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TOMORROW

A&M professor threatens lawsuit if fired

By AMANDA SMITH
 Staff Writer

A tenured Texas A&M professor accused of improperly diverting more than \$100,000 of University funds into his private bank account is threatening to sue the school if he is fired. The accusation is lodged against Dhiraj Pradhan, the school's best paid computer science professor, in a report by University auditors. Pradhan has been on paid leave since Aug. 19. Houston attorney Charles Orsburn, who represents Pradhan, said the professor is innocent of wrongdoing and may sue the university if he is fired. "The University may fire Pradhan," Orsburn said. "That is going to cost the university dearly. If it happens, we will try to get it compensated." If A&M does not honor an agreement under which it employed

Pradhan as an endowed chair, "we are going to do everything that we can to see that the whole world knows about it," said Orsburn, the lead defense attorney for Pradhan's four-lawyer defense team. C. Roland Haden, vice chancellor and dean of engineering, declined to comment on whether or not Pradhan will be fired. Bill Turner, the Brazos County district attorney, said that no criminal charges have been filed against Pradhan. University officials, in a report outlining their investigation of Pradhan, said he: -Used University funds for personal travel and lodging expenses associated with three private companies he owns. -Made graduate students perform work exclusively for his private companies. -Threatened not to sign a master's thesis for graduate student Gavin Holland unless Holland publicly presented a paper to benefit one of Pradhan's private companies. Holland, according to the report, said he agreed to present the paper for fear that he would not get his thesis approved and receive his master's degree. Holland could not be reached for comment. Orsburn said Pradhan, a native of India, has been the subject of false accusations made wholly on the basis of his ethnicity and outspoken nature among professors at the University. In an e-mail Pradhan released to 600 faculty members in October 1996, he urged the formation of a labor union for professors at A&M. Orsburn said he was upset when investigations began immediately after the e-mail was sent out. "Within 24 hours, the vice chancellor of Texas A&M began an intense witch hunt to try to find accusations against Pradhan," Orsburn said. "A couple of weeks

into October 1996, while Pradhan was out of town, a University police officer raided his office and stole his computer." Robert Wiatt, the director of the University Police Department, said that the information on Pradhan's computer was part of the investigation. "Whenever the complaint was made, it was made to the System through a University audit," Wiatt said. "Some of the information under investigation was on his computer. But system internal auditors did not do anything illegal." Wiatt said that the investigation has expanded since its beginning over a year ago. "Once the internal investigation began, Pradhan claimed that the investigations were racially motivated." In addition to the investigations by the University, the National Science Foundation (NSF) is conducting an investigation at the federal level, according to the university audit.

Orsburn said that Pradhan accepted his position as the College of Engineering Endowed Chair in Computer Science in 1991 with the knowledge that he would have virtually unlimited discretion over the spending of a university endowed fund for the department. "Texas A&M (originally) gave Pradhan a letter agreement (when he first came) and said that he would

have a huge endowment at his disposal," Orsburn said. "Without any superstars in the computer science department, A&M was trying to find one. Dr. Pradhan is one of the world's leading authorities on computer microchip design." By setting up one of his private companies, Pradhan was able to get a federal Small Business Initiative for Research (SBIR) grant for university research, Orsburn said. "That was the only way that he could get money to continue the research on fault-tolerant computer chips," Orsburn said. Richard Volz, the head of the computer science department, declined to comment on the university audit and accusations against Pradhan.



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Heavy handed



Kenna Banay Harrell, a junior mechanical engineering major, receives her 1997 Aggieland Yearbook behind the Graphics Arts Services Building Tuesday afternoon. Students can pick up their 1997 Aggielands this week.

Bowen decides against further tuition increases

Staff & Wire Report

The only tuition increase facing Texas A&M University students this year will be the legislatively mandated \$2 per semester credit hour, effective with the start of the 1998-99 academic year. A&M President Dr. Ray M. Bowen has decided against proposing any increase in the University Authorized Tuition (UAT), which was formerly called the General Use Fee. Bowen said an increase in tuition was not necessary because of the amount of state funds the University received. "In recent years, the UAT has funded faculty and staff raises," Bowen said. "The 1998-99 appropriation from the state was sufficient to fund raises for the coming year without a UAT increase." Bowen added, however, that it will be

necessary to propose to the A&M Board of Regents a \$4 increase in the UAT for the 1999-2000 term. The Board of Regents will meet this Thursday. The state legislature authorized public colleges and universities in Texas, effective last fall, to set the UAT at a level not to exceed that of the legislatively mandated tuition. The mandated tuition is required by state law to increase by \$2 per semester credit hour until it reaches \$40. The tuition rate at the university is now \$34 per semester credit hour and will increase to \$36 this fall. A&M's UAT is also \$34 per credit hour. The combined state tuition/UAT rate for the 1998-99 academic year will be \$70 per credit hour, \$2 less than the maximum allowed by the state.

Bush Presidential Library opens its doors to researchers

By COLLEEN KAVANAGH
 Staff writer

With the opening of the George Bush Presidential Library research facility yesterday, over two million pages of official presidential records documenting the history of the George Bush administration became available for research. The records from the 10th presidential library include correspondence, memoranda, reports and briefing material created by the Bush White House in response to congressional and constituent inquiries, international crises and the development and implementation of the 41st president's domestic agenda. The library is open to all researchers, but those under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Research can be done in the onsite reading room, and the library can be contacted with research questions by mail, telephone or e-mail. David Alsobrook, director of the Bush Presidential Library, said archivists meet with researchers to offer guidance about which processed records and collections are most likely to contain useful material. They will also explain regulations, finding aids, research room procedures and services and will provide information on obtaining access to unprocessed presidential records. "The facility is essentially user-friendly once someone learns how to use it," he said. "The main thing is knowing your topic before you come in. If you do that, we'll help you use the materials." The Bush materials were brought to College Station after President Bush left office in Jan. 1993. Since then, archivists have been processing them in accordance to the terms of the Presidential Records Act and the Freedom of Infor-



The George Bush Presidential Library research facility, which opened yesterday, houses over 2 million pages of documents from the Bush administration.

mation Act. The files of the White House Press Office and the White House Office of Speechwriting consisting of subject files, alpha files and chronological files maintained by the office staff of the Bush administration. Records maintained by each staff member are included in the files. The Bush Presidential Library is the first library to include the records of two vice presidents: the vice presidential records of George Bush 1981-1989 and the vice presidential records of Dan Quayle 1989-1993. President Bush's Daily Diary, maintained by the White House Office of Appointments and Scheduling, are also available upon request. The diary, a daily schedule of meetings, trips, speeches and White House events involving President Bush, should not be confused with President Bush's personal diary, which is not available for researchers at this time.

Alsobrook said being able to see a copy of any president's daily schedule and drafts of every speech he delivered is interesting. "Seeing the activities of the president from the time he wakes up in the morning to the time he goes home at night is interesting," he said. "Many people hear or watch speeches, but they don't give much thought to all that goes into producing them." Warren Finch, supervisory archivist of the library, said researchers can see how a speech was born, from the information used behind it to the final speech. "The information here shows the evolution of the speech and the changes made before it was delivered," he said. "It's interesting to see the things that were changed."

PLEASE SEE BUSH ON PAGE 4.

Board of Regents to host reception for students

Meeting offers forum to discuss University issues

By COLLEEN KAVANAGH
 Staff writer

Texas A&M University students are invited to attend a reception with the Board of Regents to discuss campus issues and student concerns from six to seven tonight at the Board of Regents meeting room in the MSC. Terri Parker, director of communications, said the reception gives students the opportunity to meet the nine Board members and discuss student-related issues. "The Board wants to be able to interact with students at Texas A&M University," she said. "They want to listen to concerns in an informal session." The Board of Regents is scheduled to meet in Col-

lege Station on Thursday. Earl Nye, a regent from Dallas, said the Board wanted to have an occasion

"Different people have different interests, and we'd like to hear what the students think."

EARL NYE
 BOARD OF REGENTS MEMBER

where the only agenda item was the opportunity to visit with students. "We're people, and we're interested what's going on," he said. "The more people who come, the better perspective we'll have."

Nye said he is looking forward to meeting with students and hearing their concerns. "I think we should take advantage of the opportunity to visit with students," he said. "Different people have different interests, and we'd like to hear what the students think." Dr. Dionel Aviles, a regent from Houston, said he hopes to hear as many student opinions as possible. "I will listen to everybody's points-of-view," he said. "I never go into a meeting with my mind made up. Making decisions involves looking at the future of the University as well as the Texas A&M System." "Being an Aggie myself, it is neat to meet the students at Texas A&M," he said. "I like to hear student input — they're our clients."

INSIDE Aggielife

L.A. Confidential, starring Kevin Spacey, leads the list of top ten movies of 1997.

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sports
 Texas A&M Track and Field Teams prepare for upcoming indoor season.

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opinion
 Safety, protection issues in the debate over carrying handguns.

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