

DOUBLE TEAM
Alexander, Sharpe
score 27 points each as
Aggies beat Russian
team 67-55.
SPORTS, PAGE 7



MADLIB FEVER
• Repeated news of the
past months could be
solved with new fill-in-
the-blank plan.
OPINION, PAGE 11



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The Battalion

105 YEARS AT TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

Fire department rules Dorm 9 fire 'suspicious'

STAFF AND WIRE REPORT

College Station Fire Department officials have deemed circumstances surrounding the Nov. 2 fire in Dorm 9 "suspicious" and of "undetermined origin" and will now move their investigation to criminal mode.

Fire and police officials use the term "suspicious" to denote that accidental causes have been ruled out, and the investigation has shifted to a criminal mode.

Bob Wiatt, director of security and University Police, said investigators have ruled out accidental causes such as an electrical fire or an appliance being left

unattended.

The College Station Fire Department and University Police Department will continue their investigation into the fire that caused the evacuation and displacement of Dorm 9 residents.

Much of the residence hall sustained smoke and water damage because of the fire. Last Tuesday, officials decided to close the dorm to residents for the rest of the semester to begin work on repairs.

The College Station Fire Department's six-page initial report included information about resources used at the scene of the fire, information about the perceived origin of the fire and materi-



PHOTO COURTESY OF AUBREY SHEPARD III

A charred door remains standing in Dorm 9 after a fire started in Room 309. Also that were involved in the fire. Supplemental information included specific tasks performed by fire fighters and descriptions of the scene.

Cadets find new lodging

BY AARON MEIER
The Battalion

Because Dorm 9 has been closed for the rest of the semester due to last Monday's early morning fire, 192 cadets have been forced to live elsewhere.

Pat Spies, 1st Sargent of B Battalion and a junior kinesiology major, said former residents of Dorm 9 have now been assigned to live in Dorms 2, 5, 11 and 12. Many of the displaced students are now living three to a room.

Following the fire, Spies said there were a few delays establishing the housing situation.

"Last week, everybody was more or less in the moving process," Spies said. "Last weekend, we did a lot of shuffling and hopefully everybody is getting settled."

Craig Ilschner, a senior history major, who is sharing a room in Dorm 11 with two other cadets said only one word can be used to describe the living conditions.

"Cramped is the only thing I can say," Ilschner said. "We are all just trying to find room for all of our stuff."

Ilschner said during the first days of the displacement, some of the underclassmen had to sleep on floors, but accommodations have been made for them. Some bunk beds are triple stacked while others are sleeping on couches.

"It is just something we all are going to have to get used to for the next six weeks," Ilschner said.

Four sophomore cadets have been invited to live in the home of Dr. J. Malon Southerland, vice president for Student Affairs. Southerland said the living arrangements are working out well with the cadets sharing two rooms in Southerland's house.

"The Aggie band has both reacted and adjusted extremely well," Southerland said. "It is just a matter of the rest of us providing services for them."

HISTORICALLY unclear

Despite debate among scholars, role of black senator in A&M founding gains support among students

BY AMANDA SMITH
The Battalion

Matthew Gaines' contributions to Texas A&M and higher education have been debated by scholars since he led the Black Republicans during the 12th Texas Legislature, more than 120 years ago.

Texas A&M University is considering erecting a statue to signify the racial diversity of the Texas A&M community.

Some say Gaines' impact on Texas A&M and higher education makes him deserving of a statue on the Texas A&M campus. Others disagree, saying Gaines did little or nothing for the University, established in 1876.

Dale Baum, an associate professor of history at Texas A&M, said Gaines' leadership of Black Republicans in the 12th Legislature, which met in 1871, and his support of land-grant colleges is the reason Texas A&M stands today.

"TAMU is a federal land-grant

university," Baum said. "As the first state institution of higher learning in Texas, we who teach here have to have a commitment to telling the truth about the origins of our school. Unfortunately, we Texans sometimes pick and choose our history from a grab bag of popular misconceptions. Perhaps some are more comfortable with a white-washed or sanitized version of our school's history than with the truth."

"All Aggies are directly indebted to the record of black accomplishment during Reconstruction."

— Dale Baum
Associate professor of history

Gaines emerged as the leader of the Black Republicans of the 12th Legislature during the era of Radical Reconstruction and

supported the Land Grant College Act, which was passed by the U.S. Congress in 1862 as the Morrill Land Grant College Act. The act urged federal government to set aside millions of acres of federal land to support agricultural and industrial higher education.

An 1871 act passed by the Republican-controlled 12th Texas Legislature allowed Texas to establish the Agricultural and Me-

chanical College of Texas and provided for a federally-supported land-grant school for blacks, which was established as Prairie View State Normal and Industrial College.

Texas A&M University and Prairie View A&M continue as higher-education institutions.

Victor Treat, a former professor of history at Texas A&M who

retired in 1998 after 35 years of teaching Southern and Texas History, said little is known of Gaines and his contributions to higher education.

"There is not much we know about him, except from the Texas State Legislature journals," Treat said. "Gaines tended to fly off the handle and was [mainly] desirous of protecting blacks. The other black leaders in the 12th Legislature tended to cooperate with the white power structure. Gaines tended to be outspoken and didn't get along with Gov. [Edmund] Davis."

Treat said Gaines' contributions during the 12th Legislature

were centered on improving public education, particularly for blacks in Texas.

"Gaines thought education should be integrated," Treat said. "He was a spokesman for higher education in Texas, but his contributions to education in Texas were mainly in the public schools. I do not think Gaines had anything to do with Texas A&M."

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— Victor Treat
Former professor of history

Baum said ignoring Gaines' contributions to higher education, and specifically to Texas A&M, is ignoring the origins of the University.

"All Aggies are directly indebted to the record of black accomplishment during Reconstruction," Baum said. "TAMU and Prairie View A&M represent today two shining achievements of the biracial democracy that was briefly, but unfortunately for us all, brought to power in Texas by black political activism after the Civil War."

SEE GAINES ON PAGE 2.

Survey draws response from Southerland

BY MEREDITH HIGHT
The Battalion

Results of the campus climate survey that will be released next week reveal 90 percent of all campus groups, undergraduate, graduate, faculty and staff, agreed with the statement "diversity is good for Texas A&M and should be actively promoted," while 90 percent of faculty and staff agree "diversity of the student body is important to the educational process."

The survey concludes that "76 percent of students indicate that diversity and multicultural awareness programs are valuable in helping prepare students to function in a diverse work environment."

Dr. J. Malon Southerland, vice president for student affairs, said the numbers might not have been so high in the past.

"It leads you to believe that there are programs available to assist in understanding," he said. "I don't know that it would have been that high five years ago."

"Based on other anecdotal information, people would have thought it was worse. That's the reason we wanted to have more than anecdotal evidence to base fu-

ture programs and actions on." According to the report, "over half of all undergraduates indicate that they would like more opportunities to interact with students from racial/ethnic groups other than their own."

Southerland said those numbers are encouraging.

"It implies that students are open to information about other traditions and cultures and their student peers," he said. "It's that kind of understanding that has the ability to make a long-term impact, whether in the workplace or in the community."

However, only 25 percent of faculty and 41 percent of undergraduates feel that "Texas A&M students have a good understanding of the traditions and values of other cultures."

Southerland said those numbers are not surprising.

"We have relatively small numbers of people from other cultures. We're about 81 percent Caucasian. To have only 41 percent [of students understand the traditions and values of other cultures] is possibly very good," he said.

SEE DIVERSITY ON PAGE 2.

Campus climate survey taps Michigan professor

BY MEREDITH HIGHT
The Battalion

The results of a campus climate survey, conducted by the University of Michigan's Center for the Study of Postsecondary and Higher Education which surveyed 3,300 members of the Texas A&M community, are set to be released next week in an executive summary.

The summary is titled "Perspectives on the Climate for Diversity: Findings and Recommendations for the Texas A&M University Campus Community."

Dr. Sylvia Hurtado, chief investigator for the survey, said it was one of the most comprehensive studies of the campus climate for racial/ethnic diversity. The survey included undergraduate and graduate students, faculty and staff.

The report stated that Texas A&M University President Dr. Ray Bowen ordered vice president for Student Affairs Dr. J. Malon Southerland to assess the climate because of "broad concerns about how programs and services were meeting the needs of the campus' diverse student population as well as to identify and document issues related to the climate for racial/ethnic diversity." Southerland then

commissioned the survey.

Felicia Scott, interim director of the Department of Multicultural Services, was assistant to Southerland when the study was commissioned.

"What I think is important is the report shows some very positive factors and also pinpoints areas of concerns," she said.

The survey was conducted through both focus groups and surveys mailed to students. In the fall of 1997, 63 students were questioned about their general impressions about the campus and their views of the climate for racial/ethnic diversity in seven different focus groups. The discussions lasted about 90 minutes. Eighteen campus administrators, staff, faculty and students were individually interviewed by the research team.

The bulk of the survey was conducted during the spring semester of 1998.

Two waves of surveys were sent out to 6,239 undergraduates, 1,000 graduate students, 777 faculty and 500 staff members whose job titles reflected direct contact with students. Of all the surveys sent out, 3,361 responded. Of those, 2,205 were undergraduates, 391 were graduate students, 442 were faculty and 332 were staff.

Provost addresses core curriculum bill

BY AMANDA STIRPE
The Battalion

Ronald G. Douglas, executive vice president and provost of Texas A&M, spoke at the Faculty Senate meeting Monday to respond to faculty questions and update the faculty on issues related to his position.

Douglas said the goal of the core-curriculum bill, which is to raise the number of community-college students who go to a four-year college, is being debated in Austin along with the 70-hour cap and the South Texas Law school. He said his position as provost requires him to represent A&M in Austin to discuss the legislation pertaining to the University.

Douglas answered faculty questions on topics such as Vision 20/20, democratically elected department heads, monetary increases, and senior minority and senior women faculty.

Douglas said he "wholeheartedly" supports Vision 20/20, but the program should highlight

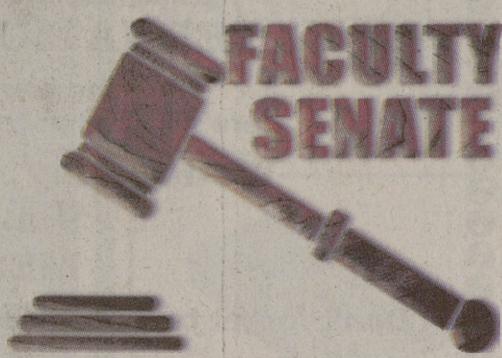
what makes A&M distinct now instead of "letting go of what we've got to reach for something else."

Douglas said he does not support democratic elections of department heads because "ultimately somebody has to make the decision."

In regard to monetary increases, some faculty questioned if the faculty was overlooked when A&M received money. Douglas said the faculty received a salary increase in 1997 and a 3 percent raise in September.

Douglas said A&M needs to maintain recruitment of senior minority and women faculty members, but the University does not have the funding to attract a large number of women and minorities. Douglas said currently one-third of hires are women and 10 percent are minority.

The Senate approved four of the nine proposed academic courses presented by the University Curriculum Committee. The courses approved are: ELEN 480, RF and Microwave Wireless Systems; ENTC 463, Mechanical Design Applications I; ENTC 463, Mechanical De-



sign Applications II; and POSC 333, Instincts and Behavior.

The faculty approved a degree-program change for the bachelor of science degree in entomology for the College of Agriculture. The degree change will "delete the Entomology Science option and Pest Management option under the existing B.S. degree in Entomology."

SEE SENATE ON PAGE 2.