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Hazing allegations lead to suspensions Fish Drill Team advisers told to clear out of Quadrangle immediately

By JACKIE VRATIL
THE BATTALION

All nine student advisers to the Fish Drill Team were temporarily suspended Monday evening following allegations of hazing and assault. Six sophomores, two juniors, and one senior were told by Maj. Gen. M.T. "Ted" Hopgood, commandant of the Corps of Cadets, to leave the Quadrangle immediately. A University Relations press release said the suspension resulted from one member of the team charging the advisers with physi-

cally assaulting him in a Corps resident hall Saturday night, March 22. Monday, two former members of the team reported incidents of possible hazing by the same advisers.

Steve Foster, Corps commander and a senior political science major, said the allegations of assault have been made and the Corps is working with the University Police Department in every way possible.

"It's going to take some strict scrutiny and some truthful testimony to resolve the problem," he said. Foster said Hopgood took disci-

plinary action by telling all nine students to leave the quad.

"They were all told to clear out of the Corps area for the night, and move their things out tomorrow," Foster said.

Hopgood explained his reason for suspending the cadets in a press release.

"Texas A&M will not tolerate haz-

"Texas A&M will not tolerate hazing within the Corps or its associated organizations."

Maj. Gen. Hopgood
Corps of Cadets commandant

ing within the Corps or its associated organizations," he said. "I find it personally distasteful and far from the ideals that the Corps and the University promote."

Bob Wiatt, director of UPD, said this case, although involving allegations of assault, cannot be looked at with any more or less severity than previous hazing incidents.

"Each incident is an overt violation [of] Corps rules [and] University rules, as well as Texas rules," he said. "Therefore, you can't really call any incident more serious than the others."

In the past, Hopgood has taken action against infractions by disbanding one unit for violating Corps and University rules against hazing.

Wiatt said he applauds Hopgood's swift action involving this matter.

"We are not going to tolerate any kind of hazing," he said.

Wiatt said hazing can be as sim-

ple as telling somebody to drink a beer, but assault includes the physical part of hazing.

"An assault charge is when somebody physically 'whops' you, or if somebody punches you in the nose," he said.

Foster said the freshmen showed no emotion when they were told the specifics of the action being taken against their upperclassmen.

"We answered some of their questions," he said, "but they really just sat there and listened."

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Amy Dunlap, THE BATTALION

Defend Yourself

Megan Stanley, a sophomore poultry science major, tries to stop Julie Daves, a senior speech communication major, from stabbing her in a self defense class Monday.

Bill limits settlement payments

Proposal would provide uniform standards in state universities

By BENJAMIN CHENG
THE BATTALION

The benefits university administrators sometimes receive when they leave their positions will be limited if the Texas Legislature passes a bill authored by Sen. Steve Ogden.

The bill passed unanimously in the Senate and currently is awaiting approval in the House of Representatives. The bill limits the settlement payments administrators receive when asked to leave their positions.

Ogden said the bill was prompted by newspaper articles printed in the Houston Chronicle two years ago. The articles documented cases at the University of Houston and Texas Southern University in which outgoing administrators were paid \$750,000 and \$216,000, respectively, to leave. Ogden said it is not uncommon for university administrators to be

paid substantial amounts to leave.

"They wanted to keep things quiet," Ogden said.

Texas A&M President Ray Bowen said the people who make such decisions should be held responsible for their actions. Instead of a bill, Bowen said, supervisors such as the Board of Regents and the governor should correct the mistakes of others.

"It's awfully hard for the Senate to legislate common sense," he said.

Rep. Irma Rangel, chair of the House higher education committee, said the bill provides uniform standards within the state universities.

"I think the legislature needs to issue some directions to the universities," Rangel said.

Although Bowen does not oppose the bill, he does not foresee it making those in charge more responsible for their actions.

"The objectives are noble," he said, "but to

build it into state law is not necessary."

Bowen said the problems addressed in the bill have not occurred at A&M during his three-year presidency.

Ogden said the bill has received little opposition as University of Texas Chancellor William Cunningham and Texas A&M Chancellor Barry Thompson both testified before the Senate in favor of the bill.

Ogden said the most significant aspect of the bill is its limitation of excessive salaries for administrators who return to teaching. Ogden said universities should avoid a perceived double standard and need to run an operation the average worker says is fair.

"It's the right thing to do," Ogden said.

Other provisions in the bill limit administrative contracts to three years and grant tenure and development leave on a consistent basis with faculty.

A&M may not fund bike program

Liability risks cause reluctance in funding of the Borrow-a-Bike program.

By ERICA ROY
THE BATTALION

The Borrow-a-Bike program unanimously approved by the Texas A&M Student Senate may not be sponsored by the administration, a University official said.

A fleet of 35-50 yellow bicycles would have been distributed for public use on campus beginning March 16 following the Senate decision.

The program was to use abandoned bicycles confiscated by Parking, Traffic and Transportation. PTTS would paint the bicycles, the University Police Department would register them and volunteers would repair them.

Dr. Carolyn Adair, director for Student Activities, said the decision not to sponsor the program has not been made officially.

Adair said the program was a good idea, but the University could not sponsor the program because of the liability risks involved.

"If an accident happens and it is (because of) a faulty piece of equipment (on the bicycle), then the University is responsible," Adair said. The student could then sue the University, she said.

A&M may not be able to regularly check every bicycle for damages, Adair said.

"We have no idea of knowing where these bicycles go once they are released," she said.

Cass Burton, a freshman senator and a political science major, has worked on implementing the program since September.

Burton said he understands the Universi-

ty does not want to sponsor the program because of liability risks, but he thought the positive aspects of the program would override the dangers.



James Palmer, THE BATTALION

"I expected the administration to work with me," Burton said. "I thought we'd be able to find a way around it."

Burton said he assumed a "ride at your own risk" clause on the bicycles would release the University from any liability.

He said an entity is needed to accept responsibility for the program, before it can be started.

Burton has three options to find an organization to sponsor Borrow-a-Bike.

He can ask the cities of Bryan or College Station, a non-profit organization in the community or he can start a non-profit organization himself.

The bicycles have been repaired and are ready to be painted. Adair said she does not know when the official decision will be made.

MSC Council revises candidate campaign policy

Under the new policy, the MSC cannot support any candidate in the student body elections.

By ERICA ROY
THE BATTALION

The Memorial Student Center Council clarified and more clearly defined the MSC policy on campaigning for student body

elections last night.

The policy does not allow the MSC to formally or informally support any candidate in the student body elections.

Chris Williams, MSC president and a senior political science and speech communication major, said the new policy reinforces the old one, and it answers questions MSC members had about the policy.

"It is an extension of our original policy," Williams said.

Nelson Burns, the incoming MSC president and a senior international studies major, said

the policy helped explain the MSC's stand on campaigning in the student center.

"I think it (the revised policy) does two things," Burns said. "First, it formalizes existing election policies concerning the student center. Second, it outlines appropriate behavior for MSC volunteers."

Williams said the MSC wants to provide an inclusive environment for the student body, and supporting one candidate does not allow the MSC to do that.

"This is their (the student

body's) living room," he said, "and you don't have political candidates in your living room telling you how to vote."

The revision of the policy is consistent with the Student Government Election Commission regulations.

The policy guidelines include: •Candidates may not campaign in the University Center, unless the candidate was invited to a meeting.

•Campaign materials cannot be displayed in the University Center, unless the candidate is using them to address a meeting.

•Campaigning cannot take place at MSC programs, unless the program is sponsoring the candidates for educational reasons.

•MSC resources, such as the computer lab, copying machines, e-mail list serves, telephones, physical space and financial resources, cannot be used for campaign purposes.

Williams said the original policy was vague and did not cover all aspects of the MSC. The new policy makes it clear that no campaigning can take place in the MSC.

Before the revised policy, can-

didates approached the MSC Film Society wanting to place advertisements before the showing of films. Under the original policy, it was not clear whether this would be allowed.

The new policy clarifies this question.

Williams said since the MSC approved this policy, they must also ensure that the guidelines are enforced.

"Not only is it the Election Commission's responsibility to enforce this, it is also ours," Williams said.

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Avilés wants to ensure equal access to A&M

He is one of three new regents appointed by Gov. Bush in January.

By ERICA ROY
THE BATTALION

In 1949, Dr. Dionel "Don" Avilés came to the United States from Ponce, Puerto Rico at age 17 to begin his lifelong relationship with Texas A&M University. This week he will begin his term as a member of the Board of Regents.

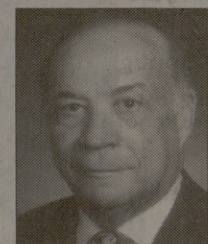
Gov. George W. Bush appointed Avilés, along with Anne Armstrong and Erle Nye, in January of this year to replace outgoing regents Chair Mary Nan West, Alison Brisco and Royce E. Wisenbaker.

Avilés is the owner and president of Avilés Engineering Corporation in Houston, a company he started 16 years ago. The company specializes in geotechnical and environmental engineering services and construction material testing.

Avilés received his bachelor's, master's and doctorate degrees from Texas A&M.

"As a graduate of Texas A&M, being appointed a regent has to be one of the greatest honors," he said. "To be able to go back and guide the University and the other schools in the system is the greatest honor I have ever received."

Dr. Leo Sayaverdra, deputy chancellor for academic institutions and agencies, said Avilés'



Avilés

three A&M degrees provide him with experience and knowledge of A&M.

"He clearly understands the philosophy of the institution and the system," Sayaverdra said. "As you might say, 'He bleeds maroon.'"

In 1993, Avilés retired from the U.S. Army Reserve with the rank of major general.

Avilés said his business and military background will help him perform his job as regent. "The combination of my business experience and military experience have built a good basis to serve the system in a good capacity," he said.

Dr. Jerry Gaston, vice president for administration, said Avilés' professional perspective and his status as a former student will enable Avilés to understand the needs of Texas A&M.

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