

Task force established to revive Aggie Code of Honor

By Melissa Jacobs
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M's Student Government is working to improve the academic honor and integrity of Aggies.

The Honor and Integrity Task Force was created to look at changes that have taken place over the years and to discover options for improvement.

Brooke Leslie, student body president, said A&M's honor code has lost a lot of its affect over the years.

"I think that's because the University has gotten so big," she said. "We have 43,000 students."

The honor code states that Aggies do not lie, cheat or steal, nor tolerate those who do.

Jeff Wilson, executive vice president of administration, said

A&M has a strong honor code, but part of the problem is the toleration clause.

"I'm sure people have seen someone cheat on an exam and not challenged that person," he said. "There is no enforcement."

Dr. Bill Kibler, assistant vice president for student affairs, said less than 25 percent of universities have an honor code and a much smaller number have an honor system.

"A&M has an honor code but not an honor system," he said. "We had an honor system at one time, but it disappeared."

Wilson said the task force will have its first meeting Sunday, Oct. 30 and they will talk about where the University has been, where it is, and where it is going with the honor system.

"A representative from the

Memorial Student Center will give a brief history of A&M and the honor code," he said. "There will be people to explain where it

ing group to lead the task force.

Wilson said the task force is a cross section of the University's leadership.

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—Dr. Bill Kibler,
assistant vice president for student affairs

is now and I will pull out what problems we have."

He said they will talk about the options they have and will vote on those options.

Leslie said Wilson will take ideas from the larger group of people and put together a steer-

"This is not something just within Student Government," he said. "It is more university wide."

Kibler conducted an academic dishonesty study in 1991 of 200 universities and learned that there is little involvement of students in the development and

enforcement of academic dishonesty policies or programs at most institutions. By failing to involve students in these processes, an atmosphere of "us against them" is fostered, which encourages cheating, he said.

Leslie said the task force is an idea that came about from her platform.

"Part of my platform says that I will initiate a campaign that will hold students responsible for their actions," she said. "The task force is a forum for student leaders around campus to voice their opinions."

Wilson said he attended a conference at Rice University during the weekend of Oct. 15 and 16, which 15 or 20 schools from all over the country attended.

"The Rice conference was a conference on integrity," he

said. "We are not as far as we think we are. Schools have a lot tougher regulations than we do, and don't have an honor code."

Kibler found through study that honor codes are very prevalent as a student guide how institutions of higher education address academic dishonesty. His study reported that only one-fourth of the institutions studied have an honor code, and none rely exclusively on an honor code without the guidelines disciplinary policies.

Wilson said at the University of Virginia, students committing an act of academic dishonesty are kicked out of university.

See Honor

State representative proposes Texas' first legislation on playground safety

FORT WORTH (AP) — A playground accident in which a 6-year-old boy was critically injured has prompted a lawmaker to draft legislation seeking Texas' first mandatory playground safety standards.

Jerry Browning suffered massive head injuries Sept. 19 in Euless, northeast of Fort Worth. The rotted supports of a wooden climbing wall broke at ground level, causing the 350-pound structure to fall on the child during lunch recess.

Remarkably, the first-grader returned to school Oct. 12 after having undergone emergency brain surgery and remaining in critical condition at Cook-Fort Worth Children's Medical Center for days.

State Rep. Keith Oakley, D-Terrell, is drafting legislation that would require that public playgrounds in Texas be built according to specific safety standards to be developed using guidelines established by the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

If the legislation is passed, Texas would become the second state to mandate minimum standards for playground safety. California is the only state that mandates playground safety.

Oakley, chairman of the House Public Safety Committee, said he plans to start filing the bill next month.

"I don't see anybody who would oppose this," Oakley said. "We may not be able to stop playground injuries, but we can minimize the number of children who are seriously hurt."

Under Oakley's outline, the bill will only affect playgrounds and equipment built or installed after

the proposed law goes into effect.

Existing playgrounds that do not meet the standards would be grandfathered in, or given a period of time to be brought up to standards. Signs would be posted on all playgrounds to indicate those that meet the standards and those that do not.

That will minimize the expense to cities and school districts, Oakley said. State Rep. Bill Carter, R-Fort Worth, a member of the Public Safety Committee, said to gain support for the legislation, it will be important to keep the cost to schools and cities low.

The proposal will also include provisions for mandatory inspections and maintenance schedules. Oakley said the proposed bill may also require that school districts and cities have someone trained in playground safety.

The lawmaker's effort comes six months after Tarrant County Safe Kids Campaign began lobbying for mandatory safety standards.

No federal laws mandate playground safety. And in Texas, school districts are immune to liability for playground accidents.

In 1992, 226,500 children younger than 14 were admitted to U.S. emergency rooms with playground injuries, according to reports based on the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System.

Five children were killed. An estimated 70 percent of the accidents occurred on public playgrounds. Comparable figures have not been compiled for Texas.



Tim Moog/The Battalion

If only college books were this fun to read

Sophomore education major, Alicia Braun, checks out books at the TSEA book fair between the Harrington buildings. The fair will continue until the 28th.

Promises, promises, Texas gubernatorial race rolls on

IRVING (AP) — Locked in a dead heat with Gov. Ann Richards, Republican gubernatorial nominee George W. Bush said Monday the biggest difference between them as the campaign moves into its final two weeks "is how we propose to keep the streets safe."

Bush said a provision of the new penal code that provides automatic probation for selling 1 gram or less of crack cocaine "shatters" a 1990 campaign promise by Richards.

He said that during that election year, Richards said in campaign literature that anyone dealing drugs should serve time in prison.

"The penalty for anyone dealing drugs must be swift and certain," Bush told about 50 supporters gathered at a rally in Las Colinas. "Drug dealers must serve time behind bars and not simply receive a slap on the wrist. We must hold each and every Texan accountable for their behavior."

Bush said 92 percent of crack cocaine cases in Texas involve 1 gram or less of the substance. Under the old law, drug dealers faced up to 99 years in prison, he said.

John Hatch, the law enforcement coordinator for Richards' campaign, said Bush was "not telling the voters the whole truth about the new penal code."

He said the automatic probation still can include some jail time coupled with drug or alcohol treatment, education and community service.

If those convicted don't abide by the terms of their probation, they face two full years in a state jail. That's more actual jail time than what drug convicts averaged under the old system, Hatch said.

Hatch also pointed out that 66 of the 71 Republicans in the 73rd Legislature voted for the new penal code. "And now George Bush says they're all wrong," he said.

Several sheriffs and district attorneys stood with Bush during the rally.

Bush said that if elected, he would push for more severe treatment of men who don't pay or fall behind on child support.

"Any deadbeat dad who doesn't pay child support, we'll take away every license the state issues. And to show you I mean business, that would even include hunting and fishing licenses," Bush said.

He said he would make education the No. 1 funding project in Texas and that proceeds from the state lottery should go to education.

Bush called welfare an area "that Ann Richards refuses to admit is not working" in Texas. He said it's time that people on welfare stop having babies at public expense.

Richards, meanwhile, contended that the price tag of Bush's campaign proposals on crime, welfare and education would be \$17.9 billion.

"Texas is only one of seven states without an income tax, and I want to keep it that way. George W. Bush would cost us dearly — his education promises alone would result in either a 5 percent income tax or a doubling on our current sales tax," Richards said.

Richards raised the issue in their debate Friday night, and Bush responded then that her cost estimate was "preposterous."

"That's just old-style politics," he said Monday. "I'm not going to allow this campaign to degenerate into issues she's trying to generate with two weeks to go."

Bush defends business ventures

AUSTIN (AP) — Republican gubernatorial candidate George W. Bush says he's a successful businessman with broad experience that makes him ready to be governor.

Democratic Gov. Ann Richards says Bush has lost big money and lacks the skills needed to run a \$71-billion state government.

From the opening gun of their only debate to almost daily speeches on the campaign trail, Richards accuses Bush of exaggerating business accomplishments.

Bush accuses Richards of being a career politician who has launched an unsubstantiated attack on his career in an effort to derail his campaign.

"He laid himself out to be, for all of us to see on television, a successful businessman," Richards said. "And yet we know that, as a consequence of those businesses, all five of them on which he sat on the board lost \$371 million."

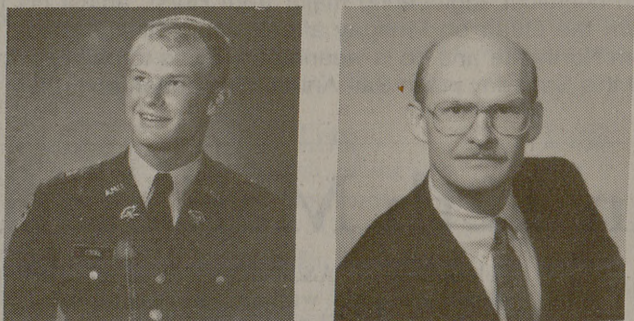
"My business career is open for public scrutiny and I'm proud of it," Bush responded. "I think an attempt to smear my business record is simply a diversion away from trying to determine what's best for Texas."

Bush, a graduate of Yale with a master's in business administration from Harvard, is managing general partner of the Texas Rangers baseball team.

He entered the oil and gas business in West Texas in 1975, founding a small exploration business, Arcturto Energy Inc., which later changed its name to Bush Exploration and merged into Spectrum 7 Energy Corp. That company merged into Harken Energy Inc.

Bush served on the Harken board along with the boards of Tom Brown Inc., a Midland energy company, and Caterair International Corp., a Maryland-based airline food business.

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The Battalion (USPS 045-360) is published daily, Monday through Friday during the fall and spring semesters and Monday through Thursday during the summer sessions (except University holidays and exam periods), at Texas A&M University. Second class postage paid at College Station, TX 77843.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Battalion, 230 Reed McDonald Building, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843.

News: The Battalion news department is managed by students at Texas A&M University in the Division of Student Publication, a unit of the Department of Journalism. Editorial offices are at 013 Reed McDonald Building. E-mail: BATT@TAMUVM1.TAMU.EDU. Newsroom phone number: 845-3313. Fax: 845-2647.

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