

BRIEFS

Panel recommends school expense curb

WASHINGTON (AP) — Concluding that tuition has grown faster than the cost of educating students, a panel recommended Thursday that colleges curb expenses and get more information available on costs and student aid.

The National Commission on the Future of Higher Education, agreeing with recommendations to Congress from the White House after just four months of work, also questioned guaranteed tenure for faculty and a mandatory retirement policy.

The 11-member panel, chartered earlier this year by Congress, held its public meeting just two days after being cautioned by the chair of the House Education Committee, Rep. Bill Goodling, R-Pa., not to unstate the problem.

Graham's condition upgraded to stable

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (AP) — The Rev. Billy Graham has pneumonia and is responding well to treatment, his doctor said Thursday.

The 79-year-old evangelist was hospitalized Wednesday night for treatment of the respiratory infection, which he developed during a Caribbean vacation.

"He's responding nicely. I don't think there will be any complications," Dr. Charles Burger, pulmonary medicine specialist at Mayo Clinic-Jacksonville, who is treating Graham, said.

He is listed in fair condition at St. Luke's Hospital, which is affiliated with the Mayo-Clinic Jacksonville, a satellite clinic of the Mayo Rochester, Minn. clinic.

Physicians ran a series of tests Thursday which indicate the infection in his right lung is clearing, his fever has subsided and his white blood count is back normal.

Study shows folic acid reduces birth defects

WASHINGTON (AP) — Adding folic acid to women's diets during child-bearing years can reduce brain and spinal-cord birth defects by almost half, says a study that reinforces federal plans to fortify bread and cereals with the vitamin.

Dr. James L. Mills of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development said the study shows taking even a small amount of folic acid a day can have a strong effect on the number of babies born with neural tube defects such as spina bifida.

"There has been a lot of debate if a small amount of folic acid will do anything to prevent neural-tube defects," said Mills. "Nobody knew what minimum dosage was needed."

Now, he said, it is clear daily dosages as small as 100 micrograms of folic acid can reduce the number of such defects by about 22 percent. Dosages of 400 micrograms cuts defects by about 47 percent, Mills said.

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Regents reject bids for Kyle project

By COLLEEN KAVANAGH
Staff writer

The Texas A&M System Board of Regents rejected all bids received for the Kyle Field expansion project and authorized a budget increase for the project Thursday in Commerce.

The bids were all \$10 million

more than the estimated budget. The budget was increased from \$28.5 million to \$37.8 million.

Terri Parker, director of communications for the System, said the 12th Man Student Foundation has agreed to cover the increased budget costs.

"The project is being revised, so that the cost will be within the scope

of the proposed budget," she said.

In other business, the Board approved proposals for Sbis Dining Center renovations, cooling tower replacements, a geology bachelor of arts program and a public health masters program.

The public health, geology and Kyle Field proposals have to be ap-

proved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board at their meeting in January.

Sbis renovations are estimated to cost \$6.6 million. The main entrance will be re-established at its original location facing Military Walk, kitchen equipment will be upgraded and kitchen areas will be

renovated. The work will be done during the next three summers.

Parker said the designers of Sbis Hall renovations want to maintain the building's historic architecture.

The cooling tower replacement will complete a 15-year project to replace the wooden cooling tower cells with ceramic-filled concrete towers.

The spirit of giving



Sheri Schmidt, coordinator of Diversity Education, buys Christmas gifts at the MSC bazaar Thursday afternoon.

RONY ANGRIWAN/THE BATTALION

PTTS to close red lot

By AMANDA SMITH
Staff writer

Construction will begin Dec. 10 in the red parking lot at the corner of Wellborn Road and George Bush Drive. Students who use this red lot may use the blue-permit lots for the remainder of the semester.

The red lot accommodates on-campus students.

Tom Williams, the director of Parking, Traffic and Transportation Services (PTTS), said the construction was delayed until after the last day of classes to eliminate parking inconveniences for students using the red lot.

Williams said students can start using the blue lots Dec. 8 without being ticketed.

"There should not be a problem with parking," he said. "We are asking that students [using the lot] move to the blue lots."

Because demand for parking spaces decreases during the spring semester, Williams said the elimination of the red lot should not produce significant parking problems.

"The spring semester is lighter as far as parking is concerned," Williams said. "There should not be a parking crunch."

The red lot under construction has 300 spaces. Williams said blue parking lots for the Reed Arena should be completed by late spring. The lot will have 1,500 spaces.

Williams said the red parking lot is being eliminated for the development of practice fields in that area.

Guy Cook, the assistant manager of facilities construction, said the practice fields should be completed by the end of June 1998.

Wally Groff, athletic director of Texas A&M, said the Athletic Department will have two grass practice fields and one AstroTurf field. He said the decision to rebuild practice fields accompanied the decision to change Kyle Field from AstroTurf to grass.

"It is the trend in college athletics to play on grass," Groff said. "If you play on grass, then you need to practice on grass."

The construction will take out some tennis courts and remove Mt. Aggie, the simulated ski slope. Groff said he expects Mt. Aggie to be moved to West Campus near Reed Arena.

Corps to march in San Antonio parade

By RACHEL DAWLEY
Staff writer

As a prelude to the Big 12 Championship game Saturday, the Texas A&M Corps of Cadets will march in an early parade in downtown San Antonio.

Chris Chase, inspector general of the Corps and a senior history and English major, planned this week's trip and parade.

"The Corps usually takes two trips each fall, but this year it wasn't feasible because there were no schools close to A&M," he said. "Normally, we travel to Baylor [University] and [University of] Texas, but those games were at home this year."

The Corps marched in San Antonio before the 1994 Southwest Conference game between A&M and Southern Methodist University.

"The Class of '98 went to San Antonio during their freshman year," Chase said. "The city is very

excited about us coming back because there was such a large turnout then."

Chase said the trip is an opportunity for cadets, especially freshman and sophomores, to get to know others in their outfit and to meet friends.

James Benham, a cadet in Company C-2 and a freshman computer engineering major, said the parade is an opportunity for cadets to represent the University.

"Corps trips are a time for fish to get to know their buddies better, as well as represent the Corps and Texas A&M across the state," he said.

Cadets travel together with their outfit, and normally stay at the homes of fellow members.

Reagan O'Reilly, a cadet in Squadron 17 and a freshman finance major, said the cadets in his outfit are traveling to the game and midnight yell together.

"The trip provides us with a

chance to bond with our buddies outside the Corps environment," O'Reilly said. "It helps us to get to know them on a more personal level."

The parade will begin at 11:30 a.m. near the corner of Dolorosa

"Don't play up a dumb quote just to make space. Trust me, I'll know."

HELEN CLANCY
PROFESSIONAL BULLY

and San Saba streets. From there, the Corps will march east along Dolorosa to Market Street and continue east on Market. The parade will end at the intersection of Market and Bowie streets.

Trey Herndon, a cadet in Squadron 13 and a freshman me-

chanical engineering major, said the parade will allow the nation to see the Corps and A&M.

"The Corps represents what A&M was founded on," Herndon said. "Even if the rest of the country only sees us for a few seconds, in a high-profile game like the Big 12 Championship, it reflects well on the University and the principles on which it is based."

The Aggie Band will lead the parade and will stop and play near the reviewing stand at Market and Alamo streets as the remainder of the Corps passes. Parson's Mounted Cavalry will ride as the parade's final unit.

Gen. Lloyd W. Newton will be the reviewing officer for the parade. Newton is commander of the Air Education and Training Command headquartered at San Antonio's Randolph Air Force Base. The command recruits, trains and educates Air Force personnel and encompasses 13 air bases nationwide.

Student Senate works to bring grade information to Internet

By BRANDYE BROWN
Staff writer

The Texas A&M Student Senate passed the Interaction Assurance Bill Wednesday, which will make grade distributions of classes accessible through the Student Government Association homepage.

The grade distributions are scheduled to be on the homepage next semester.

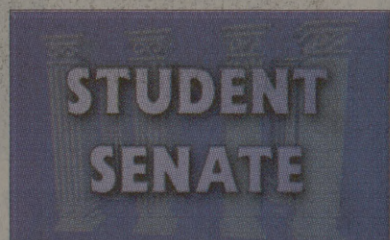
The bill also asks the classroom communications form be put on the Internet and the student's name be removed from the third and fourth copies of the form.

Kacyie Swain, off-campus senator and a junior political science major, said the Senate felt the need to take steps to improve the quality of teaching because some of the constituents were not satisfied with classroom experiences.

"We have received a lot of complaints about the quality of teachers," she said, "and we have surveyed our constituency on the issue, and many

students feel they do not receive the quality teaching they deserve."

The student's name is removed from the form so the professor, the department head of the professor and the Provost's office will receive anonymous copies. The



student's name will remain on the copy submitted to the student's department head.

Swain said the classroom communication form is for students to voice violations of University policy by the professor. Swain also said the form is not used often because it can be a conflict of interest if the student is enrolled

in the professor's course.

"The forms help students deal with situations where a student would not want to confront the teacher on their own," she said. "By removing the student's name, we are increasing the effectiveness of the form and protecting students who need to voice their concerns."

In other business:

- The Student Senate Transitioning Procedures Bill and Senate Absence Policy Reform Bill, which deal with Senate rules and regulations, were passed.

- The Q-Drop Period Extension Bill, which would expand the time to Q-drop until the last day of class before dead week, was referred to committee.

- A resolution was passed in support of the Texas A&M Football Team and Coach R.C. Slocum for capturing the Big 12 South Championship. The resolution also named the weekend of Dec. 5-7 "The Fightin' Texas Aggie Football Weekend."

RHA seeks solutions to revenue problems

By STACEY BECKS
Staff writer

The Residence Hall Association tried Wednesday night to find ways to offset revenue loss for the Department of Residence Life.

Mac Thomas, associate director of housing assignments and conference services, said Residence Life is losing money and is trying to find the cause of the problem.

"Rather than spread the problem out among everybody, we're trying to pinpoint the problem," he said.

Thomas said the three main ideas for halting revenue loss are to raise deposits for housing by \$100, charge a \$25 application fee and stop students from breaking contracts.

Peter Schulte, vice president for administration and a sophomore meteorology major, said losing the current deposit of \$200 does not stop students from moving out mid-year.

"The \$200 deposit is not a stiff enough penalty to stop people from moving out," he said. "The ex-

tra \$100 would help."

Although some schools charge an application fee, Texas A&M does not. Thomas said the department is losing money on processing ap-



plicants who decide not to attend A&M. It costs anywhere between \$25 and \$31 to process one person through housing, he said.

Nia Woods, hall director of Mosher Hall and an educational administration graduate student, said students breaking contracts is a problem in Mosher.

"In Mosher, lots of girls leave because they pledge a sorority and want to live in the house or with friends," she said. "Trying to keep students in residence halls is hard."