

Regents to consider affiliation, new initiatives

By COLLEEN KAVANAGH
Staff writer

The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents is scheduled to consider proposals today to allow the president of Texas A&M the authority to execute the affiliation between the South Texas College of Law and Texas A&M. Jim Ashlock, director of University Relations, said the agenda would give University President Dr. Ray M. Bowen the authority to proceed with discussions about the affiliation and sign an agreement.

"Right now, the main motivation is that many people think a top university needs an affiliation with a good law school," Ashlock said. "A&M is 127 years old, and it's a lot different than when it was founded. We need the affiliation to show that A&M has a broad-based curriculum and discipline of studies." Ashlock said the South Texas College of Law also would benefit from the alliance because when people are considering law schools, they look for university affiliation. "They want an affiliation with a large university," he said. "Discussions with them go

back to the 1960s. We have been moving towards each other for a long time." Also on the agenda, the Board will consider approving the ranking of sealed proposals for the Kyle Field expansion project today in College Station. If approved, the University will begin negotiations with the top-ranked contractor. Tom Donathen, assistant vice chancellor of facilities planning and construction, said interested contractors have submitted information about their team, workcrew, experience and safety records in addition to information about the proposed cost of the job.

A Facilities Planning and Construction committee has evaluated and ranked the contractors in order of preference. "The bids are no longer decided on the basis of the lowest price," Donathen said. "Hopefully if the Board approves the committee's results, we can negotiate with whoever was the preferred team. There may be some cost saved." The evaluation ranking system of the sealed proposals is a new law for higher education that went into effect Sept. 1997.

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up for discussion ...

- affiliation between South Texas College of Law and Texas A&M.
- ranking of sealed proposals for Kyle Field expansion project.

Leaves of grass



MIKE FUENTES/THE BATTALION

Herman Scholthof, an assistant professor of virology in the Department of Plant Pathology, checks plants affected by viruses Wednesday afternoon.

Students trapped in elevator after campuswide blackout

By CHRIS HUFFINES
Radio producer

Four Texas A&M students were trapped last night when the elevator they were riding in stopped between the eighth and ninth floors of Rudder Tower. The elevator stopped because of the power failure across campus. The students were trapped for about one hour. Before UPD had arrived, Ron Fulton, a parks and recreation doctoral student and manager of the MSC guest rooms, arrived with keys to open the ninth-floor fire door. After prying the elevator doors apart, the students walked out of the elevator unharmed.

The situation was found when Keith Helpenstell, a senior business administration major, checked the elevators after the outage and discovered the students. Helpenstell called 911 and was routed to the University Police Department. Lyndsey Bellows, a freshman speech communications major, said the situation was "a little scary," but that other students, notably Helpenstell and members of Howdy Ags!, encouraged them during their confinement. Power went out throughout most of the University at about 8 p.m. and remained out until about 10:10 p.m., University officials said.

Conference on leadership, unity to attract over 1,200 students

By JENNIFER WILSON
Staff writer

College students from 70 different Texas and southwestern colleges will attend the tenth annual Southwestern Black Student Leadership Conference (SBSLC) at Texas A&M today. About 1,200 students, staff and guests will attend the four-day conference, whose focus is "Today's Black Leaders: Our Hope for Tomorrow." Sandra Medina, an adviser for the SBSLC and communications coordinator for the Department of Multicultural Services at A&M, said the conference incorporates history, unity, self-improvement techniques, leadership skills, moral values and corporate America to inspire young black collegians to be productive leaders of tomorrow. "The theme of this year's conference, 'Celebrating 10 years of Black Leadership ... Empowering Minds for the 21st century,' is to help prepare students to be outstanding leaders in their community," Medina said. With the aid of a 25-member A&M student staff, who have been

preparing since last March for the conference, participants will be able to attend workshops and programs on education, finance, health and relationships given by major speakers as well as network with major companies and students from other campuses. Medina said that although registration is closed for the conference, many events are open for the students and community to attend. Dr. Julia Hare will be speaking tonight at 7 in Rudder Auditorium. A career fair will be in the Rudder exhibit hall Friday and a play will be presented Friday evening and cost is \$5 for non-registered participants. A vendor fair supporting shops and businesses selling arts, crafts and Greek paraphernalia will be held on Saturday, and there will be a party in G. Rollie White Coliseum at 10 p.m. Saturday. Tamara Raven, chair of the SBSLC and an accounting graduate student at A&M with three years of SBSLC experience, said this conference teaches responsibility and skills for achievement in a goal-oriented setting. "One goal of the conference is

for African-American students to be enlightened by the information available and to pick up or fine-tune leadership skills and networking abilities with many different companies and students," Raven said. The SBSLC is the largest African-American leadership conference in the United States.

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TAMARA RAVEN
CHAIR, SBSLC

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Coffee Station provides customers with unique atmosphere, gourmet beverages.

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Historic visit

Pope calls attention to human rights in Cuba

HAVANA (AP) — Pope John Paul II, a "messenger of truth and hope," began a historic pilgrimage Wednesday to Cuba, land of hardship, embattled faith and an aging, struggling revolution. Long delayed, much anticipated, the papal visit to this communist island ruled by Fidel Castro may help set a new course for the Cuban church, if not for Cuba itself. Castro, dressed in a business suit, was among those waiting to greet the pope at the airport. Even before touching down here Wednesday afternoon, John Paul addressed some contentious issues surrounding his visit, telling reporters on the papal plane he hoped for more respect for human rights in Cuba, and for a "change" in the U.S. economic embargo. But no matter what else his visit brings, said Orquidea Mesa, one pious parishioner here, "the pope will bless the people of Cuba" — 11 million who for four decades have suffered through one of the world's longest-

running political showdowns. Ahead of the pope's arrival, Castro's government worked nonstop to make Cuba's welcome a memorable one. Havana workers had the afternoon off on a sunny 80-degree day. In neighborhoods and workplaces, Cubans were organized to be bused to points along the pope's route from the airport. The Cuban president himself, a diehard Marxist-Leninist, urged people to turn out for the island's first papal visit ever. "Sure, I'll be down at 16th and Paseo to see him," said postman Jorge Luis Jimenez. "Everybody will be out, even the ones who aren't really believers." Communist party workers joined church volunteers in tacking the pope's portrait and "messenger" slogan to palm trees, telephone poles and even the backs of bicycle cabs. One was even spotted on the national Capitol, where Castro's revolutionaries once declared Cuba an atheist nation.

Clinton denies allegations of affair with former intern

WASHINGTON (AP) — In dozens of taped conversations now in the hands of Whitewater prosecutors, a former White House intern says she had an affair with President Clinton and that he tried to get her to lie about it, lawyers said Wednesday. The president denied the allegations and expressed outrage. "There is not a sexual relationship," Clinton said firmly in a White House interview. "I did not ask anyone to tell anything other than the truth. There is no improper relationship." His comments capped a dramatic day for Clinton and former White House intern Monica S. Lewinsky, who was at the center of a legal and media storm. Word of the new investigation gripped the White House and had political figures talking of possible impeachment if the allegations were borne out. The investigation was prompted when one of Lewinsky's friends, former White House staffer Linda Tripp, provided tapes to Whitewater Prosecutor Kenneth Starr in which Lewinsky apparently claimed an affair with Clinton and recounted conversations she allegedly had in which Clinton and his friend Vernon Jordan asked her to deny the relationship in affidavit she gave in Paula Jones' sexual harassment lawsuit, her attorney said. In her affidavit, Lewinsky denied she had an affair with Clinton. However, two lawyers who demanded anonymity said she describes the affair in no uncertain terms in conversations tape-recorded secretly by her friend and former White House colleague Linda Tripp. The lawyers said that in these conversations Lewinsky said Jordan assisted her in getting a new job



Clinton

in New York in recent months, around the time she was subpoenaed in Paula Jones' case against Clinton. "The charges are not true," said Clinton, "and I haven't asked anyone to lie." Asked about the allegations during the day, first lady Hillary Clinton told reporters, "Certainly I believe they're false. Absolutely." Lewinsky is scheduled to give a deposition in the Jones lawsuit Friday. On Wednesday, her Los Angeles-based attorney William Ginsburg said, "at this time, she stands by her declaration" in the earlier affidavit. He discussed the stress his client was enduring. "In her mind, it's a lose-lose situation and quite ravaging in terms of what folks think of her," he said. The Tripp tapes were secretly recorded and include dozens of conversations in which Lewinsky described in detail an affair so intense that Clinton even left private messages on her home phone, lawyers said. Lewinsky was unavailable to comment, as was Jordan. Knowledgeable sources said Tripp voluntarily brought the tape recordings to Starr. Starr went to the Justice Department and with the quick blessing of Atty. Gen. Janet Reno he gained a court-ordered expansion of his investigation.