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ExCEL celebrates 10th anniversary

By Amy Protas
The Battalion

This year will mark the tenth anniversary of the ExCEL conference. The two-day conference, which stands for Excellence in uniting Culture, Education and Leadership, serves as an additional orientation for minority students.

Anita Snell, an ExCEL team leader and senior education major, said ExCELL gives minority students at the conference a "comfort zone" for their freshman year.

"ExCEL is a freshman orientation program geared for and not necessarily limited to ethnic minority students," Snell said. "It gets them into A&M and acquainted with the University. They are able to form a foundation."

During the conference, students meet with campus leaders who answer questions and offer advice.

"We have professors from the different colleges come in," Snell said. "The yell leaders come in to talk about traditions. We also have a student panel that answers questions about student life."

Brad Angell, director of registration at ExCEL and a junior agricultural development major, said he got involved to encourage students to embrace Texas A&M's traditions.

"I felt like there's a need for more minority involvement in traditions," Angell said. "There's a big need for minorities to feel welcome at this school and adjust as freshmen."

Angell said unfortunately, minority students can easily avoid involvement in traditions.

"A lot of times, minority students get discouraged because there are so few minorities involved in the traditions," Angell said. "If we get more numbers out there, it will encourage them to get involved."

One of the functions of ExCEL is to show minority students they are not alone at A&M. Snell said she wished she would have gone through the conference when she was a freshman.

"I guess coming through this conference, you realize you're not the only one," Snell said. "There are people here who've been through it and can tell their stories. Here we are and we're about to graduate and we did it."

Angell said the friendships that develop are the most important thing about ExCEL.

"The most beneficial thing is, they get some time to meet other and get camaraderie others like them," Angell "It's people that feel the way about coming to A&M."

Although minority stu also go through the regula student conferences, ExC fers a little more.

"With this conferen opens so many doors," Snel "Students get familiarize the Department of Multic Services. They also realiz not just our minorities. We a very diverse staff."

At the conference, stu are offered the option of tak class their freshman year ExCEL Plus. The one-hour ceeding in College class is Department of Multicul Services and the Departm Management.

CPA educates citizens of local law enforcemen

By Erica Roy
The Battalion

For the past nine years, the College Station Police Department has conducted a Citizen Police Academy (CPA), designed to educate citizens of College Station on local law enforcement operations.

Lt. Scott Simpson said through the program, citizens can become familiar with the functions of the Police Department.

"It's a crash course, basically information on all the things we do to make the system work," Simpson said. "People think all we do is sit out in the bushes and wait for people speeding to come by; then we head out to the doughnut shop. This gives them a better understanding of what we really do."

The Citizen Police Academy runs 12 weeks. Classes are held on Tuesday nights from 7 to 10 p.m.

The dispatch system, traffic stops, domestic and gang violence, narcotics, gang violence, criminal investigation and criminal law are among the various subjects covered in the classes.

The majority of the 12-week period is spent in the classroom, but students also participate in some hands-on activities.

During the traffic stops class, students participate in role-playing games. CPA alumni or off-duty police officers pose as speeding drivers while students pretend to be officers stopping the driver. Students actually wear a gun belt, holster, unloaded gun and ticket book.

Crime Prevention Officer Darrell Luedke, who teaches the class on traffic stops, said role-playing games give the students an understanding of how the police officer feels approaching a vehicle.

"It lets them understand from the officer's point of view what it is like," Luedke said. "It lets them know exactly what it's like to be on the other side."

"It's a crash course, basically information on all the things we do to make the system work."

— SCOTT SIMPSON
College Station police officer

Russell Howerton, vice president of the CPA Alumni Association, said role-playing was the highlight of the class for him. He said there were different scenarios for each student, so no one knew what to expect. The driver might cooperate, or he might "shoot" the pretend officer.

Students also ride in a patrol cars with an on-duty officer.

Two classes are held each year. The fall class starts on Sept. 3. A class is also held in the spring.

The class usually consists of 30 students. Simpson said they never have room for all the people who want to join the class. They try to get a cross-section of citizens from College Station. Usually three to four A&M students are included in each class.

Simpson said the Police Department efits from offering the Citizen Police Ac my because it helps foster good relation with the citizens of College Station.

"Our goal is to educate our custome to say," Simpson said. "If they have a ter understanding of what we do, they tell others in the community. It's n against everybody."

Luedke said the CPA gives him a ter understanding of how the average izen feels.

"It helps me understand the misco tions and fears the public has about law forcement and the role we play," Lue said. "It creates better communication tween us and the community."

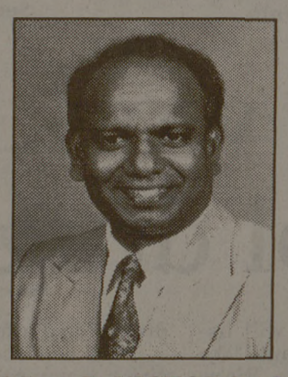
Howerton said his experience as a stu of the CPA has taught him not to hesita use the Police Department. He now has a ter understanding of what police work en

"I am much more confident about c them if I feel the need to," Howerton said.

Howerton was stopped by a police offi year ago for an expired inspection sticker said he knew how to act toward the offic make him feel at ease.

Howerton said everyone should attend CPA to become better acquainted with Police Department.

"If it were up to me, I would requir Everyone should know their police dep ment," Howerton said. "The better t know them, the better they are to safeg themselves."



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A&M researchers helping to reduce salmonella threa

By James Fowler
The Battalion

Texans love homemade ice cream during the summer, but researchers say ice cream made with raw eggs can be hazardous to your health. Raw eggs can carry salmonella bacteria.

Recent breakthroughs by Texas A&M researchers are helping egg producers reduce the public health threat from salmonella.

Dr. Steven Ricke, Dr. John Carey and graduate students Young Min Kwon and F.L. Kuo of the poultry science department have discovered an environmentally safe and effective method of fighting salmonella bacteria.

Many bacteria reside on the surface of eggs or enter them through pores or cracks in the shells.

Dr. Ricke has worked on the salmonella problem with eggs since arriving at A&M in 1992.

"I immediately focused on salmonella, one of the most important problems in poultry processing," he said. "The industry was looking at prevention in carcasses, but new sanitizing washes were not very effective due to the organic loads. Since these washes had killed organisms on hard surfaces, we thought it might work on eggs."

Researchers linked about 2 percent of the outbreaks of foodborne disease between 1973 and 1987 to eggs contaminated by salmonella. Nationally, salmonella costs billions of dollars each year in direct health costs and productivity losses.

Ricke, in cooperation with Biomedical Development Corporation in San Antonio, received a grant from the National Institute of Health to research his theory. Ricke, Kwon and Kuo tested the effectiveness of an enzyme-derived compound for washing eggs.

Kuo has returned home to Taiwan. But Kwon, a Ph.D. candidate in poultry science, will extend their research commercially in Phase II of the grant. Kwon arrived at A&M almost two years ago from Seoul National University.

"I came to A&M upon the advice of a former student of Dr. Ricke, who knew I was interested in microbiology," Kwon said. "I hope to graduate in three years and then return to Korea to accept a research position at the university."

Dr. Ricke and his associates' research proved a commercially produced compound, Enzodine, is as effective as other, less environmentally friendly substances in reducing salmonella.

Unfortunately, the procedures developed by the A&M researchers may be years from being implemented nationwide.

Until then, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recommends thoroughly cooking eggs. USDA guidelines suggest boiling eggs for seven minutes, poaching them for five minutes or frying them for three minutes on each side. The USDA also advised consumers should avoid eating raw eggs and store them below 45 degrees Fahrenheit.

Food safety experts also advocate using egg separators to extract the yolks from the shells. They also recommend discarding cracked eggs.

Gwendolyn Struve, The Battalion

Young Min Kwon, Ph.D. candidate in poultry science, counts salmonella colonies in a Kleberg laboratory.

"Food safety is vital, especially for college students who may be away from home for the first time," Ricke said. "You must cook food thoroughly and practice good sanitation in the kitchen. It's got to be like folklore. As an example, nobody undercooks pork. It's ingrained in our thinking."

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News offices are in 013 Reed McDonald Building. Newsroom phone: 845-3313; Fax: 845-2647
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The Battalion (ISSN #1055-4726) is published daily, Monday through Friday during the fall and spring semesters and Monday through Thursday during the summer sessions (except on University holidays and exam periods), at Texas A&M University. Second class postage paid at College Station, TX 77840.
Postmaster: Send address changes to The Battalion, 230 Reed McDonald Building, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843.