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THE BATTALION

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"Serving Texas A&M since 1893"

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A&M restructures departments in response to state audit

□ The department of finance and administration experiences a shift in leadership.

By Wes Swift

THE BATTALION

In an attempt to improve efficiency, A&M administrators are restructuring several departments of the division of finance and administration.

Dr. Jerry Gaston, interim vice president for finance and administration, said the changes will upgrade existing administrative tools.

"The changes are being made and implemented to improve our management function, especially concerning contract negotiations," Gaston said.

Dr. Donald Powell, director of business services, said some of the changes were in response to the

findings of a recent state audit that said the A&M management had ignored policies and procedures.

"The state auditors took a look and saw things they didn't like," Powell said. "We also have a new president, and he wanted to make the changes he felt were right."

The changes include the movement of two units, Texas A&M University Research Park and aviation services, to the division of finance and administration. In addition, a new vice president for finance and administration will be appointed by a search committee.

"I would say a new vice president would be in

place in approximately four to six months," Gaston said.

The Department of Business Services, which oversaw the financing of the residence halls, will be eliminated.

Financing for the residence halls, as well as management of off-campus residence housing, will be shifted to the Department of Student Affairs, where all other functions of

Student Affairs as well.

Powell said the shuffling of residence hall duties was necessary.

"I just don't see how you can separate pieces of the same operation," Powell said. "I believe housing is housing."

Since his department will be eliminated, Powell will assume a new post as special assistant to the vice president for finance and administration. He said his new duties will focus on long-range plans for the University's printing and copying needs.

"To be more cost effective, we need to look at the University community's need for printed materials and see if we're missing other opportunities to make our operation more efficient," Powell said.

In early January, state auditors admonished A&M management for its contract negotiation practices.

In response to this criticism, a new department

"The changes are being made and implemented to improve our management function, especially concerning contract negotiations."

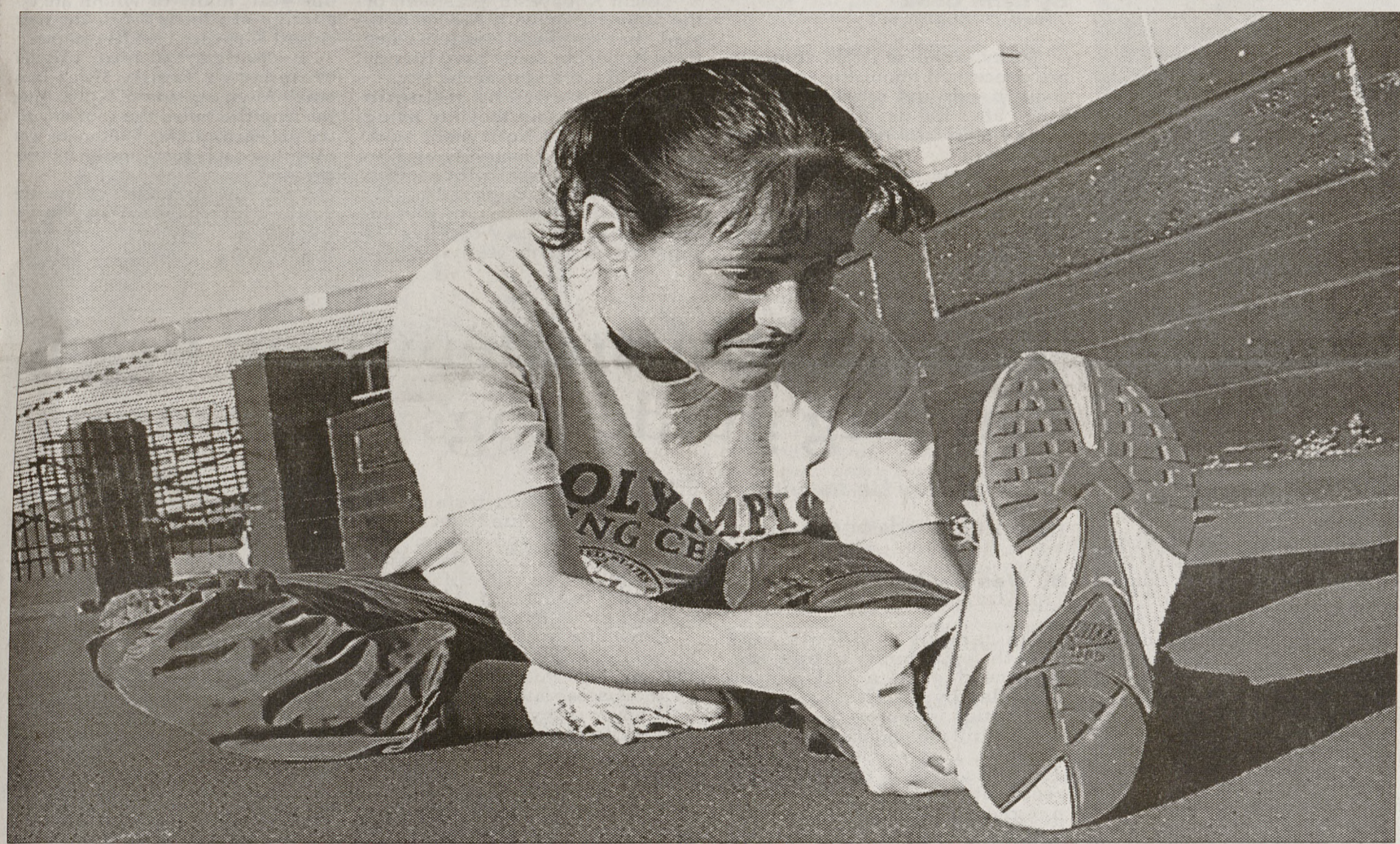
— Dr. Jerry Gaston,

Interim Vice President for Finance and Administration

residence halls are handled.

All functions of the University Center and special events center, will be moved to the Department of

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Eddy Wylie/The Battalion

S-T-R-E-T-C-H

Lisa Chumbley, a freshman general studies major, performs a routine stretch before her daily racewalk.

Former A&M employees wait for university to address grievances

□ Reassigned food service employees may sue the University if officials do not meet with them soon.

By Lisa Messer

THE BATTALION

Three former top A&M food services employees who say they were reassigned in 1993 with no explanation are waiting to meet with an A&M administrator to understand the basis for their reassignments.

The employees, Lloyd Smith, former food services director, Col. Jim Moore, former assistant director and George Nedbaek, former business manager, filed grievances with the University in January 1994 to be reinstated to their positions.

They have said their former boss, Robert Smith, former vice president for finance and administration, gave them no reason for their reassignments, which they believed were due to their opposition to Smith's original plan to privatize food services.

Dr. J. Malon Southerland, vice president for student affairs, denied the employees' grievances in December and assigned Dr. Jerry Gaston, interim vice president for finance and administration, to meet with the men about the basis for their reassignments.

The former employees' attorney, Wayne Rife, said the University has had no contact with him since that ruling was made.

"They have taken no action," Rife said. "They have made no move to contact either the men or my office. I would have assumed we would have heard something by now."

Moore said he was looking forward to the meeting with Gaston but expected the meeting to have occurred by now.

"When Dr. Southerland reviewed our grievances," Moore said, "he basically said the University had a right to change our jobs but didn't do it in a proper manner. We're still waiting for an explanation."

Gaston said the meeting will occur but not for some time.

"Dr. Southerland reached his conclusions, published that information and assigned me to meet with them," Gaston said. "But prior to that time I had nothing to do with the case."

"I've got to study all the files and do research. I'm going to meet with them, but I can't do it until I have all the facts. The process is on target, but it will be some days in the future until I even have a 30-minute slot open."

Moore said he will wait for the University to explain his reassignment to him.

"I want to let the system work and see what happens," Moore said. "I'm not going to file a lawsuit against them. It's my University, too. I want to give them a chance and see what good it does. I'm still hoping."

Rife said the former employees can only wait so long.

"They're still waiting at this point," Rife said, "but they're considering all of their options, and a suit, in all likelihood, will occur."

MSC jukebox expands music selections at students' request

□ The Hullabaloo jukebox now includes Tejano, jazz, and R&B music.

By Kasie Byers

THE BATTALION

After a complaint from several minority student organizations, a more diverse selection of music has been added to the jukebox in Hullabaloo in the Memorial Student Center this semester.

In November, several leaders from these organizations met with Dr. J. Malon Southerland, vice president of Student Affairs, to bring forth ideas on how the A&M campus could be more inclusive of all cultural groups represented at the University.

David Washington, president of Alpha Phi Alpha, said the selection the jukebox had to offer was very limited.

"The jukebox mainly contained country and rock with maybe one or two R&B selections," Washington said. "There was a definite need for a broader representation of the African-American and Hispanic students, considering they make up a large

portion of the A&M population."

The suggestion from these student leaders was to add Tejano, jazz and R&B selections to the jukebox to begin the push for a more culturally diverse environment.

Juanita Walker, assistant manager of Special Event Facilities, said updated "hot hits" of pop, R&B and country have been added as well as several selections of Tejano music.

"We have put CDs in the jukebox called 'hot hits,' songs that are most popular at the present," Walker said. "They have replaced unpopular songs that were only played maybe once or twice a month."

Southerland said this move was important in recognizing the diversity at A&M.

"This is simply a matter of having choices available for all students," Southerland said. "That is certainly a matter of great importance to many at the University."

Although the addition is a step toward a higher cultural awareness, Washington said he sees it as only the beginning.

"The jukebox is a good start," Washington said. "But for all of us as Aggies to truly recognize the diversity of this campus, we must also realize that with new cultures come new customs and ultimately new traditions."

Internet information faces scrutiny

□ A&M study group is investigating monitoring Internet newsgroups.

By Gretchen Perrenot

THE BATTALION

A study group has been assigned to investigate the electronic newsgroups available through A&M's Internet in response to concerns about newsgroups containing nude pictures, A&M officials said.

Interim Provost Dr. Charles Lee, who appointed the study group, said A&M is examining similar experiences that have happened on other campuses and are trying to prevent further Internet problems.

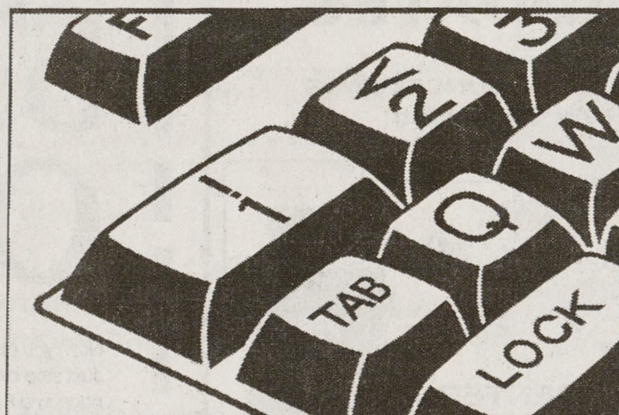
"We are looking into the issues and technology that are part of the new communication revolution," Lee said.

Dr. John Dinkel, associate provost for computing and a member of the study group, said the study group was appointed to cover many complex aspects of the issue, including free speech and harassment.

"This is not a group put together to censor or evaluate," Dinkel said, "but

it is concerned with the overall environment of A&M and the information that is available."

The study groups represents a broad range of faculty and administrators from across the University, including some from the political science, engineering and agriculture departments, Dinkel said.



The groups' research includes learning if any technologies are available that can be used to edit newsgroups, Lee said.

Lee said the group has several concerns about monitoring the newsgroups, including violating First

Amendment and free speech rights.

Assistant General Counsel Melissa Ricard, who has been assigned to give the study group legal advice, is uncertain whether or not banning newsgroups is censorship.

"Nobody knows for sure," Ricard said. "There is no case out there to follow."

Ricard said the office must make analogies like, "Is the Internet similar to a telephone or a newspaper?"

The study group originally planned to have results by Jan. 31, but has extended the study due to the complications other institutions have experienced with banning newsgroups.

Carnegie Mellon University decided to eliminate three sex-related bulletin boards from its computer system in November and was accused of censorship by the student body, according to a November article in The Chronicle of Higher Education.

The article stated that free speech advocates around the country, who consider Carnegie Mellon University to be a leader in campus computing, said they were worried that other institutions would follow Carnegie Mellon University's lead and ban similar materials on their systems.