

8 A&M women participate in sorority Rush activities

BY MATT WEBER
City editor

Over 750 Texas A&M women participated in Rush last week, hoping to pledge one of the 12 sororities at A&M.

Rush began last Monday with each of the sorority houses hosting a short reception for the rushees.

Rushees attended parties during the week until Saturday, when rushees received bids from sororities. Activities will continue with accepted rushees pledging for their sororities.

Lanita Hanson, the Pan Hellenic adviser, said that Rush is open to anyone interested in joining a sorority.

"There is a place for everyone," Hanson said.

"It's a positive thing because you meet a lot of people ... I just know I'm going to form friendships that will last my whole life."

KRISTA MANDERSCHIED
SOPHOMORE GENETICS MAJOR

"Whoever wants to rush can, and we would like as many as possible."

Krista Manderscheid, a sophomore genetics major who is pledging for the Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority, said Rush helps students to meet others in a close-knit social setting.

"It's a positive thing because you meet a lot of people," Manderscheid said. "I've already formed some bonds — I just know I'm going to form friendships that will last my whole life."

Manderscheid also said the pace of Rush was hectic at times.

"It was a very stressful week for all of us, both sides," Manderscheid said. "It was really stressful for rushees and the people doing Rush."

Kim Sowden, computer chair for Rush Team, which organizes Rush, said the week helps to disprove people's preconceived notions of sororities and sorority life.

"I think new rushees learn by participating in Rush," Sowden said. "I think they realize that the stereotypes people not in sororities have about sororities aren't true. It's not just parties and mixers."

Although Rush traditionally is held the week before classes start, it can be held any time membership numbers for the sororities fall below projected figures.



DAVE HOUSE/THE BATTALION
Melanie Jansen, a freshman general studies major, embraces her new pledge sister Keely Pillans, a freshman horticulture major, after receiving their bid invitations to become members of Zeta Tau Alpha sorority.

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A&M achieves national academic recognition

BY BRANDYE BROWN
Staff writer

Texas A&M ranked 19th among the nation's public institutions of higher education in U.S. News and World Report's 11th Annual "America's Best Colleges."

A&M was the only university from the southwest region of the United States to rank among the 25 best public universities in the nation.

James R. Ashlock, executive director of University Relations, said in the past Texas A&M has competed successfully against both public and private universities, but this year another category was added that included only public universities.

"Awareness is growing among university administrators and faculty around the nation of A&M's academic reputation," Ashlock said. "This report takes into account what our peers say about A&M." Curtis Childers, A&M student body president and a senior agricultural development major, said he was not surprised A&M ranked high nationally because the University has been working to improve its academic reputation.

"A&M has generally done a better job at student life in the past than academic standards, so former students have had a great student life and support the University generously," Childers said. "Today, the University benefits from the camaraderie and spirit of former students."

Ashlock said high academic standards and reasonable tuition coupled with a reasonable

cost of living make Texas A&M attractive to students and their parents.

"Students are more discriminating today," he said. "They are looking for value, and A&M is always very highly ranked for value."

Dr. Ray M. Bowen, Texas A&M president, said the University's high national ranking is important in drawing quality students and in receiving the support of former students.

"The steady stream of high recognition is very beneficial," Bowen said. "When we ask students to pay a high-dollar tuition, they can be confident in a quality education at a top university."

Childers said national ranking influences the quality of students Texas A&M attracts, especially top academic high-school students.

"Top students want to know they are going to a top school," Childers said. "They want to see that A&M is perceived as Harvard and Yale have been perceived in the past."

Ashlock said that A&M offers a quality education to well-rounded students.

"A&M students may not have the highest SAT scores or GPA, but they are the best well-rounded high-school students turned out of Texas schools with strong leadership abilities (and) maturity, as well as high academics," Ashlock said. "A&M turns out students ready to take on leadership roles."

Dr. Ron Douglas, provost and executive vice president of academic affairs, said A&M's success rests on the emphasis given to undergraduate programs receiving contributions from former stu-

dents. These offers of gratitude to the University in the form of gifts and scholarships continue to support a quality student body, Douglas said.

"This ranking recognizes excellence built up over years," he said. "This kind of quality doesn't happen overnight. We feel good when other people agree with us, and we certainly feel that A&M is one of the best universities in the country."

Bowen said the construction work on campus is evidence of the reinvestment of money into the University to create a quality educational environment. Three million dollars have been put into the renovation of classrooms to achieve modern learning facilities, as well as continued investment in library facilities, Bowen said. These investments are part of A&M's assurance to retain its reputation as a top-ranking national university.

Douglas said the Texas A&M administration will work to bring in money to fund research and scholarships to support both faculty and students.

Childers said the impact of students on A&M's ranking is significant, because Texas A&M has a student body that cares, student leaders who always are willing to voice an opinion and administrators who listen to what students say.

Childers said A&M cannot get comfortable with its position, but must continue to improve.

"It's always hardest to see faults when you are doing well," he said.

"Right now is the time to look at ourselves as a University. Now is the time to change, to continue to rank high nationally."

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