



THE BATTALION

"Serving Texas A&M Since 1893"

Volume 103 • Issue 103 • 8 Pages

The Batt Online: [http:// bat-web.tamu.edu](http://bat-web.tamu.edu)

Friday, February 28, 1997

Senate alters structure of caucus groups

Caucus leaders will be appointed by Senate officers to attend Internal Affairs meetings as non-voting members.

By ERICA ROY
THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M Student Senate changed its structure to make senators more responsive to their constituencies, but did not reduce the Senate's size Wednesday night. The Senate officers will now appoint each caucus leader rather than have the

caucus elect its leader. A caucus is a constituency group, such as academic colleges and residency areas. The appointed caucus leaders must attend the Internal Affairs meetings as non-voting members, and inform their caucus of the issues addressed at the meetings. Leaders are also responsible for establishing contacts with major organizations in the leaders' constituencies. Speaker Chris Reed, a senior finance major, said centralizing the caucus groups will improve the Senate because it will enable senators to work together as a caucus group to represent their constituencies and find out the student body's opinion. Elliot Kerlin, Student Services Committee chair and a senior finance major, said

the caucus system will provide another way making senators accountable to their constituents. Kerlin said this bill is the first step in effectively improving the Senate. "It's more of a journey than a destination," Kerlin said. "We're on the road to success, but we surely haven't arrived. This is a start." Other changes in the bill include: • Choosing Senate committee members through applications. The applications must include a list of goals and ideas for the committee during the year.



• Giving External Affairs the power to implement an absence policy to guarantee attendance at organizational meetings other than the Senate, such as the Board of Regents or Faculty Senate. Reed said mandatory attendance at external functions can improve internal parts of the Senate. "It (mandatory attendance) was important for the Senate internally," Reed said. "If we (the Senate) start having visibility... it really can have an impact on the decisions made." The original bill introduced to the Senate would have reduced the size of

the Senate by eliminating some residency seats. Northside and Southside would each have had two senators, and off-campus seats would have been reduced to nine. An amendment was passed striking these parts of the original bill. Reed said that reducing the size of the Senate would force candidates to run on a platform. "By reducing the number of senators... we will be able to stop them from playing the numbers game," Reed said. Drew Howard, a college of science senator and a senior math major, said the Senate could lose valuable input from senators if the Senate were reduced.

See SENATE, Page 2



Amy Dunlap, THE BATTALION

Making Change

Shelby Kimball, a sophomore speech communication major, contributes to the Special Olympics drive organized by Alpha Phi Omega.

Cadets share ideas at roundtable

Corps members from U.S., Mexico discuss military issues

By BENJAMIN CHENG AND JOEY JEANETTE SCHLUETER
THE BATTALION

Colorfully decorated uniformed cadets from the United States and Mexico converged on Texas A&M as Military Weekend commenced Thursday in the MSC. Approximately 150 cadets from university and military corps will attend roundtable discussions covering hazing prevention, integration of corps programs and goals of the corps. Highlights of Military Weekend include the Combat Bash to be held tonight at 9 and a March-In Saturday at 10:10 a.m. Yvette Espinoza, chair of Military Weekend and a senior international studies and political science major, said the roundtable discussions offer equal footing and an opportunity for cadets to suggest improvements to the corps. "It is a four-night and five-day conference where cadets from all over the country and Mexico can share ideas that are pertinent to military institu-

tions," Espinoza said. A highlight of the weekend is the breaking of international boundaries by including cadets from the Heroic Military College in Mexico City, she said. Cadet Corporal Roberto Carlos Giron Marban said this is the first time he and four other cadets have been to the United States. "My partners and I are glad to be here," Marban said. "We are having fun at A&M, and we are looking forward to sharing our ideas." The main subject of yesterday's roundtable discussion was hazing and how to prevent it. John Stone of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy said the number of hazing incidents at the Coast Guard Academy was reduced by handing out more severe punishments for breaking hazing rules. "It's not really necessary because you can get your point across without hazing," Stone said. Shasta Bateman of Tulane University said the integration of the student body and the Corps of Cadets at Tulane, combined with a short orientation ses-

sion, prevents many of the hazing incidents other institutions encounter. Jonathan Dues of the U.S. Military Academy said discipline should be administered in an objective manner. "Make sure you're correcting the problem and not the person," he said. Sean Nowlan of Auburn University said the fear of being disciplined is not the most effective tool in instilling character. "In the middle of battle they're going to be more afraid of dying than getting an article 15 (a disciplinary action)," Nowlan said. Jim Harrison, Cadet Col. and a senior business analysis major, said reducing hazing incidents involves recognizing the chain of command and learning from other institutions. "Professionalism is paramount," Harrison said. Corps Commandant Maj. Gen. M.T. "Ted" Hoppood Jr. said the Corps at A&M has reduced hazing incidents by increasing awareness of the problem. "Hazing won't be tolerated in the Corps of Cadets," he said.

► Kappa Alpha Psi

Olympiad to feature African dance

By SHIKONYA CURETON
THE BATTALION

Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity will step into action for the 8th annual Greek Olympiad Saturday at 7 p.m. in Rudder Auditorium. The Greek Olympiad is a performance of dance called step. The dance originated in Africa as a means of helping tribal groups communicate and settle disagreements. Step was first performed by pledges at black universities to impress their big brothers and sisters. It then became a form of entertainment on college campuses. This year's Greek Olympiad will feature between 12 and 15 performances lasting from 10 to 12 minutes each from different universities around the state including

Prairie View A&M and the University of Houston. John Thoppil, vice-president of Kappa Alpha Psi and a senior biochemistry major, said the Greek Olympiad is a competition to unite Greek organizations on campus and around the state. "The purpose of the step show is to show unity between the Greeks and for entertainment," he said. "It is a friendly competition among the fraternities and sororities because we have a common goal, which is to service our community." Vince Allen, a Kappa Alpha Psi member and a senior business analysis major, said each group adds a unique perspective to the performance as an expression of how the members see themselves as a whole.

The students performing will be judged on originality, precision, authenticity and overall stage performance by eight judges representing different Greek organizations. "The performance is an expression of the fraternity or sorority," Allen said. "For instance, the Kappas are caners because the cane is a symbol of power. "We believe that how the person handles their cane while performing is how they handle power." To Kappa Alpha Psi, the Olympiad is more than entertainment, Allen said. Proceeds from the show will fund scholarships for motivated high school students in the Bryan-College Station area who show an interest in higher education.

Education officials look into allegations

Accusations of TAAS testing irregularity prompt investigation of two school districts.

AUSTIN (AP) — Allegations of cheating on Texas' academic skills test are under investigation at two school districts, and 20 students' reading scores were invalidated at a third district because of teachers' mix-up. "Overall, we have very, very few problems, but every test administration there are accusations about some kind of testing irregularity," Texas Education Agency spokeswoman Debbie Graves Ratcliffe said Thursday.

The TEA will review school officials' probe of the allegations and determine if further investigation is needed, she said. "We take test security very, very seriously." Ratcliffe noted, however, that few school districts typically are involved in complaints about the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills, given to 1.8 million students annually. This week, the TAAS was administered to students in grades four and eight and in high school. Students must pass the high school exit-level test to get a diploma. The TAAS also is used to gauge school district performance. Cheating allegations have been reported to TEA concerning Silsbee Independent School District, 81 miles northeast of Houston, and Grapevine-Colleyville ISD, northeast of Fort Worth. The reading mix-up occurred at Mesquite ISD, near Dallas. The alleged incident at Silsbee apparently is related to school districts being given flexibility by TEA concerning the days they administer the TAAS. That was done because of students' involvement in basketball playoffs and the Houston Livestock Show, events whose timing districts don't control. Under the regular schedule, the writing portion of the TAAS was to be given Tuesday, the math portion Wednesday and the reading portion Thursday. Under the flexible schedule, school districts had to keep the writing test on Tuesday but could give the others any time between Monday and Saturday.

Schools weren't allowed to change the time of the writing test because it contains only one question and there is no backup exit-level writing test if problems are discovered, Ratcliffe said. At Silsbee, it is alleged that students who took the exit-level math test Monday looked ahead in their test book to see the writing assignment, she said. The word was then allegedly spread to at least one student in a neighboring school district, and ultimately reported to TEA, she said. Silsbee school officials alerted by TEA investigated immediately and have already submitted a report to the agency, said Superintendent James Lang. If cheating is found to have occurred, scores could be invalidated and students would have to take the test again. The exit-level test next will be administered in May. "Certainly we're concerned about it," Lang said. "We're talking about all of our sophomores taking the writing portion of the test." At Grapevine-Colleyville ISD, four staff members were placed on administrative leave with pay after allegations that some learned of the specific writing assignment on the TAAS test administered at a middle school. It was originally alleged that one or more teachers then prepared their students for the assignment. But late Thursday, Ratcliffe said it was unclear whether any teacher shared the information with students.

Conference to shed light on presidential communication

By KEVIN CUMMINGS
THE BATTALION

Radiation, deforestation, the spotted owl and other issues concerning presidential communication will be addressed in Texas A&M University's third annual Conference on Presidential Rhetoric, being held today through Sunday. The Center for Presidential Studies and the George Bush School of Government and Public Service have sponsored the conference since 1993. Dr. Martin J. Medhurst, professor and associate department head of speech communication, anticipates representatives from over 45 different universities around the country and participants from more than 30 states. "This is one of the many ways that the Center for Presidential Studies reaches out to scholars from all around the country to try to underline the importance of studying the American presidency as an institution," Medhurst said. "Bringing people to College Station is a way of underlining Texas A&M as the leading center for studying the presidency." Tarla Peterson, an associate professor of speech communication and conference coordinator, said she is interested in selecting participants who not only are well published, but also can bridge across academic disciplines. "We have invited people from [the] departments of English, architecture, communications, humanities and environmental science," she said. "Often the current controversial issues in the real world aren't divided into the neat little academic segments we have on campus."

J. Robert Cox, professor of communication studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and chair of the national Sierra Club's Board of Directors, will deliver the keynote address Friday on environmental policy and the Clinton/Gore White House. Medhurst said he is looking forward to the keynote address. "It's going to start off with a real bang with Robert Cox's paper and the two respondents," Medhurst said. "The two who are responding to it aren't known for mincing words, and there will probably be some fireworks right off the bat." Other speakers discussing the policies of various presidential administrations include: Lawrence Prelli, University of New Hampshire; John Nelson, University of Iowa; and Christine Oravec, University of Utah. Roundtable discussion topics this year include the relationships between presidential rhetoric and the influence of nongovernmental groups on science policy and attempts to limit the role of such groups in political decision-making. Medhurst said the quality of the discussions is dependent on the participants. "It's a matter of getting the right combination of expertise and chemistry," Medhurst said. "We think the people participating on the roundtable [discussions] have both academic and practical experience... and will have some interesting things to share."

See CONFERENCE, Page 2

THE BATTALION INSIDETODAY

HILL: The quest to reinstate public prayer neglects Christian theology. Opinion, Page 8

Debriefing Page 2
Aggielife Page 3
Sports Page 5