

New committee set to carry A&M into future

By AMANDA SMITH
Staff writer

The eyes of Texas A&M focus on the future as it aims to become one of the top 10 universities in the United States by the year 2020.

The Vision 2020 Working Committee, led by Dr. Walter Wendler of Texas A&M, progresses toward developing a plan to improve the oldest public institution in the state of Texas.

Wendler, the executive assistant to President Dr. Ray Bowen, said the Vision 2020 Working Committee consists of faculty representatives, administrators, former students and the current student body president.

"As we (the committee) look at how Texas A&M will collaborate (in the future), we can set goals for the future," Wendler said. "Texas A&M is clearly one of the best universities in the state. We keep getting better and improving the quality of education."

Wendler said that the committee looks at a variety of rankings to compare A&M to other universities across the nation. The most current (1997) US News & World Report data listed us as nineteenth among public universities in the nation," Wendler said. "That is one kind of ranking. We also look at other reports. With the National Research Council (NRC) rankings, the rank is as clear."

The NRC lists only the top 25 universities in the nation. Texas A&M was not on the latest NRC report, Wendler said.

"We are looking at what the top 10 universities from the NRC and the US News & World Report rankings have," Wendler said. "Two of the things that come up when you talk about great universities is that they almost always have a fine arts school and a law school."

On Jan. 23, Texas A&M President Ray Bowen signed an affiliation agreement with the South Texas College of Law, the first law school to have an affiliation with Texas A&M University.

Paul Henry, the associate director of the Memorial Student Center and the faculty advisor of the MSC MBA/ LAW committee, said that the affiliation agreement with the South Texas College of Law is of great benefit to both institutions.

"We need a law school to become a top 10 university," Henry said. "Pretty much the only piece of the puzzle that was missing was a law school."

Henry said that the affiliation with a law school complements A&M's current graduate and professional programs. Texas A&M

has a medical school, an affiliation with the Baylor College of Dentistry, the Bush School of Public Administration and a masters program for business students.

Curtis Childers, student body president and a member of the Vision 2020 Working Committee, said that affiliation with the law

students and faculty, develop a fine arts program and retain a strong faculty."

Improving the percentage of graduate students and upgrading the faculty of Texas A&M are central to improvement, Graduate Student Council (GSC) President Clifton Griffin said.

Griffin, a member of the Vision 2020 Working Committee and a doctoral candidate in the Wildlife and Fisheries department, said that top universities have a larger percentage of graduate students than Texas A&M. Currently, Griffin said that graduate students make up only 18 percent of the student population.

"We want to improve graduate education but not at the expense of undergraduate education," Griffin said. "We need to make a renewed commitment to graduate students and to promote a sound faculty with top research-minded individuals. That is going to take some leadership at the top."

Dr. Howard Kaplan, a member of the Vision 2020 Working Committee and a distinguished professor of sociology, said that improvements in faculty and graduate programs will also take money.

"What will drive these improvements is

stable funding whether from state or private sources," Kaplan said. "We must continue to increase the amount of money from private sources, national research agencies and state allotments." A plan designed for the more immediate future, 1998 to 2002, establishes goals for Texas A&M University that resemble shorter term goals of the 2020 vision plan.

Wendler said that the shorter strategic plan provides a stepping stone for A&M as it progresses towards 2020.

"Most of the objectives in the shorter focus plan are things that need to be accomplished to get to the 2020 project," Wendler said. "When you get up near the top of the universities in the nation, it gets harder. That is the challenge to make us better than we already are."

Major goals of the short-term strategic plan aim to:

- Strengthen colleges through improved faculty and student body across the Texas A&M campus.
- Increase campus computing investment from \$50 to \$60 million per year.
- Increase investment in library materials, both print and electronic, to make the library system one of the top 35 university systems in the nation.

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school moves Texas A&M one step closer to becoming a top 10 university.

"We want to set the stage for Texas A&M to achieve top national status," Childers said. "Almost all top 10 institutions have a fine arts program and a law school."

Childers said that the committee hopes to increase population diversity among stu-

Dinner time



Shelly Novotny, a sophomore biomedical science major, feeds Emma and Frog, a pair of whitetail deer, at the Wildlife and Exotic Animal Building Wednesday afternoon as part of her veterinary physiology and pharmacology class.

RYAN ROGERS/THE BATTALION

Kyle expansion awaits finish of cost discussion

By STACEY BECKS
Staff writer

The proposed expansion of Kyle Field is still uncertain as Texas A&M University officials attempt to lower Bartlett Cocke Inc.'s original bid for the project to meet the school's \$33 million budget.

Tim Donathen, assistant vice chancellor of Facilities, Planning and Construction, said he does not know how long it will take for the negotiations to be conclude so that construction can begin.

"We would hope within two to three weeks we'll know whether we will be able to recommend to the Board a contract award or whether we'll be required to move to a second team," he said.

"We could be repeating the negotiations until we get a contract that meets the budget."

Last Friday, The A&M Board of Regents gave a team of individuals from the University permission to negotiate with Bartlett Cocke, Inc. of San Antonio, Texas for the expansion of Kyle Field.

Wally Groff, athletic director, said the plans are to tear down the horseshoe and add two decks with two levels of seats in between.

"The overall project is to demolish

the north end zone of Kyle Field and add a lower and upper deck," he said. "We're moving it 58 feet closer to the field and taking horrible seats and providing a good view."

The expansion will almost double the amount of seats available in the end zone and add higher priced seats in between.

Groff said the seats between the two decks will include a club area with 1,800 covered seats. People who purchase the season tickets, for \$2,000 each, will be Zone Club members.

Alcohol will be served in the Zone Club, but will not be allowed outside the area.

There will also be food buffets before the games and snacks served during the games for members.

The next level will have 20 suites with 12 seats each that will sell for \$27,000 per season.

The club area will include a 14,000 square foot private club separated by glass from the seats.

Shay Scruggs, chief development officer for the 12th Man Foundation, said the Zone Club will include many amenities.

"Amenities inside the club will include television monitors, elevators, possibly an escalator, food, drink and ample restrooms," he said.

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online

http://battalion.tamu.edu
Pick up with state and national news through The AP's 24-hour online news service.

Aggies assist in new hearing-aid project

By SUSAN E. ATCHISON
Staff writer

By developing a wireless volume control and a noise reduction system, electrical engineers at Texas A&M University are making life easier for people who use hearing aids.

Graduate student Alexander H. Reyes and professor Edgar Sánchez-Sinencio are working with researchers at the University of Extremadura, Spain, and the University of Pavia, Italy to improve hearing aid technology.

The wireless volume control allows users to adjust the volume without removing the hearing aid. The remote control, small enough to fit in a purse or a pocket, may be programmed to contain four or five different volume settings for different environments.

"Hearing-impaired persons each respond differently according to degree of hearing loss," Sánchez-Sinencio said. "If we take an audiogram, which is like a fingerprint of a person's hearing response, we can see just where the patient's frequency gaps are."

With this new technology, users

would visit an audiologist to receive their prescription for a hearing aid, Reyes said. The audiologist would record the user's audiogram and then program the hearing aid accordingly.

Programs are developed not only to fit the patient's individual hearing pattern but also to fit environments, such as restaurants or offices, Reyes said.

The noise reduction system increases the volume of human speech while cutting down background noise. Unlike volume controls used in the past, which made all sounds louder, the system is able to block out unwanted sounds.

While the noise reduction system has direct application in hearing aids, it could have a broader application in reducing noise in cars, airplanes or factories, Reyes said.

The new technology has been developed for hearing aids worn both behind the ear and inside the ear, Reyes said.

Partial funding for the project is provided by Iberdrola, which is Spain's major utility company.

Advising for the project comes from audiologists at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

Agents' testimony sought

Prosecutors look to Secret Service for possible evidence of affair

WASHINGTON (AP) — Aggressively pressing for evidence of an alleged presidential affair and cover-up, prosecutors on Wednesday sought Secret Service agents' testimony, questioned President Clinton's former chief of staff and tried to clinch a deal for Monica Lewinsky's cooperation.

In a whirlwind day, investigators crossed the country to pick up possible evidence in a safety deposit box in Oregon while opening negotiations deep inside the Treasury Department.

Officials told The Associated Press Whitewater prosecutor Kenneth Starr's office and Treasury officials were discussing how to gain testimony from Secret Service agents about whether they saw anything while protecting Clinton that would support allegations that he had an affair with Lewinsky.

The two sides were trying to work through Treasury concerns that forcing agents to breach their customary code of silence might jeopardize the effectiveness of his security detail, the officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Former chief of staff Leon Panetta spent most of the day at the federal courthouse and said he had been "largely detailing the operations of the White House and the physical setting of the White House."

He said he was unaware of "any improper relationship, sexual or otherwise," involving Clinton, and he added, "My fervent prayer is that for the sake of the president and the sake of this nation that this matter is resolved soon."

With Clinton keeping mum about the crisis, an anxious White House awaited word of whether prosecutors would provide Lewinsky immunity in exchange for her testimony before a grand jury.

Attorney William Ginsburg, who represents the former intern, said prosecutors have been in regular contact as they try to clarify various points in his client's formal offer earlier this week to testify.

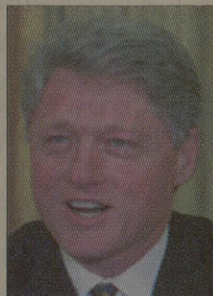
"There is regular give and take," Ginsburg said in an interview with the AP. "We are clarifying points (in the offer) as they come up. And they have kept us pretty much in the loop. There's an

open line of communication."

Asked if he was growing more hopeful, Ginsburg said: "In negotiations, it is not a matter of optimism, it is a matter of patience."

Lewinsky swore in an affidavit earlier this month in the Paula Jones sexual harassment case she did not have an affair with Clinton. But prosecutors have custody of secretly recorded conversations in which Ms. Lewinsky tells a friend she did have an affair and was asked by Clinton and presidential friend Vernon Jordan to deny it.

Among the charges prosecutors must weigh is whether Lewinsky and the president committed perjury and whether she, Clinton and Jordan conspired to suborn perjury and obstruct the investigation.



Clinton