

A&M grad chooses quality over diversity

By BENJI CHENG
Staff writer

As one of just four African-American students admitted to the University of Texas Law School this fall, A&M graduate Aja Henderson might feel a little out of place among the other 464 new law students there. But she said her undergraduate experience prepared her for that situation.

"When I was at A&M, there was usually only one or two other blacks in the class," Henderson said. "It's really not that much of a difference."

Since last fall, UT Law School has seen the number of new African-American students enrolled drop from 31 to four. UT officials blame the drop on the Hopwood decision, which prohibits state universities from considering race as a factor in admissions and scholarships.

Mary Soto, assistant dean of admissions for UT Law School, said a major cause of the drop is not actual repercussions of Hopwood, but the perception created by the media.

"Certainly a lot of (the drop) is a result of the negative publicity about what it is like to attend law school here," Soto said.

Henderson said the media has misrepresented the UT administration as supportive of Hopwood, which she said it is not.

"The (UT) administration was upset with Hopwood, and they haven't always been portrayed like that," Henderson said.

Henderson chose UT over Duke Law School. Although Duke Law School was more diverse, she said, the quality of education at UT and her desire to stay in the South outweighed its less-diverse student body.

But Henderson also said a lack of minorities in the classroom results in a lack of alternate points of view, which hurts every law student's education.

"(A lack of diversity) does detract from the quality of education," she said.

"In legal education, it does make a difference because of the diversity of viewpoints."

Soto said the number of African-American applicants to UT Law School has dropped 40 percent since Hopwood, and classroom diversity at the school suffers because of it.

"I strongly believe that in law school, learning from other students is huge part of learning," Soto said.

Mary Chapman, president of the Texas A&M Pre-Law Society, also said decreased diversity would result in fewer diverse opinions in the classroom. But she said the new enrollment numbers would have only a minor effect on the overall quality of education at UT Law School, which she regards as one of the best in Texas.

"[About] the only (thing) it's going to affect is cultural diversity in the classroom," Chapman said.

From her sophomore to senior years at A&M, Henderson wrote columns on and off for the Battalion's opinion section. She said her stint as a columnist prepared her for the argumentative atmosphere of law school.

She described her columnist experience as worthwhile, but bittersweet. "Sometimes, it seemed like mail call was devoted to me," Henderson said.

Theater as part of the early celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month.

Other events this month will include Latino parties, social gatherings and a fajita cook-off.

Students from many Hispanic countries, including Brazil, Bolivia, Columbia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Peru and Venezuela, will participate in Hispanic Heritage Month.

being involved in Multicultural Services programs such as Ambassadors, ExCEL and MEDALS, as well as in other University programs such as Fish Camp, has helped her improve her leadership skills.

"I like all the people I worked with (in Multicultural Services), and I met many good friends in the department," she said. "The department has a lot of good programs to promote people of color. It gives you the opportunity to get together with people who have the same concerns as you do."

Martin Hodges, Student Government director of minority affairs and a senior journalism major, said he believes the department's role as an educator is important in shaping A&M's future.

"I believe the department will be pivotal in taking A&M into the 21st century," Hodges said. "If we are going to have a global economy, we need to have a global perspective. That's what the department provides."

Leah Matthews, Class of '93, said

HERITAGE

HERITAGE

Continued from Page 1

"We expect a lot of Hispanic students to come out and participate in the celebration, because it's a time to express our heritage," she said.

Hispanic fraternity Omega Delta Phi presented the movie *Senna* Saturday night at Rudder

DIVERSITY

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The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board recognized the department in 1993 for "creating a positive multicultural environment in Texas higher education."

Dr. Emily Santiago, assistant director of Multicultural Services, said several student organizations now work with the department.

"I think the department has grown tremendously," Santiago said. "There is a lot of enthusiasm from minority students who utilize the program."

Santiago said it is rewarding to help minority freshmen who feel scared and out of place at A&M become involved on campus.

"Through our different programs, I think we provide a 'home away from home' for ethnic minorities," Santiago said.

Leah Matthews, Class of '93, said

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PHYS 202	5-7 PM	CH 24	CH 25	CH 26	CH 27 + PRAC EXAM
PHYS 201	7-9 PM	CH 1, 2	CH 3	CH 4	CH 5 + PRAC EXAM
CHEM 101	9-11 PM	CH 1, 2	CH 2, 3	CH 3, 4	CH 5 + PRAC EXAM
PHYS 218	11 PM - 1 AM	CH 1, 2	CH 2, 3	CH 4	CH 5 + PRAC EXAM
BUSINESS					
		MON Sep 15	TUE Sep 16	WED Sep 17	THU Sep 18
FINC 341	5-7 PM	PART 1	PART 2	PART 3	PART 4
ACCT 230	7-9 PM	CH 14 CASH FLOW	CH 14 CONT + CH 1		
BANA 303	7-9 PM			PART 1	PART 2
FINC 341	9-11 PM	PART 1	PART 2	PART 3	PART 4

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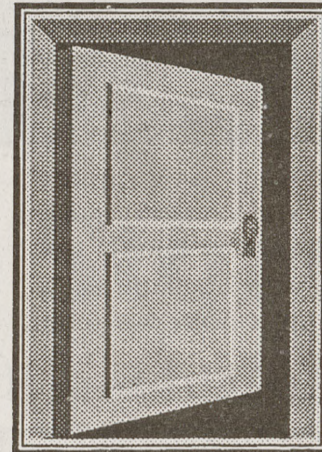
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