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Teacher ratings could carry more weight

By Brandon Hausenfluck
THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M administration may adopt a proposal allowing for a student rating system of faculty to be used in decisions determining the fate of professors' careers.

In an attempt to distribute the burden of evaluating faculty members up for tenure or those whose competence has been questioned, the administration could rely on the students to help make the final choice.

Although seeming like a reasonable proposal, many faculty members — for whom tenure means job security — oppose the issue. Dr. Larry Crumbley, a professor

of accounting, said student evaluation of teacher (SET) forms are inaccurate and detrimental to higher education.

"They (SET forms) have caused the goal in higher education to shift through the years from teaching students to a goal of profit maximization," Crumbley said. "There has been massive grade inflation and course work deflation. All faculty members know A's equal 'good' on their reports."

Crumbley said the administration is attracted to the proposal because the SETs will alleviate some of the pressure of evaluating professors' competence.

"These forms are valuable to the administration because they will be able to evaluate professors in 15 or 20 minutes," he said. "They (the administrators) don't want to go into the classrooms themselves, so they just use a computer printout to make their decisions. There is no due process here because students remain anonymous. And overall, students are being cheated."

Under the proposal, faculty members who receive substandard evaluations from their peers and/or students two years in a row are likely to be asked to resign their contracts.

Dr. Steve Oberhelman, speaker of the Faculty Senate, said the student evaluations will not be the only factor considered in the proposed review process.

"Students can evaluate a professor's performance but not necessarily their effectiveness," Oberhelman said. "The rankings are good when they're used in conjunction with other processes. The bill appears to place too much influence on student evaluations, and a two-year window is too short."

"What people need to understand is professors who receive tenure are subjected to a rigorous six-year probationary period. Tenure can only be granted after all aspects of their (professors') dossiers have been examined."

Oberhelman said tenured professors can lose their jobs if they show professional incompetence or commit a criminal act, among other things.

Crumbley said he is concerned students may use the evaluations as a re-

venge tool to get back at professors in whose class they did poorly.

"If you call a student stupid, the person will probably not evaluate you highly on an anonymous questionnaire," Crumbley said. "You only need a few students to be pissed off at you about something, then they will evaluate you poorly."

Dr. William Perry, associate provost and dean of faculties, said the proposal has not passed yet and added students should not have any reason to assign bad evaluations to faculty members.

"Our tenure system has served Texas A&M well," Perry said. "We have an

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SAT, ACT scores may lose importance in admissions

By Tauma Wiggins
THE BATTALION

By Fall 1998, SAT and ACT scores may not carry as much weight for incoming freshmen in the Texas A&M admissions process.

Curtis Childers, a member of the Admissions Advisory Committee and junior agricultural development major, said the committee has recommended incoming freshman applicants in the top 50 percent of their class not be eliminated from the application process based on their SAT or ACT scores.

Childers said in the past SAT and ACT tests scores have proven to be inaccurate in predicting the success of a student in college.

"They (SAT and ACT tests) are horribly inefficient," Childers said. "Only 22 percent correctly predict students' grades."

Childers said many students who are capable of attaining a high GPR are prevented from coming to A&M because of lower SAT or ACT scores.

"We're probably cutting out many people who would come to A&M and get a 4.0 because of a 10-point-lower SAT score," he said.

Erin Mozola, a member of the Admissions Advisory Committee and senior applied math major, said many A&M students think the recommendation is a step in the wrong direction, though it was intended to create a larger, more-competitive variety of students on campus.

"Everybody thinks A&M is lowering their standards, and everybody is getting scared," she said. "But (with the recommendation) we are getting a more diverse student body."

We want leaders with different skills and talents, and this is a way to open up to a more diverse group."

Deborah Cotten, a senior wildlife and fishery science major, said the SAT and ACT score requirements should remain the same.

"I think it should stay where it is to keep the quality of students at A&M," Cotten said. "If they do lower it since some students don't take tests well, they should focus more on students' grades and ability to function in the classroom."

Mozola emphasized the Admissions Advisory Committee has only recommended lowering SAT and ACT importance and that it will not go into effect this fall.

"It's still up in the air with admissions," she said. "It won't be for admission for '97. The earliest would be Fall '98. The '97 admission criteria will be the same."

ETS Net provides test information

By Erica Roy
THE BATTALION

At the beginning of July, Educational Testing Service introduced ETS Net, a new World Wide Web site providing a variety of information on major testing programs.

The new web site is available for students needing information on tests such as the Graduate Record Examination Board's GRE General and Subject tests, the Graduate Management Admission Council's GMAT, the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language exam), the Praxis Series' Professional Assessments for Beginning Teachers and the LSAT.

Dwight Horch, executive director of applications, development and management at ETS, headed the team that developed the ETS Net program.

"Basically, it is a site that allows people who are interested in various testing programs ... to get a wealth of information on the tests," Horch said.

College students can now register for the GMAT through ETS Net. Registration for the GRE will be avail-

ETS Net

WEB SITE

<http://www.ets.org>

able in the fall.

Horch said students will be able to register for the Praxis tests and the TOEFL later in the fall.

The GRE OnLine is a part of the ETS Net that enables students to order GRE reference materials, receive test scores, and use practice test questions.

Practice test questions are provided for all of the tests.

Although most students have not yet been able to use ETS Net, many said they will use the program when they are preparing for one of these tests.

Thaddeus Niemeyer, a senior electrical engineering and mathematics major, is going to take the GRE.

"I'd look into it," Niemeyer said. "I'd have to see what it's all about before I'd

use it. Any test questions will be a help."

Currently only a few practice test questions are available for each test.

Horch said one of ETS Net's priorities is to improve the practice test question sections of the program.

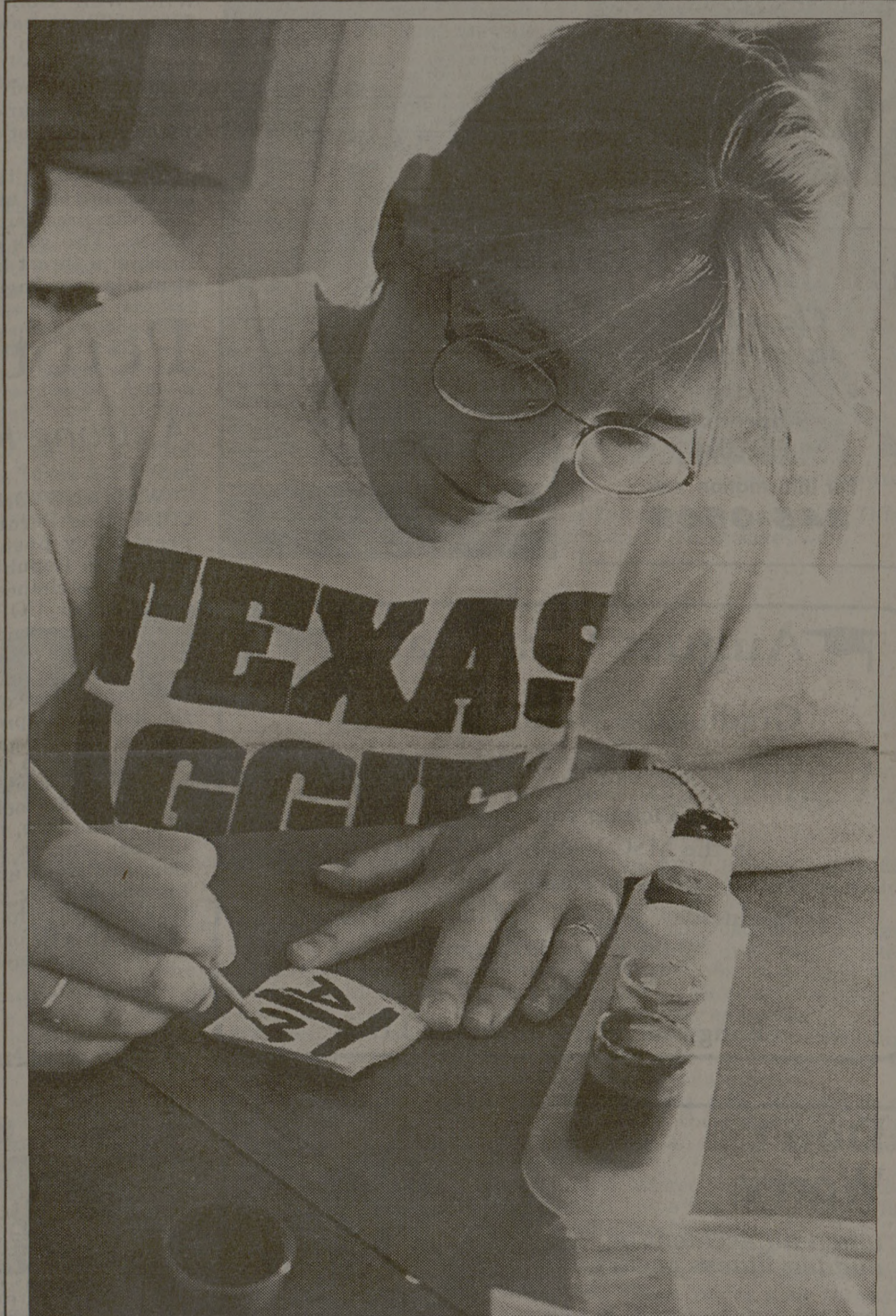
"We are hoping to expand the variety and depth of the practice test questions. We want to have full practice test questions eventually," Horch said.

Scott Turner, a graduate electrical engineering student, has already taken the GRE but would have used the ETS Net if it had been available.

"I get most of my information off the web, so I would have used this service when I took the test," Turner said. "There's a lot at stake when you take that test, so you want to have the best possible information."

The web site contains information on financial aid, minority scholarships and career and job opportunities. High school students are also able to register for the SAT through ETS Net and can link to College Board Online through ETS Net.

ETS Net can be accessed on the Internet at <http://www.ets.org>.



Gwendolyn Struve, THE BATTALION

CREATIVE CRAFT

Erica Scott, a senior community health major, paints a rawhide dog toy to use as a magnet for her apartment Sunday afternoon.

Construction updates library facilities

By Ann Marie Hauser
THE BATTALION

Completion of the "library village" in the year 2000 will advance Texas A&M University's information services into the 21st century.

Future construction includes a six-floor library addition connected to Sterling C. Evans Library, a student computing center on the south end of the addition, an eight-level parking garage, and a renovation of the Cushing Memorial Library.

Dr. Fred Heath, dean and director of Evans Library, said the undertaking is one of the most ambitious in the country. Approximately \$90 million will be spent by the end of the five-year construction period.

"This scale of library construction hasn't been matched anywhere within the States," Heath said.

Amanda Kuentler, a junior psychology major, said the renovations will benefit future students.

"If it makes it better organized, although I won't be able to enjoy it, at least somebody can," Kuentler said. "It's about time we put some money into academics."

Heath said the mission of academic research libraries includes

three parts.

First, support of the undergraduate education, where students can take advantage of a new, 135,850-square-foot facility.

This state-of-the-art, six-story addition will feature a learning resource center, 60 group-study rooms and extended hours for students.

The second part of the triad is the complete renovation of the now-closed Cushing Memorial Library.

The new quarters will be home to A&M's "collections of distinction," including rare books, manuscripts, special collections and University archives.

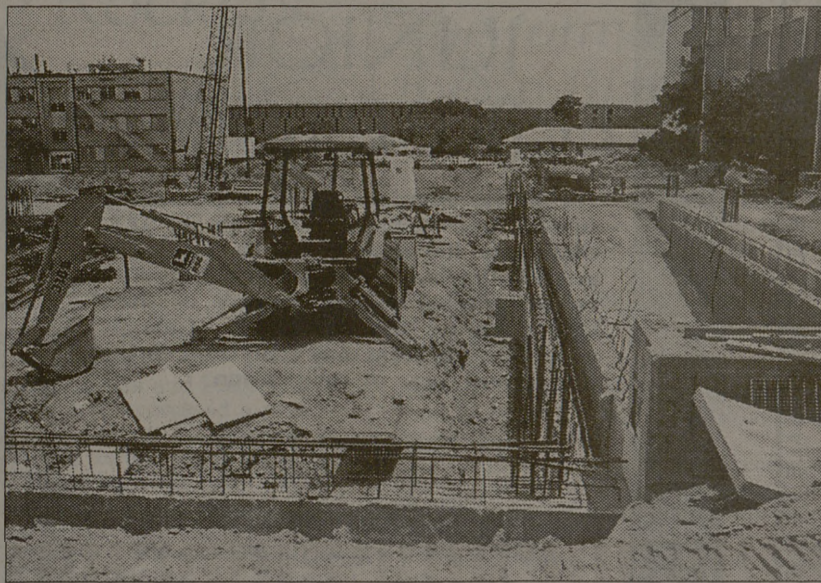
The final stage of the construction will be a renovation of the first two floors of Evans Library.

Joyce Thornton, executive assistant at Evans Library, said Evans, completed in 1979, was built with out-of-date technology.

"Enrollment grew so much faster than the building could accommodate," Thornton said. "We're looking forward to the completion."

To prevent this from happening again, the top two floors of the addition will be saved for future expansion.

Thornton asks students to be patient with the construction and any problems that might arise.



Gwendolyn Struve, THE BATTALION

Construction continues on the new "library village." The complex is expected to be finished in the year 2000.

"It's a huge project, and students will have to be patient," Thornton said. "Advance warnings and updates will be posted on the A&M home page."

Ashley Graham, a senior

forestry major, said making the sacrifice now will be worth it in the long run.

"If I was going to be here, I would put up with the construction," Graham said.

Warm water causes problems for residents

By Heather R. Rosenfeld
THE BATTALION

Because of malfunctioning cooling tower units, many Bryan residents are experiencing an increase in the temperature of their household water.

Joe Brown, public relations officer for the city of Bryan, said three of Bryan's five cooling units have completely broken down.

"Two of the [cooling units] weren't even being used because they were so bad," Brown said. "They were so old and broken that when the third one went down, the city had to act. ... We are rebuilding them from the base up."

Roy Elliott, operator for water production for the city of Bryan, said the city has been planning to replace the units since 1994.

"The city has spent two years working on getting funds allocated for the replacement," Elliott said. "Funds simply weren't available to act any sooner."

Brown said the city began rebuilding in late June because of newly available funding.

"The final determination to begin work was that we had enough money to do it. ... The total cost of the project is \$775,000," Brown said. "Other water improvements had to take precedence because this one was so costly."

Ricky Spence, a senior community health major and Bryan resident, said he believes the city should have made repairing the cooling units a higher priority.

"I wished the city [had done] something sooner, because I noticed that there was a problem with the temperature of the water the first day we moved in," Spence said. "If you

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