

Food Services gets student feedback

By CARLA RENE MARSH
THE BATTALION

Free lunches with the Food Services director offer Texas A&M students a chance to express new ideas, ask questions and comment on campus dining.

Leanne Mitchell, a Food Services staff assistant, said the program, a project of the Student Advisory Council, is a chance to get student feedback.

"There are various ways that students can sign up," Mitchell said. "Every student that signs

up will get a chance to attend a luncheon."

Ronald Beard, Food Services director, said more than 250 students have already signed up.

"That is a really big turnout," Beard said. "We schedule about 20 students for each luncheon."

Food Services held their second luncheon Monday.

After being served lunch, students expressed concerns and commented on food services.

Cindy Casares, a senior elementary education major who lives off campus, said she regularly attends meetings on campus and wants a good meal before leaving campus.

"My main concern is for people who live off campus," Casares said. "It would be better to serve a variety of different foods."

"I would like to eat the same types of food here that I would at home if I were there to cook."

Beard said he is excited about the ideas the Student Advisory Council has generated in the past.

Beard said meal plans now offer students more flexibility.

The hospitality pass, a concept developed by the council, was implemented this semester.

Organizations support minority graduate students

By COURTNEY WALKER
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M's two minority graduate student organizations work together to help minority graduate students adjust to the stress of course work of graduate school.

The Black Graduate Student Association (BGSA) and the Hispanic Graduate Student Association (HGSA) were formed to help minority graduate students by serving as a support base and networking outlet.

Gary Cruz, president of the HGSA and a biology graduate student, said the groups worked together on a one-day freshman orientation and cookout for incoming minority students.

"We want to foster an image and belief for all minority students that they can make a difference and be successful," Cruz said.

BGSA was formed in 1987 to provide professional, informative and social networks

for African-American graduate students. HGSA was formed in 1992 as part of a graduate student project.

Of the 7500 graduate students enrolled at A&M this fall, 328 are Hispanic and 182 are African-American.

"Minority students want a place they can feel at home with people who have similar beliefs and through that they learn other things about A&M and their courses," Cruz said.

Ashanti Pyrtle, BGSA president, said although there was a 5 percent increase in minority enrollment last year, the small number of minority undergraduate students leads to a small number of minority graduate students.

"There's such a small number to begin with because some minorities just don't have as much academic, moral and financial support as other students," Pyrtle said.

One way both organizations are trying to stop the chain is by recruiting minority un-

dergraduate students.

BGSA rewards undergraduate African-American students with the James L. Courtney Award for graduating with a 3.0 grade-point ratio. The award is named for the first African-American student to graduate from A&M. The undergraduate student with the highest GPR is given a class ring.

"We give the rewards to compliment academic excellence and encourage them to pursue academic degrees at A&M," Pyrtle said.

The HGSA has an outreach program that focuses on Hispanic undergraduates and the surrounding community. HGSA also provides information on minority scholarships, résumé books, conferences and legislative decisions such as the recent *Hopwood* decision.

The two organizations also held a joint voter registration drive in September.

Both organizations are open to any graduate student whether they are minorities or not.

VENDORS

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The revisions place three additional limitations on the process, he said.

First, only students may be present at the table, no vendors. Second, all items sold must be owned by the student organization, which may either purchase the products wholesale or take them on consignment. Finally, the items must relate to the "mission and purpose" of the organization.

The revisions have drawn criticism from vendors and student organizations.

Shawn Withington, Class of '94 and owner of Withington Designs, said the policy has become too restrictive.

Withington's company has sold Aggie neckties in association with student groups such as the Aggie Pathfinders, a group of Cadets organization.

"What are they going to do, sell compasses and maps?" Withington said. "To me, the 'mission and purpose' of every Aggie is to promote Aggie Spirit."

Timothy Vanya, an artist with Edition Concepts, has sold his limited edition prints with Squadron 17 since 1987.

Vanya said he will miss being behind the table with the cadets.

"I [will not] have the opportunity to meet students, parents and alumni as a vendor and a mentor to the guys from Squadron 17," he said. "The benefit of experience is negated when I can't be there."

Some vendors abused the system

before, Vanya said, but the steps taken to correct the situation were too harsh.

"They kind of threw the baby out with the bath water," he said. "We know who the culprits were."

Vanya said the policy will be more detrimental to the student organizations than to the vendors.

"This will affect me," he said. "But it won't hurt me."

Vanya said he is not certain the same will be true for campus organizations.

The Peruvian Student Association and the Texas A&M Lacrosse Team set up T-shirt tables in the MSC during Saturday's football game. Both tables were manned solely by student members of the organizations.

To satisfy the "mission and purpose" requirement, both groups printed the organization's name on each shirt.

Soumo Mukherjee, a junior biochemistry major, said PSA conformed so they could continue to sell merchandise.

"Where else can we sell them besides here?" Mukherjee said.

Adam Questell, a junior biomedical science major on the lacrosse team, said the organization protested the policy revisions.

"It seems the [Texas A&M] bookstore has a lot to say in what's going on," Questell said.

Busch said the policy revisions will require organizations to change the way they raise funds, but knows the problem will be resolved.

"We know that students have the creativity and ingenuity to come up with new fund-raisers," he said.

SETTLEMENT

Continued from Page 1

Cora Rogers, a Brushy Creek resident and member of ROPL, said the University is guilty of "environmental racism" because there several black families in the area. She said the residents do not want to go to trial, but will if they must.

"They (A&M) figured the blacks wouldn't say anything because most of them work for A&M," Rogers said. "We'll go to court and let the world know what A&M is doing to blacks in the community."

The University and ROPL reached a tentative agreement in March. Specific details have been negotiated since that time.

The University agreed to pay residents \$600,000 if the settlement would avoid the possibility of future lawsuits against the University.

The \$600,000 would have compensated for the presence of the center in the neighborhood, Ashlock said.

The University had also agreed to implement environmental monitoring systems and reduce the number of animals at the center.

"We thought the environmental issues were taken care of by mutual agreement long ago," Ashlock said. "The revival of those issues complicated matters. The single thing that held it (negotiations) up was the lack of assurance that we'd have a final settlement."

But Schaffer said the environmental monitoring system would not prevent air and water contamination and the money would not compensate for the problems the residents anticipate.

"They (A&M) have not done enough to address the environmental issues," Schaffer said. "Environmental issues are crucial. They're going to have a negative impact on people's lives and property."

"They (A&M) shouldn't expect that \$600,000 would protect them from lawsuits for the many years ASTREC would be in operation. If they want to protect ASTREC forever, then they should pay people fair market value for their property. They want a bargain basement settlement, but we're not going to give it to them."

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