out of the system."

Although the system will be installed in all reside halls, except Law and Puryear, by the end of the summ Sept. 6 will be the first day the entire system is operation

Mizer said they are trying to find times to install the s tem when it is convenient for students.

"Students don't want to be bothered with construct in the middle of the semester," he said. "That's why we waiting until the end of the spring semester and summe induct the rest of the systems."

Aggie picked as Miss Brazos Valley, will compete for Miss Texas

Vail puts off working to take opportunity as pageant winner, helps promote local community

By Eloise Flint
The Battalion

A Texas A&M student was chosen as the 1994 Miss Brazos Valley USA and will compete in the Miss Texas Pageant this June on South Padre Island.

Tricia Vail, a senior speech communications major, was among 20 contestants ages 18-25 who competed in the competition Saturday night.

"I went into it with an open mind and the perspective of having fun," Vail said.

"I know it's a competition but I wasn't competing with the other girls, I was competing with myself for a constant chance of self-improvement."

Vail will be speaking in schools, at dinners, banquets, community events and will help the community wherever she is needed, she said.

Nikki Pederson, area director of Miss Texas USA, said Vail will represent the Brazos Valley while she prepares for the Miss Texas Pageant.

"She will represent the pageant in the best way she can while upholding the rules and being responsible and mature," Pederson said.

Vail will spend a lot of her time working with the Bryan D.A.R.E. program, which is receiving the proceeds of the pageant. D.A.R.E. is a campaign designed to persuade kids to stay away from drugs.

"She will be at a lot of events, such as charity, golf and autograph signing," Pederson said.

"Sometimes she will be going for a public appearance and sometimes she will actually be going to work and getting her hands dirty."

Vail will be graduating in May and, although she is looking for a job, the Miss Texas Pageant is her main focus.

"I am currently interviewing for jobs, but I am looking at the pageant as a wonderful opportunity to represent the Brazos Valley," Vail said. "I have my whole life to wo so I want to take advantage of the opportunity that I ha been given."

The Miss Texas Pageant, which is the largest st pageant in the nation, will consist of the same compet tions as the Miss Brazos Valley USA pageant.

"We will have a swimsuit and evening gown compe tion, as well as interviews, both with the judge and o stage," Vail said.

The key to a successful pageant is to remain calm a relaxed, she said.

"You have to be prepared both mentally and physica ly," Vail said.

"If you show that you are beautiful on the inside, th that makes you beautiful on the outside."

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