

THE BATTALION

106 YEARS AT TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

Wednesday • November 10, 1999

College Station, Texas

Volume 106 • Issue 53 • 12 Pages

Core-curriculum committee to hear students' concerns

'First of its kind' forum seeks ways to improve requirements

BY KENNETH MACDONALD
The Battalion

The Core Curriculum Review Committee will give Texas A&M students an opportunity to voice their concerns and offer input on general educational requirements for all undergraduate students in the MSC Flagroom from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. today.

According to the 1999-2000 Texas A&M University Undergraduate Catalog, every undergraduate must complete 48 hours of core courses in mathematics, natural and social science, humanities, visual and performing arts, social sciences, history and kinesiology in addition to classes required by their majors.

Paul Parrish, review committee chair and an English professor, said the idea to review the core curriculum was brought up by the Faculty Senate a couple years ago.

"The State of Texas required all public universities to follow a common core curriculum," he said. "The Faculty Senate thought that there should be an assessment of [Texas A&M's] curriculum. The state core-curriculum requirements go back to 1988. The only changes made since then were some fine-tuning."

Parrish said he talked to former students, administrators and current students, but this will be the first open forum of its kind.

Texas A&M Student Body President Will Hurd, who is helping to coordinate this event, said he looks forward to seeing what students have to say.

"I think it is great that we are asking how to improve the core curriculum from the broad-based input from everyone," he said. "This is in the best interest of the 43,000-plus students."

Forum Today

Voice your concerns about your required **CORE CLASSES**

MSC Flagroom

9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

RUBEN DELUNA/THE BATTALION

Hurd said the core curriculum should provide undergraduates with a well-rounded education, regardless of their major.

"A&M is not a technical school or a junior college," he said. "We want students to receive a broad education."

Mt. Aggie returns



BRADLEY ATCHISON/THE BATTALION
Pat Marek, a junior agricultural business major, nails down plywood Tuesday at the site of the new Mt. Aggie behind the Varsity Tennis Center.

Veterans: War a 'foolish' thing

BY CHRIS CARTER
The Battalion

Nine Korean War veterans spoke to students about the hardships and grueling nature of war in a lecture hosted yesterday by history professor Dr. Arnold Krammer.

Krammer said the veterans provide a better method of teaching history than textbooks.

"It's great to have these heroes here today," he said. "Why learn history from a guy who read it from a book when you can learn about these great events from the heroes who wrote that page in history?"

Norman Beal, a member of the

Marine Corps and a veteran of the Korean War, spoke about the different military campaigns of the war, such as the invasion at Inchon and the Chosin Reservoir campaign.

Beal said his appearance was not intended to bring attention to war but to those who fought in these conflicts.

"I am not here to glorify war in any way," he said. "I am here to glorify the soldiers who fought in this war."

Beal said bonds of brotherhood formed between fellow soldiers through this war.

"These soldiers up here today are my brothers," he said. "I know what they've been through, and I know for what they stand. The longer we were [in Korea], we realized we weren't fighting for the [United States] flag or the United Nations but for the guys [fighting] right next to us."

The program became emotional when George Pharis recalled his enlistment into the Marines during World War II at the age of 15 and his later service in Korea. A teary-eyed Pharis offered insight into the reality of war.

"There should never be a war," he said. "War is the most foolish thing."

The Korean War was a conflict between communist and non-communist forces from 1950 to 1953. The United States lost 54,000 soldiers in the war as a result of combat or the harsh conditions of the mountainous terrain.

This is the 15th year Krammer has invited veterans to participate in this lecture.

Minority students in some districts improve on TAAS test, prof says

BY ROLANDO GARCIA
The Battalion

Although the number of African-American students who pass the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) test lags behind that of Anglo-Americans, Texas A&M political science professor Kenneth Meier has identified some school districts which have made significant improvements in test scores.

Meier, Texas Educational Excellence Project director, conducted a study of TAAS scores from 1995 to 1998 from 170 school districts in Texas from with at least 1,000 students and over 10 percent African-American enrollment.

"By identifying exemplary districts, we hoped to provide the public and policymakers with information that will inform future efforts aimed at improving minority education in Texas," Meier said.

For the project, each school district was evaluated on such factors as the percentage

of families living in poverty, per-student instructional funds, teacher qualifications and district policies.

Based on these factors, researchers projected what each district's passing rate for African-American students should have been and compared it to actual student performances. School districts were ranked by how much they exceeded or fell short of expectations.

For example, the Ferris Independent School District ranked first, with scores that topped projections by more than 20 points.

Bryan Independent School District (BISD) and College Station Independent School District (CISD) ranked 143rd and 149th, respectively. According to the study, Bryan had an average African-American passing rate of about 54 percent between 1995 to 1998, more than six points below the study's projection.

Dr. Jan Hair, assistant superintendent for

African American 1998 TAAS Scores Top Ranked School Districts	
1) Ferris:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20.11% above expected • Average Score: 68.93
2) Pittsburg:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25.74% above expected • Average Score: 67.93
3) Hooks:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22.73% above expected • Average Score: 66.10
143) Bryan:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.97% below expected • Average Score: 41.67
149) College Station:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8.63% below expected • Average Score: 48.00

BRANDON HENDERSON/THE BATTALION

SEE TAAS ON PAGE 2.

Author Kunstler discusses ways to make nation 'beautiful again'

BY BROOKE HODGES
The Battalion

James Kunstler proposed ways civil developers can make towns in the United States beautiful again in a lecture last night sponsored by MSC Current Issues Awareness.

Kunstler's, lecturer and author of *The Geography of Nowhere* and *Home Sweet Home*, focused on the public realm — the outsides of buildings, the sidewalks and streets — and how it can make people comfortable in a place so they can enjoy their town.

"The public realm is the part that belongs to everybody," he said. "[In America] it is mostly in the form of the street."

He said the removal of this realm from American streets has created a move to suburbia.

"We lost our faith to create a town, and that is why everyone lives in the suburbs," he said.

Kunstler said identical architecture of suburban homes sends a message of having no past or future to its inhabitants.

He said the suburban family spends most of its time putting on the "We're normal" front, while they are really depressed and anxious. Kunstler said he believes the recent school shootings are in part a result of this desperation.

Kunstler said new urbanism, "a return to our country's history in the form of 'Mainstreet, America,'" is the solution to the strip malls that cluster our towns.

He said one form of new urbanism is taking existing malls and breaking them into different city blocks.

"The Street and Block Plan creates more blocks and more profit opportunity," he said.

Kunstler said a change would consist of constructing buildings more than one story tall. He said the main idea is to build buildings two or three stories tall, with commerce on the ground level and offices and residences on the upper level.

Kunstler said the return of the public realm would lead to the



BRADLEY ATCHISON/THE BATTALION
James Kunstler speaks Tuesday night on improving suburbia in the United States.

beautification of the country's towns.

"The bottom line — we deserve to live in better places than the automobile slum of our human ecology," he said.

News In Brief

Students to receive memorial award

Two recipients of the Ethel Ashworth-Tsutsui Memorial Awards will be honored at 7:30 p.m. tomorrow in Chemistry Building 2104.

The awards are presented to woman graduate students at Texas A&M who excel in scientific and technical fields.

Carrie Vyhldal, a biochemistry and biophysics Ph.D. student, will receive the Ethel Ashworth-Tsutsui Memorial Award for Research, for her study of the mechanisms of estrogen and anti-estrogen action in breast cancer.

Marina Petrukhnina, a post-doctoral student in chemistry, will receive the Ethel Ashworth-Tsutsui Memorial Award for Mentoring for her work in helping new students adapt to the research group, laboratory, chemistry department and community.

Dr. Ethel Ashworth-Tsutsui taught biochemistry and biophysics at Texas A&M from 1969 until her death in 1998. She received numerous teaching awards and was known for

her compassion and encouraging nature.

'Aggieland Saturday' to recruit new Ags

Hundreds of prospective students and their families will be introduced to aspects of life and study at Texas A&M University during "Aggieland Saturday," Nov. 13 in the Kleberg Center, Wehner College of Business Building and Biochemistry/Biophysics Building on West Campus.

Several departments and colleges will give presentations, including overviews of each college, admission policies, financial aid, traditions and how to choose a major.

Division creates \$1,000 endowment

The Division of Administration has raised more than \$24,000 to create an endowed scholarship.

The endowment will allow a \$1,000 scholarship to be awarded annually to a division employee or the dependent of a division employee. A one-time scholarship of \$500 will be awarded in the spring because of the success of the fund raiser.

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Aggielife

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Many resources are available to aid students' job hunt. Page 3

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Aggies chances of making bowl appearance hinges on win. Page 7

Opinion

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Revelations about Thomas Jefferson show a man who deserves little praise. Page 11

Batt Radio

Listen to KAMU-FM 90.9 at 1:57 p.m. for information on the A&M System Health Science Center.