

ExCel promotes diversity among students

By **ROBERT SMITH**
Staff writer

Incoming Texas A&M students learned about cultural diversity and college survival skills at the 9th annual ExCel program, held last Friday and Saturday in the MSC.

Denise Cunningham, executive director of ExCel, said the program will benefit the students who attended.

"They (new students) will have a good head start when classes begin compared to other students," she said.

The ExCel program, which began in 1987 as a minority freshman program, is intended to help students make a smooth transition to college life, enhance leadership skills and preserve and promote cultural identity.

ExCel was attended by 88 students this year, a decrease from 125 students a year ago and 198 students in 1995.

Cunningham said the program was a success despite the lower turnout.

"This year was the first year the Hopwood decision really went into effect, so we have fewer minority students coming in this year," Cunningham said.

This year's program included speeches on student interaction and college survival tips, an exposition of A&M and community organizations and social activities.

A&M Student Body President Curtis Childers and University President Dr. Ray M. Bowen made speeches Saturday.

Stefanos Ghebray, a senior business management

major and an ExCel team leader, said leaders related their experiences at A&M to the students.

"The new students are able to interact with other college students and can talk to someone who has been there," Ghebray said.

Each student was assigned to a team leader. The leaders helped the students learn about the University, the resources and everyday college life.

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DENISE CUNNINGHAM
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OF EXCEL

Jason Miller, a freshman electrical engineering major, said he enjoyed the ExCel program.

"I like the networking and meeting minorities and freshmen," Miller said.

Rachel Robinson, a freshman kinesiology major, agreed.

"I like the networking and learning who's where and where you need to go if you want to do something or have a

problem," Robinson said.

Danielle Ross, a freshman computer engineering major, said she was glad to meet people at ExCel.

"I knew some people before I got here, but it's good to meet some new people and just meet everyone," Ross said.



(from right) **Andrie Leday**, a senior marketing major, **Eric Malonson**, a senior wildlife and fisheries major, and **Eric Brooks**, a chemical engineering major, explain to students about the two benches outside the MSC, which are memorials to Reginald Broadus.

DEREK DEMERE/THE BATTALION

Burger Boy owner refuses city's offer

By **BENJAMIN CHENG**
Staff writer

Burger Boy owner George Sopasakis rejected the City of College Station's \$35,000 offer to pay for his relocation costs and said he would take the city to federal court in Houston Sept. 16.

"We told them (College Station) 'No'. We're not going to give in," Sopasakis said. "We're not going to give in."

Last Thursday, the College Station City Council voted 5-2 to offer Sopasakis \$35,000 in agreement with

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations. But

"We told them (College Station) 'No'. We're not going to give in."

GEORGE SOPASAKIS
BURGER BOY OWNER

Sopasakis, who was not present at the meeting, said he wants at least

\$45,000, and that relocation probably would cost more.

The two sides differ on their interpretations of the Uniform Relocation Act, the section of HUD regulations that states what relocation costs Sopasakis can be reimbursed.

Assistant City Manager Tom Brymer said the city has negotiated in good faith with Sopasakis while following HUD rules.

"It's been lengthy," Brymer said. "We're as interested in getting Mr. Sopasakis relocated in another location in Northgate as he is."

Sopasakis' lawsuit against the city cites various civil rights and HUD regulation violations. He said construction work on his new location will begin soon, but he will continue to fight the city on the settlement.

"We do not trust the city," Sopasakis said. "Their goal is to put us out of business — ours is to remain in business. It's as simple as that."

Mayor Pro Tempore Hub Kennedy said the city wants to resolve this issue.

"We really need to get this behind us," Kennedy said.

ALL-U NIGHT

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"We tried to get the class of 2001 together to show their support for A&M," Cox said. "Also, we know that Appelt Hall is the best on campus, so we had to come prove it."

Jessica Porrazzo, president of Alpha Delta Pi and a senior journalism and international studies major, said she was excited about All-U Night, Alpha Delta Pi's first sorority activity.

"School just started and already bonds have been forming in our sorority," Porrazzo said. "All-U Night is a chance to meet and get motivated about A&M."

The yell leaders introduced campus leaders after the Texas Aggie Band marched into Kyle Field.

Dr. Ray M. Bowen, president of Texas A&M, and Dr. J. Malon Southernland, the vice president of student affairs, welcomed the freshmen to A&M.

The night ended with the first yell practice of the year and an invitation to the Howdy Dance, sponsored by the Class of '98 for the Class of '01.

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