



## Senate passes bill for tenure review

AUSTIN (AP) — State universities would have to review tenured professors' performance at least once every six years under a bill passed by the Texas Senate.

The bill by Senate Education Committee Chairman Teel Bivins, R-Amarillo, passed Tuesday and goes to the House for consideration.

Under the measure, universities would be required to establish a system for reviewing tenured professors, whose jobs traditionally have been secure.

An unsatisfactory review could lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal.

The University of Texas System Board of Regents already has announced review guidelines. The Texas A&M University Board of Regents has passed a resolution requiring a review process.

The idea has raised concern among those who say tenure has protected professors who express unpopular ideas, and thus academic freedom. They cite policies that have allowed even tenured professors to be dismissed for cause, such as incompetence.

Supporters of review, however, say they've heard from parents, students and even professors concerned that some faculty slack off after being granted tenure.

"Academic freedom is one of the most important concepts that we have ... but so is accountability to taxpayers," who pick up the bulk of the tab for public higher education, said Bivins. He said his bill would provide a good balance.

Sen. Steve Ogden, whose district includes Texas A&M, opposed the bill and expressed concern about the potential for harmful effects.

"How do we keep this bill from having the very real, unintended consequence of this being used as a political weapon?" asked Ogden, R-Bryan.

Under Bivins' bill, tenured faculty members would face evaluation at least once every six years on how well they are carrying out their professional responsibilities, such as teaching, research and administration.

The review would be directed at professional development, but faculty members would be subject to disciplinary measures for such reasons as incompetence or unsatisfactory performance.

Sen. Gonzalo Barrientos, D-Austin, added provisions to the bill that he said would give protection to faculty. They include requiring faculty input when designing the review system and recognizing professors' due process rights.

## Students meet with A&M colleges

Representatives from nine colleges provided information on degree plans at ExCel Plus College Night '97.

By GRAHAM HARVEY  
THE BATTALION

Freshman and sophomore students met with representatives of Texas A&M's nine colleges last night at ExCel Plus College Night '97 in Rudder Tower.

George Castorena, co-adviser for ExCel Plus and a student affairs and higher education graduate student,

said the event was held primarily for freshman and sophomore minority students.

"This program provides information concerning the different majors at A&M," Castorena said.

About 10 students attended College Night '97 looking for information about degree programs. Among the representatives, were those from the General Academics and Honors Programs.

This is the second College Night held at A&M.

Anitra Johnson, director of programs for ExCel and a junior biomedical science major, said the success of the first event, held last fall, prompted a second one.

Before the event began, Johnson said she expected about 50 students to show up.

Castorena said he was disappointed to see only 10 students at the event. He said the rainy weather may have kept them away.

Tamara Allen, a freshman business major, said the representatives from the College of Business helped her with specific decisions about her major.

"They were very friendly and accommodating," Allen said. "A lot of questions were answered about information I didn't even think to ask for."

Allen said the representatives she spoke with were encouraging.

"I was congratulated for my freshman success and wished the best for the future," she said.

Allen said she especially appreciated the presence of student representatives from the College of Business. She said the student representatives

helped her to see the College of Business from a student's perspective as well as an administrator's.

Johnson said ExCel began 10 years ago as a support organization for incoming minority students.

In addition to College Night, ExCel hosts an annual weekend conference before the fall semester and provides year-round academic counseling.

The organization has also initiated a class within the Department of Management that teaches study skills and time management.

Johnson said ExCel's purpose is to offer support and guidance to underclassmen.

"ExCel is a program aimed at retaining minority freshmen and sophomores at Texas A&M University," Johnson said.

### Black Awareness Committee

## Festival celebrates unified community

By LAURA OLIVEIRA  
THE BATTALION

Unified African-American community will celebrate the successes of Black History Month today at the third annual Harambee festival.

Eric Curley, chair of the Memorial Student Center Black Awareness Committee and a junior biochemistry major, said this year's theme, "Upliftment and Enrichment: The road to a better black tomorrow," emphasizes unity within the African-American community.

"In order for us to achieve anything we must be unified first," he said.

The event, sponsored by the committee and the Pan-Hellenic council, will begin at 7 p.m. in Rudder Theatre and will showcase 23 African-American organizations.

LaSondra Carroll, director of programs for the committee and a sophomore journalism major, said the event will allow organizations to show students what they are about.

"We want to show students how they can be an asset to the University and how they can play a role in the things that go on," she said.

Carroll said the organizations

also serve as support groups for African-American students who feel isolated.

"Students may come to A&M and be the only minority in their class," she said. "You see no one that looks like you."

Carroll said low minority enrollment at A&M did not discourage her from attending the University.

"I wanted to go beyond my comfort zone," she said. "I do not want to miss out or miss the opportunity to do something because I put myself in a box."

Stephanie Rhodes, BAC adviser, said this year's festival includes more of the surrounding community in the festivities.

"This festival is one way we can reach out to the community," she said.

Shiloh Baptist Church Bell Choir will perform and Fade to Black will dance at today's festival.

Curley said he enjoys seeing the community get involved with Harambee.

"When you see the little kids come and sing and dance it is really great," he said. "I like to see that we are keeping it opened to the community and not just the campus."

**"In order for us to achieve anything, we must be unified first."**

Eric Curley  
Chair, MSC Black Awareness Committee



Rony Angkriwan, THE BATTALION

Simple Treasures Cheng-Non Hsu, president of the Taiwan Student Association and civil engineering graduate student, explains Oriental ornaments to Rajan Visanathan, a civil engineering graduate student, and his wife Susheela Rajan during International Week at the MSC.

## GOP one vote short of balanced budget amendment

WASHINGTON (AP) — The balanced budget amendment to the Constitution teetered on the brink on Tuesday as a pivotal Democratic freshman endorsed the measure and one final uncommitted senator weighed a make-or-break decision.

"It's the right thing to do," Sen. Mary Landrieu, D-La., said in announcing she would vote for the Republican-crafted measure despite reservations. Barring any last-minute switches, Landrieu's decision appeared to leave the fate of the amendment in the hands of Sen. Bob Torricelli, D-N.J., who pledged to disclose his decision on Wednesday.

Torricelli supported the measure two years ago in the House. He has been uncommitted since his election to the Senate in November, even as the White House and Democratic leaders have lobbied him to oppose the measure now.

And at day's end, the White House addressed one of Torricelli's concerns when it quietly announced creation of a presidential commission to study capital budgeting.

"I understand the enormity of the moment," Torricelli said as he pondered his decision.

With a final vote expected by early next week, the party's leaders seemed locked in a war of nerves.

Senate Democratic leader Tom Daschle, leading the opposition, conceded, "our momentum has lost a couple of wheels" with Landrieu's announcement. He added, though, "I think it is entirely possible we could win this."

Majority Leader Trent Lott told reporters he could count "about 66" votes for the measure, one shy of the two-thirds needed to prevail, but sug-

gested there may be a surprise or two.

"There's more than one senator who is still considering how to vote on final passage," he said with an air of mystery.

Privately, though, GOP aides said Republicans were prepared to let the measure fail rather than bow to Democratic demands for changes. These aides, speaking on condition of anonymity, noted that all 55 Senate Republicans are lined up to vote for the measure, but thus far, only 11 of 45 Democrats have done so — a breakdown that would make it relatively easy to make an issue of the measure's defeat at the next election.

The measure, a cornerstone of the Republican legislative agenda, would require a balanced budget by 2002 and require a three-fifths vote of Congress to run a deficit any year thereafter.

## Bonfire crane operator dies in San Antonio at 72

Thomas E. "Preacher" Thornton died Monday night at Southeast Baptist Hospital in San Antonio. Thornton, 72, had worked with Aggie Bonfire for over 20 years. Thornton operated the crane at stack site and was a longtime employee of the H. B. Zachary engineering company.

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WASHINGTON (AP) — American women who are raped, whose birth control fails or who just forget in the heat of the moment can use high doses of ordinary birth control pills to prevent pregnancy, the government said Monday.

The Food and Drug Administration said six brands of birth control are safe and effective "morning-after pills," the first federal acknowledgement of the emergency contraception that European women have been prescribed for years.

"The best-kept contraceptive secret is no longer a secret," said FDA Commissioner David Kessler. "Women should have the information that this regimen is available."

The decision opens the door for companies to specially package birth control pills for women to have on hand in case of an emergency, just as the pills are routinely sold overseas.

Contraceptive manufacturers so far have refused to sell what the government terms emergency contraception here, citing litigation and political fears.

So while it is legal for doctors to

prescribe emergency birth control — and the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology in December endorsed it — few physicians know the proper doses and few women even know to seek it.

The FDA's decision could change that. One small company, New Jersey-based Gynetics, is developing a specially packaged version of birth control it hopes to sell for emergency use next year.

And the FDA's instructions were purposefully detailed enough to tell family-planning clinics and private doctors the right dose to hand to women today.

"This should be in everyone's medicine cabinet," said Janet Ben-shoof of the Center for Reproductive Law and Policy.

The FDA announced Monday that high doses of six popular birth-control brands, when taken within three days of unprotected sex, are 75 percent effective at preventing pregnancy.

For every 100 women who have unprotected sex during the second or third week of their menstrual cycle, eight would normally become pregnant — but

### Morning-after pill

The Food and Drug Administration has published guidelines for "morning-after" contraception, in which high doses of birth-control pills are taken after unprotected sex. The method prevents pregnancy 75 percent of the time.

Drug*	Manufacturer	Dosage	Color
Ovral	Wyeth-Ayerst	Two up to 72 hours after sex; two 12 hours later	White
Nordette	Wyeth-Ayerst	Four up to 72 hours after sex; four 12 hours later	Light orange
Lo/Ovral	Wyeth-Ayerst	Four up to 72 hours after sex; four 12 hours later	White
Triphasil	Wyeth-Ayerst	Four up to 72 hours after sex; four 12 hours later	Yellow
Levlen	Berlex Laboratories	Four up to 72 hours after sex; four 12 hours later	Light orange
Tri-Levlen	Berlex Laboratories	Four up to 72 hours after sex; four 12 hours later	Yellow

\*Drugs must be prescribed by a physician. The second dosage must be taken exactly 12 hours after the first.

Source: Food and Drug Administration

AP

only two would if the women took emergency contraception, explained Dr. James Trussell of Princeton University.

His research convinced the FDA that emergency contraception could prevent up to 2.3 million unplanned pregnancies a year, 1 million of which now end in abortion.

"We're going to see a really big change here," said Trussell, who helped set up a hot line and Internet service that offers women information about emergency contraception and addresses of nearby doctors who already prescribe it.

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