

Proposed tuition increase for Fall 2000

BY ANN LOISEL
The Battalion

A proposed fee increase for the Fall 2000 semester may raise Texas A&M's University Authorized Tuition (UAT) to \$40 per credit hour, the maximum allowed by the Texas State Legislature, Thomas H. Taylor, assistant vice president for finance, said.

The suggested \$2 per credit hour fee increase will raise an estimated \$2.2 million to help provide salary increases for faculty, Taylor said.

Will Hurd, student body president and senior computer science major, said students may be wary of the proposed tuition increase.

"Any time you look at an increase like this, people question whether or not it is really needed," Hurd said. "But I think when people realize how important this increase is to raising our faculty's pay to a level that is competitive with other national universities, they will be behind it 100 percent."

Taylor said the UAT increase will account for 22 percent of a proposed salary increase. The remaining 78 percent is expected to come from the state government.

"If the State Comptroller certifies that money is available in the State treasury, [the state of Texas] will provide 78 percent of the cost of a 3 percent salary increase for faculty," Taylor said.

An open forum for students, faculty, staff and any other in-

terested parties will be held today at 3 p.m. in 206 Memorial Student Center.

President Dr. Ray M. Bowen and his staff will discuss the need for the proposed increase and give attendees a chance to ask questions and give their input.

"The statute that covers tuition in the state of Texas requires a public hearing to be held to discuss any increase in the UAT, to let the public know what we are proposing and why," Taylor said.

After the public hearing, the recommendation will go to System Chancellor Howard D. Graves for review and questioning, Taylor said.

\$2

per credit hour?
It's a proposed University
Authorized Tuition
Increase.

OPEN FORUM

What do you think?
Open forum for students,
faculty, staff, and public.

3:00 p.m. Tuesday in Room 206 of MSC
BRANDON HENDERSON/THE BATTALION

Coping with bonfire injuries, aftermath

We all turned at the same time and watched as weeks of hard work tumbled to the ground, covering those who were working on it. We sprinted as fast as we could. There were people yelling from under the pile and there were bodies everywhere. We couldn't do anything. We were unable to help those people who were suffering. They were calling to us and we couldn't do a damn thing about it. There was terror everywhere. Two minutes later police lights were lighting up the scene. Ambulances were trying to help the people they could reach. We gathered jackets and sweatshirts; and went around to cover up the injured. I saw a pair of boots sticking out from a white sheet — he was gone. I saw a fish with both his wrists and his pelvis broken. People were bleeding and hurting. Medics were scrambling. People started gathering and soon the yellow tape was put up.

— Diana Estrada

BY JULIE ZUCKER
The Battalion

Brittany Allison, a sophomore environmental design major, said she gets through the new semester with faith in God and memories of the students who died in the 1999 Aggie Bonfire collapse.

"I know they are in heaven," Allison said. "It is a horrible loss, but I have a sense of rejuvenation knowing they are in a better place looking down on all of us."

Allison was on a second stack swing when the logs fell. "My foot was caught between two logs and I went down with the stack," she said. "Because my foot was stuck, I was too scared to jump, so I fell on top of the logs and was able to climb down."

Allison said she was hit between the eyes by a log, leaving a small scar that can be covered with makeup. She also has scars on her hand and forearms.

Allison said she gets emotional support from her friends and roommate, Her roommate, Diana Estrada, a sophomore journalism major, was also working on the stack, but escaped injury.

Allison said the reminders of the collapse are always around. "I wish the land was cleared — put in dry storage or something," she said. "But I have strength from God and support from my friends and family, and I can't wait to go out and work on Bonfire 2000."

The physical scars are still visible and the emotional scars are still healing, but the survivors of the collapse are glad to be back in class at Texas A&M University.

"I needed to get back to school, to be surrounded by my friends and start classes again," Chad Hutchinson, a sophomore industrial distribution major, said.

Hutchinson was working on the fourth stack when the logs collapsed. He fell down with the logs, but does not re-



KIMBER HUFF/THE BATTALION

Brittany Allison, a sophomore environmental design major, and Diana Estrada, a sophomore journalism major, members of Squadron 3 in the Corps of Cadets, were injured during the 1999 Aggie Bonfire collapse.

member anything until he woke up in the hospital. Hutchinson's friends told him about the parts of the night he can't recall.

"I was told I was running around yelling at the paramedics to help all of the other people who were hurt," he said. "But they grabbed me and I was mad to be the first person taken to the hospital."

Hutchinson suffered two collapsed lungs, a broken left eye socket and a broken nose. Hutchinson was wheeled into the hospital unconscious and underwent emergency surgery without anesthesia for his collapsed lungs.

Hutchinson entered St. Joseph Regional Health Center in critical condition, almost entirely dependent on a respirator to breathe.

"I don't know the medical terms for what they did to me, but basically what happened was they cut my chest open with a scalpel, broke open my rib cage and stuck a tube into my chest. I am grateful I was unconscious," Hutchinson said.

When Hutchinson woke up in the hospital he was told by staff and family what happened.

"My uncle is a cop and saw the story on the news," he said. "He told me he grabbed my parents [from Houston] and they were all by my bed in less than an hour."

After five days, he was released from the hospital. Hutchinson has scars on his chest from the surgery and on his arms and hands from the fall.

"I am glad to be back. I hope the commission looks over it [the collapse] and we can build a fire next year," Hutchinson said.

Michael Guerra, president of Fowler, Hughes, Keathly Complex (FHK), and a sophomore mechanical engineering major, was wiring logs on the first stack before the collapse. A friend of his wanted to go home, so he left the Bonfire site to escort her back to her dorm.

"I was really lucky. We were walking back and heard the sirens but didn't know what was happening," Guerra said.

FHK lost three students: Michael Ebanks, a freshman aeronautical engineer, Jamie Lynn Hand, a freshman environmental design major, and Chad Anthony Powell, a sophomore computer engineering major.

Guerra said it is quiet in the dorms, but the spirit is still around.

"We are a tight-knit group, and we are all supporting each other," he said. "Break was a good time to be away and reflect, but I think the whole campus needs to be back so we can continue the tradition of great Aggie spirit."

Dorm fire safety evaluated by Faculty Senate

BY BRANDIE LIFFICK
The Battalion

In the early morning of Jan. 19, three students were killed and 58 injured in a residence hall fire at Seton Hall University in South Orange, N.J.

Boland Hall, where the blaze occurred, did not have a sprinkler system installed because the building was built before such a system was required.

This tragedy prompted the Faculty Senate Monday to address fire safety in residence halls and other buildings on the Texas A&M campus.

"The older buildings are not as ready in the mishap of a fire as opposed to the newer ones. I am concerned that a lot of them don't have sufficient sprinkler systems," Dr. Pete Rose, professor of finance, said. "This is an issue that begs to be solved, as Seton Hall has just demonstrated."

Rose said he believes this situation should be further investigated by the Faculty Senate in cooperation with the Bryan and College Station Fire Departments.

"If a tragedy occurs, we do not have a way of protecting ourselves," Rose said. "Bryan-College Station must respond. We must work together with the two cities."

Former Faculty Senate speaker and assistant professor of educational curriculum and instruction, Dr. Diane Kaplan, said she approved of the efforts to maintain a safe campus for both students and faculty.

"The older buildings are not as ready in the mishap of a fire as opposed to the newer ones ..."

— Dr. Pete Ross

Faculty Senate member and professor of finance

"I was very impressed by a fire drill that occurred in my building [Harrington Tower]. Instead of just the straight buzzing, a voice actually came over the intercom and repeated over and over what was happening. It was very loud...I hope that they continue working towards the other buildings' systems being as safe."

In other business, the Faculty Senate unanimously approved a new minor in the College of Geosciences. The new minor field of study, geoinformatics, will require a minimum of 15 hours chosen from a list of geography, geology and computer science courses.

Also approved were changes to the Industrial Distribution curriculum for a bachelor of science degree. The changes included offering different accounting courses to industrial distribution majors.

The Faculty Senate will further address several points at their meeting next month, including parking fee concerns, faculty grade distributions and ideas for a 1999 Aggie Bonfire collapse memorial.

Bush, Gore take top spots in Iowa caucus, New Hampshire next

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP)—Opening the presidential election season, Republican George W. Bush won Iowa's caucuses in a closer-than-expected race against conservative publisher Steve Forbes. Vice President Al Gore breezed to a Democratic victory over Bill Bradley and declared, "I can't wait to get to New Hampshire."

Bush described the caucus results as "a record shattering" validation of his compassionate conservative agenda. "It's a solid victory and I'm humbled," he told the Associated Press as the presidential campaigns but the best-possible spins on their finishes.

Forbes said, "We vastly overperformed the polls and have emerged as the conservative candidate" going into New Hampshire. He told AP, "I'll take more losses like that, and I'll win the nomination."

In an interview, Bush said, "We have a record-shattering victory tonight. I'm grateful for the outpouring of support my message of compassionate conservatism has received, and I'm looking forward to taking it to the state of New Hampshire." Hours before the voting, Bradley in-

dicated he was in for the long haul: "The longer the competition goes, the better chance that candidate is going to have ... in the fall."

Gore and Bradley differed in tone more than substance. They wrestled primarily over alternative approaches to federal health insurance policy. While Bradley promised to provide big ideas to solve a few big problems, Gore said the next president should not limit himself to a handful of issues.

McCain's only two trips to the state were for debates. He leads in New Hampshire polls, but didn't discourage Iowans from lending support.

He and Bradley emerged as significant challengers for 2000, their fund raising dramatically boosted, after they began drawing substantial support in New Hampshire.



Students' cars in parking lots are targets for burglary, vandalism, according to UPD

BY BROOKE HODGES
The Battalion

Jared Pittman, a freshman political science major, parked his car at Northgate Sunday to grab a quick bite to eat before the basketball game. When Pittman returned, he found the car's driver-side window smashed.

"I parked on [Church] street behind the pay lot around 11:30 Sunday morning," he said. "I went back out there around 12:15 and the window was broken. Nothing was stolen."

Sergeant Allan Baron, a criminal prevention officer with University Police Department (UPD), said parking areas 56 and 62, which make up Fish Lot on West Campus, along with parking areas 40, 88 and 30, all located on main campus, are the scene for most of the on-campus vehicular crimes.

Baron said on-campus residents who leave their cars in parking lots for extended periods of time have a greater chance of having their cars vandalized, broken into or stolen.

"Students may not realize they have

been burglarized until they go out to their car which may be a week or even a month later," he said.

UPD had 39 reported cases of vehicle burglary and 71 cases of criminal mischief—which includes any destruction of property (keying a vehicle, breaking a window, defacing a building)—from Sept. to Dec. 1999.

Baron said Texas A&M has seen a major decrease in the number of reported vehicle crimes over the last five years.

"It has really tapered off," he said. "We have security officers doing individual patrols in cars and on bicycles and random police surveillance from building tops."

Baron said students can prevent their cars from being vandalized or burglarized by removing or hiding all valuables left in their cars and by parking in well-lit areas that are visible to the public.

Baron said writing or etching your driver's license number on your property will increase your chances of getting

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Batt Radio

Listen to KAMU-FM 90.9 at 1:57 p.m. for details on the debate over a Bryan Hotel.