

Panel: Changes in panel help define its purpose

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Questions that needed to be answered in simpler terms," Schaffer said. "Basically, the changes sharpen the task and make it easier for the students to recognize and correct the discrimination." Schaffer said the Students Rights Appeals Panel never met. "One of the problems in the past is that students have not been aware of the committee," Schaffer said. Kibler said Schaffer was presented with discrimination cases, but she was able to act as a mediator and fix the problem without meeting of the panel. "I did have cases where students felt they were discriminated against and we were able to always solve it in the favor of the students, except once," Schaffer said. Gayle Schmidt, professor of sociology and current chair of the Illegal Discrimination Appeals Panel, said the students need to follow the new procedures carefully and be specific. "Students need to read the instructions stated and follow them," Schmidt said. "The students need to have written information that is focused on a specific incident or situation

and not on generalities."

Kibler encourages students to consult the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs about pursuing any kind of grievances. Staff members are also knowledgeable about the procedures used to file complaints with the panel, she said.

The panel's procedures would be used when one student is involved in an action or behavior determined to be discrimination, but not a violation of the Texas A&M discipline code, Kibler said.

Disability is a potentially discriminatory issue and therefore is included in the list of cases the panel will hear, he said.

"Both illegal discrimination and disability issues are the two sets of grievances that go to this panel," he said. "Disability issues potentially can really involve discrimination issues."

Gail Walters, the head of the Office of Support Services for Students with Disabilities, said there haven't been many problems working out differences between faculty and disabled students, but the potential for that type of problem is always present.

"Usually we are able to work the disagreements out between

the students and faculty," Walters said. "We were lacking a final step though, so I'm happy to see that done."

Kibler said the new panel has written procedures for disability accommodations in academic programs.

"If disabled students need some kind of accommodation or change in their academic program because of their disability and they have a disagreement with the department about that, we now have a procedure of how a student pursues that," Kibler said.

The new panel will consist of a chair, four faculty members, two staff members and three students: two undergraduate and one graduate student.

Bowen will appoint panel members to make decisions on his behalf and all panel decisions will be final.

Kibler said Bowen has also endorsed the idea of forming a third section to the Texas A&M student handbook focusing on student grievance procedures. Most regulations are scattered throughout the current handbook, but to make the process more "user friendly", a new section may be added to the handbook for the 1995-96 academic year, he said.

WEATHER

Today
Becoming mostly sunny with a high near 54. Northerly winds 5-10 mph.

Tonight
Clear and cold with a low near 33.

Light Northerly winds.

Tuesday
Mostly sunny and mild with a high near 60. North East winds 5-10 mph.

Tuesday Night
Partly cloudy and not as cold. Low near 39.

Wednesday
Mostly cloudy and mild with high near 64.

Source - A&M Chapter of the American Meteorological Society

Computing Toolbox

A weekly column dedicated to computing at Texas A&M

The legal and ethical use of software

Software piracy, the illegal copying of software, is a hot—and often confusing—topic in the computer industry these days. Many people don't realize that the illegal copying of software is a felony punishable by fines up to \$100,000 per copyright infringement. The following questions and answers might clear up a few issues for you.

What do I need to know about software and the U.S. Copyright Act?

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Some licenses may restrict the use of a copy to a specific machine, even if you own more than the one system. In general, licenses do not allow you to install the software on more than a single machine, or to run the software simultaneously on two or more machines.

Isn't it legally "fair use" to copy software if the purpose in sharing it is purely educational?

Historically, the Copyright Law was modified to permit certain educational uses of copyrighted materials without the usual copyright restrictions. However, "fair use" of computer software is still a cloudy issue. The "fair use" amendments to the Copyright Law are intended to allow educational use of legally protected products, but it is limited (for paper-based products) to small portions of full works. For most software it is clearly illegal to make and distribute unauthorized, fully-functional copies to class members for their individual use. Making copies of a small section of code from a program in order to illustrate a programming technique might not be a violation. The best alternative is to clear any such use with the copyright owner or consult the appropriate authorities at your institution.

For more information about software piracy, consult the Fall 1993 issue of *Computing News*. Check a CIS Help Desk for copies or access the articles online through Gopher. A brochure entitled "Using Software: A Guide to the Ethical and Legal Use of Software for Members of the Academic Community" is also available. Send requests to COMPDOC@TAMU.EDU or call David Lawrence at 845-9325. ●

The information in this article was taken from "Using Software: A Guide to the Ethical and Legal Use of Software for Members of the Academic Community," a brochure produced as a service to the educational community by the Educational Uses of Information Technology Program of EDUCOM and the Information Technology Association of America.

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