

FORUM

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One of the four issues chosen was the Texas Tuition Assistance Grant (TTAG) which was passed in the Legislature in 1991. The grant will provide tuition at state-supported schools for qualified students.

Students from lower middle-class income families who graduate in the top 20 percent of their high school class are eligible to apply for the money. Recipients are required to maintain a minimum 3.0 grade-point ratio.

Thirteen A&M students will receive the tuition assistance in 1997. Obenhaus said the legislative relations committee will push for additional funding and greater support from the Legislature for TTAG.

Obenhaus said the grant is modeled after the Hope Scholarship in Georgia, which may be used at public, private, technical and graduate schools.

"We hope to get that one day in Texas also," she said.

Flexible tuition, another of the forum's top priorities, could also face Texas legislators this year, Obenhaus said.

"They're (Legislature) proposing to let the Board of Regents decide what our tuition would be and to let it be market-driven," she said. "We don't want our Board of Regents set-

ting our tuition. It would send the prices up tremendously."

A proposed fee simplification bill was also selected as one of the four issues to be discussed at the forum.

Under the proposed bill, student fees would be broken down into three categories for every state college and university. The tuition would continue to be set by the

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Nickie Obenhaus
Student Government legislative relations chair

state, the General Use Fee would continue to be set by the Board of Regents, but the Student Services Fees would be voted on as a referendum by the entire student body of each institution.

Reed said the difficulty of educating the entire student body with the proper information makes the referendum infeasible.

The final issue chosen by the forum was having a student on the Board of Regents.

Obenhaus said this issue has been brought before the Legislature every year without success.

"This next year we want to see if there's another way," she said. "We do not want to pursue the Legislature again."

Josh Golden, student body president at Tarleton, said seeking help from the governor would be the best option.

"I would say we have a better chance of going through him (Gov. Bush) than we've ever had before," he said.

Golden said several states in the southeast already have a student regent or an ex officio student member of the Board.

"Most of the members of the Board haven't been in school for a long time," he said. "They need to treat us as customers and we need to choose the product we want."

Golden said a student voice on the Board would be more important than having a vote on the Board.

"The power of voice extends beyond vote," he said.

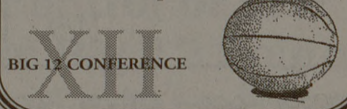
Obenhaus said students should express their opinions not only to the representatives from their school's district but to their hometown districts as well.

"Let's start knocking on our representatives' and senators' doors," she said.

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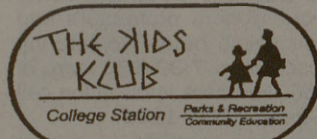
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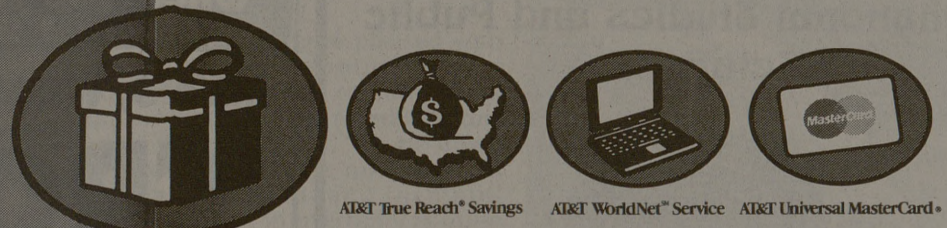
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