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# UT Law School discloses new admissions criteria

AUSTIN (AP) - The University of Texas' law school has revamped its admission policy again, this time identifying applicants from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds.

It is the latest attempt by the school to counter the effects of an appeals court ruling banning affirmative action from admissions decisions.

"We very much hope that we are able to increase minority enrollment," said Cynthia Estlund, associate vice president for academic affairs at the law school. "But we can't tell ahead of time what change the new admissions policy is going to make."

Under the new policy, released Wednesday, Law School Admissions Test scores and undergraduate grade point averages will still be considered along with several new factors, including a "commitment to public service, leadership."

The criteria includes an essay about personal challenges or disadvantages faced. "We are expanding our vision of what is important for future lawyers," she said.

Any distinct experiences that are not already "well-represented in the student body" also will be considered in the application process, in addition to whether an applicant is from an underserved region of the state or has a socioeconomically disadvantaged background.

"There is a sense that all regions of this state are not well represented in this school," she said.

The new criteria will be considered for applicants to fall 1998.

In 1992, four law school applicants sued after they were denied admissions, while minorities with lower test scores were admitted. They claimed that the law school's affirmative action policies constituted reverse discrimination.

The U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals agreed in a decision known as *Hopwood* sending minority enrollment plummeting.

This fall's freshman class includes four blacks and 26 Mexican Americans. That is compared to the 31 blacks and 42 Mexican Americans that were admitted last year.

"We're hoping to end up with a more diverse class," Estlund said. "But this just one of many ways."

She added that the law school is also hoping to see

results from beefed up minority recruitment efforts. "We have been trying to respond to the concerns outside the law school and outside the law school about what we're doing," she said.



The effects of Hopwood also are being felt across the state as minority enrollment at Texas' four public law schools declined 23 percent for blacks and 19 percent for Hispanics.

"The new UT law school admissions criteria for 1998 is definitely a good start and a step in the right direction," said Rep. Kino Flores, D-Mission. "UT must build on this to ensure that access to higher education reaches everyone in Texas."

Flores has pushed for a new law school branch at the University of Texas-Pan American that would allow students to complete two years in Edinburg, then finish at the UT law school in Austin.

Vincent Lazaro, general counsel for the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, said he congratulates the law school on its efforts.

"However it is not going to accomplish what needs to be done," Lazaro said. "It is not going to achieve the level of diversity that was at the law school before the decision."

He said any improvements in minority enrollment would be marginal. "But anything will certainly be better than the numbers that we saw during the first year of Hopwood," Lazaro said.

Lazaro added that the emphasis on socioeconomic background is futile. "It is not interchangeable with race and should not be," he said.

# KKK fliers found in free classified ads

ODESSA (AP) — Odessans bewildered to see grocery store classified publications in their yards were further shocked by what was inside — one-page fliers recruiting new members into the Ku Klux Klan.

Copies of the Dollar Saver and Thrifty Nickel publications apparently were taken from their racks and redelivered last weekend with the pamphlets, which portray the American Knights of the KKK as a "White Christian, right wing, conservative organization."

Publishers of both tabloids said the KKK didn't have permission to throw the papers.

"We will be working with law

enforcement agencies to determine what liability exists and we will take whatever action we can," said Charles Spence, publisher of the Midland Reporter-Telegram, which owns Dollar Saver.

The FBI is aware of the incident but not conducting an active investigation, Midland agent-in-charge Terry Kincaid said. Kincaid estimated the Klan to have about 25 dues-paying members in the area.

In addition to supporting a strong military, adherence to the U.S. Constitution and strict anti-pornography laws, the pamphlet called for intensified border patrols and school segregation.

"WE SUPPORT: ... Creating a

three tiered school system with white schools, black schools and integrated schools thus allowing freedom of choice to attend the school of preference," the flier said.

A man who answered the telephone at a number listed on the flier said the Klan has changed since its violent origins in the 1800s.

"This is a new Klan," said the man, who wouldn't give his name. "We abide by the Constitution. We go by the Bible and we go by the laws. We don't do hangings and we don't do lynchings."

He said the group believes in segregation, not white supremacy.

# Teen pleads guilty in bus stop slaying of 14-year-old

WICHITA FALLS (AP) — A Wichita Falls teen-ager has been sentenced to 28 years in prison after pleading guilty to killing her 14-year-old neighbor at a school bus stop last year.

LaShawna Yvette Duval, 18, pleaded guilty to murder in a pre-arranged agreement. She won't be eligible for parole until 2010 for the Sept. 26, 1996, stabbing death of Erica Holloway.

Duval's younger sister, Taquisha Nicole Ragsdale, was convicted last March for the same crime. Ms. Ragsdale, 15, received a 15-year sentence and is currently in custody of the Texas Youth Commission.

After Duval was sentenced Wednesday, a friend of Holloway said the punishment didn't fit the crime.

"An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," said Rodeshia Galbert, a witness to a face-off between the sisters and Holloway the night before the killing.

As Holloway and friends were waiting for a bus the next morning, a black Camaro screeched up beside them, witnesses said. Duval emerged from the car, an argument ensued and Duval struck Holloway.

Duval chased Holloway and returned holding a knife. Holloway reappeared moments later and said, "She stabbed me," before falling down.

# Newspaper reports state inspector a paid advisor for private jail company

HOUSTON (AP) — A state inspector who gave a heavily criticized West Texas jail perfect marks was a paid consultant for the private jail company that operated the facility, the *Houston Chronicle* reported Thursday.

The Bobby Ross Group operates the Dickens County Detention Center at Spur, 55 miles east of Lubbock. A subsidiary of the Bobby Ross Group paid \$42,000 a year to Robert L. Dearing, deputy director of the Texas Commission on Jail Standards, said Tony Schaffer, attorney for the company.

The \$3,500-a-month consulting fee nearly doubled Dearing's annual state pay of \$48,360, the *Chronicle* reported.

The jail commission is charged with inspecting and certifying county jails, including those that are privately run. Its authority to enforce state standards, in effect, gives it the life-and-death power over private vendors who want to be in the booming privatization of jails and prisons.

As deputy director, Dearing is responsible for scheduling, reviewing and sometimes participating in inspections of county jails.

Dearing did no work for the Bobby Ross Group and he did not consult on any of its Texas-run facilities, Schaffer said. The company also operates prisons in Karnes and Newton counties.

Dearing was paid by BRG of Georgia to conduct security inspections of the Irwin (County) Youth Development Campus, a male juvenile facility the company operates in Ocilla, Ga.

Schaffer said Dearing was paid by BRG of Georgia, a subsidiary of Bobby Ross Group, to conduct security inspections of the company's Irwin (County) Youth Development Campus, which houses male juvenile offenders in Ocilla, Ga. BRG of Georgia has the same

corporate officers as the Bobby Ross Group, he said.

Last month, Dearing and Robert Scarborough, a jail commission inspector, gave a clean bill of health to the Dickens County Correctional Center despite an audit by Montana state corrections officials that found 29 areas of noncompliance with the jail's contract to house Montana prisoners.

The critical audit was the basis for Montana's breaking its \$3.5 million-a-year contract with Dickens County.

In a prepared statement, Larry Young, president of Bobby Ross Group, said that before contracting with Dearing, company officials "verified with state officials that such a business relationship was appropriate and in compliance with ethical standards."

Young did not say which state officials had signed off on the propriety of the consulting contract.

State law generally prohibits agency officials from accepting any benefits from individuals they regulate, said Karen Lundquist, general counsel for the Texas Ethics Commission.

The *Chronicle* reported that the consulting work had been carried out with the full knowledge of Dearing's boss, Jack Crump, executive director of the jail commission, who said he saw nothing wrong with it.

"I understand the implications of conflict of interest," Crump said. "It was an out-of-state effort. There was no connection with what was happening (in Texas) other than Bobby Ross operates some facilities in the state. But I never looked upon that as him being a paid consultant for Bobby Ross."

Crump said he was aware of the situation for two or three years, but Schaffer said Dearing had been under contract for the past 12 to 18 months.