

Questions to Ask When Choosing Child Care

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Child Development Center
"Committed to Excellence"

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"I have not encountered another day care with the same consistent quality to teachers and program exhibiting such a loving, supportive environment for children."
• Stepping Stone Parent

I. CENTER ENVIRONMENT

* Are the classrooms designed for small groups of children?
Is the playground divided for different age groups?
Are the classrooms arranged for active involvement and hands-on learning?

II. TEACHER TRAINING AND INVOLVEMENT

* Does the staff have a positive attitude towards you and your child?
Are the children spoken to gently and with respect?
Is the staff enthusiastic about children's learning?

III. PARENT INVOLVEMENT

* Is there some form of planned daily communication between teachers and parents?
Does the center provide support to families through parent education and information about the center's activities?

REGENTS: New fee statements to come

Continued from Page 1

Board that a \$10 increase would hurt many students struggling to pay for their schooling.

"I still think it's too much, too fast," he said. "It's too much of a burden for the students here at A&M."

However, after hearing from the presidents of all the A&M System member schools, the regents decided that declining revenues from the state mandated the increase.

Mary Nan West, chairman of the Board of Regents, said there was little choice.

"The state legislature voted to allow us to do this last summer," she said. "I think what the state was saying was, or 'do it, or do without an increase' [in legislative funding] in 1997 [the next legislative session]."

West said she was skeptical of the plan but that the obvious need of the University made the higher fee necessary.

Regent Alison Brisco, chairwoman of the Board's Finance and Audit Committee, said the decision was made on Thursday instead of Friday because of the crowded schedule of the Board.



Brisco

"Obviously, no one is happy about having to raise fees," she said. "I'm glad we could implement it in this fashion."

Bowen said Texas A&M is currently running a \$10 million dollar deficit, which was one of the reasons for the request, and an increase in salaries for A&M faculty and staff.

"I can get by with zero [increase]," he told the Board. "But it will hurt the University."

Dr. Barry Thompson, A&M System chancellor, said the quality of education was the most important thing.

"This is more than a dollar-plus-dollar issue," he said.

Bowen said that he supported the increase, and that the regents' decision may actually help the students.

"From my standpoint, personally, I don't see a lot of difference," he said. "I'm not uncomfortable with a smaller fee in the first semester and a larger one in the second. For some students, that extra money makes a difference."

Bowen said the most important thing is to cover the \$11 million for the budget deficit and pay raises.

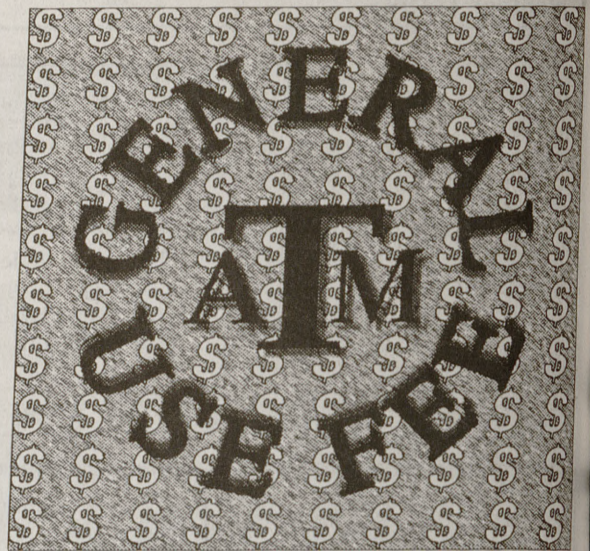
Faculty pay raises will take \$5 million of the fee increase revenue. Another \$1 million for the salary increases will come from budget cuts.

Dr. Pierce Cantrell, faculty senate speaker, said he was pleased with the decision.

"The faculty were very sensitive to the students' needs," he said.

"I think the Board's decision to go with the \$8 [increase] and the \$12 [increase the next semester] was very sensitive."

Cantrell said the 3 percent merit-based pay



raise is not the best, but will help. "Three percent is nothing to write home about, but I think we're very appreciative," he said.

The raise will also help maintain the quality of faculty at A&M, he said.

"We've worked 20-30 years to build a very fine faculty," he said. "You send in the wrong signals, and you have a mass exodus of people who are very good."

Cantrell explained the Texas Legislature, unfortunately seems to have sent a message to the System that the burden for higher education will continue to be passed on to the students.

The largest part of the remaining funds from the fee increase will go toward the deficit, though they will not eliminate it, Bowen said.

"We will still go forward with another \$4.4 million [deficit] next year," he said.

Bowen said that some shortfalls will probably occur if the University goes ahead with the pay increase for faculty, but said the loss can be covered.

"What we'll do is shift money that we were saving for the spring and spend more of that in the fall," he said.

"We can then replace it with the extra income in the spring."

Thompson said the A&M System universities have not given across-the-board raises for several years, and salaries had fallen from 97 percent of the national average to about 92 percent.

The fee was increased for all the System universities, but the increases for the other schools are not staggered and are all lower than the increase at A&M.

Regent T. Michael O'Connor of Victoria abstained from the vote.

The University will immediately begin mailing a new set of fee statements to collect the money from the higher fee. The bills will request that A&M students pay the difference between the higher general use fee and what has already been paid.

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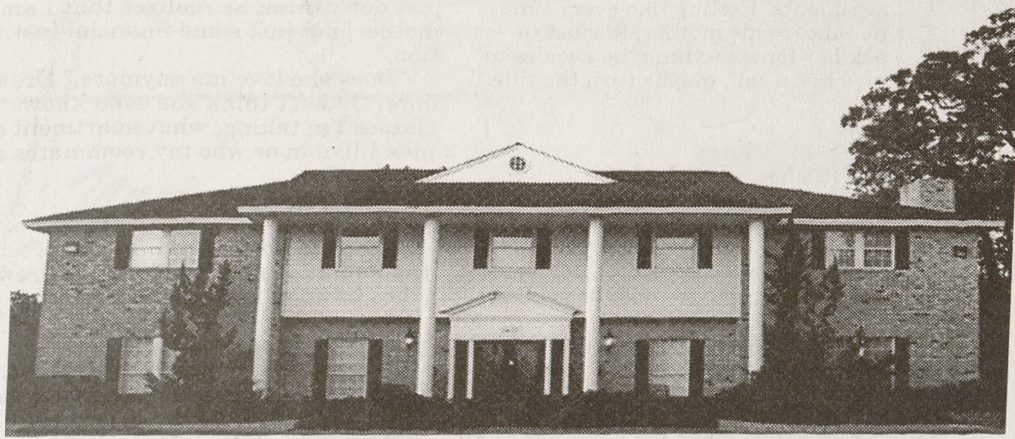
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