

THE BATTALION

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Bowen revises fee increase proposal

New proposal eases general use fee hikes GSC declares support for proposed increases

An increase of \$10 per semester credit hour in the fee will be considered by A&M's Board of Regents in August.

By Wes Swift
THE BATTALION

Dr. Ray Bowen, Texas A&M president, announced changes to his proposal to increase the general use fee during a Tuesday meeting with several student senators. The changed proposal includes increasing the general use fee \$10 per semester credit hour in fiscal year 1995-96 to \$22 per semester credit hour, then raising it another \$10 in fiscal year 1996-97 to \$32 per semester credit hour. The original proposal would have increased the fee to \$26 per semester credit hour in the first year, with an additional \$6 per semester

credit hour increase the following year. The altered proposal would require \$2 million in cuts to the University budget, whereas the previous proposal covered the entire \$6.7 million budget deficit.

The deficit is the result of the Texas Legislature appropriating less state funds than A&M administrators expected. Bowen said he and his staff reworked the proposal in an effort to find the best plan.

If passed by the Board of Regents, the revised proposal would change how the general use fee revenue is spent. The special projects fund, which would have received \$2 million from the original fee increase, would receive \$350,000.

Need-based financial aid would receive \$800,000 instead of the \$1 million it would have received from the higher fee increase.

The proposal would allocate \$5 million for faculty and staff pay raises and require University departments to find another \$1 million for 3-percent increases. The original proposal would have completely paid for the \$6 million pay raises.

The deepest cut was levied on the deferred maintenance fund. The fund, originally scheduled to receive \$1 million in increased fee revenue, will not receive anything until the fiscal year 1996-97, if the proposal passes.

The cuts would hurt the University, he said, but this alternative was better than the original plan.

"[The \$2 million in cuts] will have some effect, but not as much as \$6 or \$7 million," he said. "It causes us some heartburn."

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Representatives of the Texas A&M Graduate Student Council said they support the proposed increase in the general use fee because graduate students may gain more than they lose from the increase.

Stephen Stephenson Moore, GSC president and a graduate meteorology student, said that although the increase comes at a time when tuition and other fees are increasing, the GSC believes an increase is necessary because the recent legislative budget shortfall has forced the University to seek other funds.

The proposed increase of \$10 per semester credit hour in the general use fee will generate \$5 million for merit-based faculty and staff salary raises. John Mills, GSC vice president and a graduate geography student, said many A&M graduate students are sponsored by outside sources and do not have to rely on just graduate student assistantships or financial aid. "Graduate students usually take nine hours a

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Officials plan for best, worst of fee increase decision

If the proposed increase in the general use fee is passed, another round of fall fee statements may be sent out to collect additional fees.

By Wes Swift
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M department heads compiled their budgets for fiscal year 1995-96 over the last several weeks with the fate of the general use fee increase still undecided by the Board of Regents.

The uncertain future of the general use fee has University budget makers looking for possible cuts in their budgets, which could be rejected by the regents. A fee increase also would provide the majority of funds for a 3-percent faculty and staff increase.

To cover all the bases, administrators are planning for several different possibilities.

Dr. Charles Lee, interim executive vice president and provost, said department heads in the Division of Academic Affairs were told to find 2 percent of their budgets that could be cut if there is no fee increase.

Lee said department heads were told to complete all necessary work in preparation for the possible faculty and staff raises.

"The idea is to be ready for both possibilities," he said. "We want to be ready to implement raises as soon as possible if we're allowed to. But we have to know what different departments can absorb in case the general use fee is not increased."

Other divisions are preparing similar ways. Dr. J. Malon Southerland, vice president for student affairs, said his division has already suffered a 3-percent cut in its state-audited account. He

said that his staff also has a contingency plan in the works for the staff pay raises.

"Carrying [the pay-raise plan] out is not a particularly hard thing to do," he said.

The Division of Finance and Administration is not only searching for possible cuts and planning for salary raises, but is preparing its fiscal department to mail out another round of fee statements if the increase is approved. The first fee statements were sent out last week.

Dr. Jerry Gaston, interim vice president for finance and administration, said students should be aware that if the higher fee is approved, new fee statements will charge for the difference between the old and new fee.

"The fee statements students will be getting now will be multiplied by the relevant dollar amount," he said.

The second round of state-

"The idea is to be ready for both possibilities."

— Dr. Charles Lee
interim executive vice president and provost

ments will include information about a plan that allows students to ease the higher fee's burden. The plan will allow students to pay the difference in two payments, one on Oct. 15 and the other on Nov. 15.

Administrators are concerned with how the cuts will affect the quality of student programs and academics at A&M. Both Southerland and Lee said assessing the damage caused by budget cuts is hard to determine.

Lee said that if the regents reject the fee, it could seriously affect the faculty.

"This will make it difficult to keep faculty morale up by making it impossible to pass any kind of compensation university-wide," he said.

The cuts would not hurt the University if they occurred no more than every 5-10 years, Lee said, but cuts could be damaging if they become frequent.

Seminar works to alleviate campus racism

Conflict assessment, team building and multicultural communication are the topics of today's workshops.

By Michael Simmons
THE BATTALION

"Stir-fried" workshops attempt to alleviate bigotry on campus by encouraging personal interaction of people of different ethnicities. The workshops are the second part of a two-day seminar aimed at suppressing racism on the Texas A&M campus.

Lee Mun Wah, director of Stir-Fry Seminars and *The Color of Fear*, a film tackling the effects of racism, said the seminar focuses on lowering communication barriers between ethnic groups.

"The seminars enable people to get to know each other and learn to feel closer to each other," he said.

The two workshops today, led by Lee, will discuss conflict assessment, team building and multicultural communication.

The goal of the workshops is to teach people techniques that

can be used to build alliances and communication among groups, Lee said.

"The workshops will show the different ways people can interact and deal with each other," he said, "by helping people deal with conflict, conflict history and learning how to listen to and notice different people."

The workshop on conflict assessment and team building is directed at A&M managers and supervisors. It will teach individuals to recognize and utilize the strengths and abilities of their employees. The workshop will be held from 9 a.m. to noon in 144 Koldus.

The afternoon workshop, which will be held from 1:30 to 5 p.m. in the same room, is aimed toward teaching the communications skills necessary to deal with multicultural interests and conflicts.

Felicia James, assistant to the vice president for student affairs, said the seminar was brought to A&M to collectively address these types of problems.

"We've had a number of diversity programs in the past," she said. "But from my perspective, this seminar is the most personal and professional."

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Lee Mun Wah leads a group in an audience participation exercise after a viewing of *The Color of Fear* on Tuesday.

Lee's film arouses feelings of anger

By Amy Uptmor
THE BATTALION

Lee Mun Wah's film, *The Color of Fear*, incited feelings of frustration, tears of anger and the desire to change race relations when it was viewed by Texas A&M students and faculty Tuesday.

The film featured nine men of various ethnicities and showed how racism affected them. In the film, the men are put in a house together for a weekend to discuss their perspectives on race issues. Lee used an open-forum situation rather than a script to promote open discussion of their views and emotions.

"I couldn't have written a better script if I tried," he said.

The Color of Fear has been viewed by over 20,000 people, including 5,000 government officials since it was released in April 1994.

Lee, who is also an accomplished poet and author, said that although the film does not present the viewpoints of women or American Indians, it does an excellent job of portraying how different ethnic groups feel about racism.

Lee said he plans to target sexism and other social issues in future works. *The Color of Fear* continues to gain critical acclaim,

including Best Documentary at the 1994 San Francisco International Film Festival. The movie also was praised by the students and faculty at yesterday's viewing.

Ricarda Ganjam, an educational human resources development doctoral student, said attending the program will help her relate to the issues and situations presented in the movie. She said she hopes the movie's message of achieving multiculturalism through trust and equality gains more widespread attention at A&M.

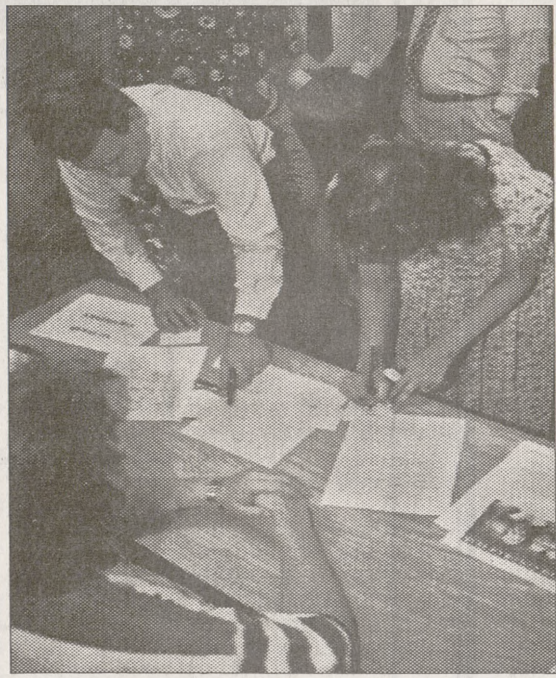
"It's one thing for student and faculty leaders to see a film like this," she said, "but it would be better if it were shown at general meetings and Fish Camp, where it could reach diverse groups of people."

Diana Lia, a sophomore biomedical science major, said the film's viewers should pass the message on to people who have not seen it.

In a discussion following the film, Lee encouraged the audience to talk about race relations in America. During the discussion, students talked with other audience members about personal experiences concerning racism.

The film's viewers also were encouraged to share personal experiences in front of the

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Attendants sign a guest list as they enter the auditorium to view *The Color of Fear* on Tuesday night.

Community, business owners discuss future of Northgate

Final designs for the Northgate Revitalization project, the action plan and implementation strategy should be finalized no later than October.

By Tara Wilkinson
THE BATTALION

Three Northgate development plans were presented for community feedback last night at a meeting focusing on the progress of the Northgate Revitalization Project.

Maps depicted Northgate 20 to 40 years from now, each based on a different concept of what the area's atmosphere and purpose could be.

Presenting the maps were engineers of Hellmuth, Obata and Kassabaum (HOK), the firm handling the Northgate project. The engineers emphasized residential areas in one of the plans.

Commercial areas and public buildings, such as a new city hall, are emphasized in the others.

Joe Pobiner, director of planning for HOK, said the purpose of the meeting was to receive input about what features of the three designs were desirable.

"The comments will help us put all three in a blender and come up with a preferred alternative," Pobiner said.

After HOK engineers consolidate the three maps into one, they will present the plan to the community for final suggestions and comments.

The Northgate plan then will be considered by College Station City Council.

Todd McDaniel, Northgate project coordinator, said he hopes the final design for Northgate, plus an action plan and implementation strategy, will be presented to city council by late September or early October.

Options for Northgate include more apartment complexes, private dorms, grassy areas, a mall plaza on Patricia Street, hotels, an elementary school and a public library.

Solutions were suggested for parking concerns, which were identified by Col-

lege Station citizens earlier this summer as the top Northgate problem.

Building a multi-level garage on "mud lot," an unpaved parking lot on Nagle Street, was suggested.

Another parking alternative is a paved lot placed between Patricia Street and Church Avenue, with the intent to build a multi-level garage later if the location is convenient.

"Parking decks are expensive," Pobiner said. "And if you have one, you want to make sure it's in the right place."

Some citizens voiced concerns that the plans are not treating Northgate as a predominantly student-based district.

Tara Sopasakis, owner of three Northgate businesses, said she is disturbed by the dramatically altered

Northgate proposed in HOK's designs. She said these changes are not what she had in mind when she initially supported Northgate revitalization.

"I didn't think I was voting to tear down and have a demolition derby," Sopasakis said. "I wonder how many College Station residents voted to fix up the area, only to find that their property might some day be taken away."

She said she opposed plans that would take away from the existing "downtown" atmosphere of Northgate.

"As for planning, let's not forget that A&M is full of tradition," she said. "And Northgate has tradition."

The next community meeting to discuss the Northgate Project is scheduled for Sept. 15.