

Bombs away



STUART VILLANUEVA/The Battalion

Malcolm Duncan, and other members of Warrior Company, a group of army contract cadets, practice throwing dummy grenades on campus Wednesday.

Student Senate OKs 'Web-Based voting'

BY JEANETTE SIMPSON
The Battalion

An emergency resolution giving the Student Government Association's (SGA) Election Commissioner the power to implement online voting passed at Wednesday's Student Senate meeting.

The "Web-Based Voting" resolution states that a Web-based polling system for the student body elections be included as a polling site at the discretion of the Election Commissioner, Ashlea Jenkins, a junior political science major.

Student Services chair Justin Strickland, a junior political science major, Academics Affairs chair Brent Spencer, a senior microbiology major, and two other senators introduced the resolution as emergency legislation.

"The passage of this bill is vital to the implementation of a web based voting system," Jenkins said. "If it is possible to have Web-based voting for the spring elections, this legislation ensures that it will be implemented."

Strickland said if the Web-based voting is put into action, it is hoped that it will increase voter turnout, making the elected student officials more representative of the student body.

"Web voting is a great step in the right direction for A&M," Will Hurd, student body president and senior computer science major, said.

"Throughout the development of Web voting, preserving the integrity of the election process will be of most importance," he said.

Other orders of business included passage of a resolution addressing the Athletic Department's decision to close "Aggie Alley."

The resolution protests the Athletic Department's failure to gather student input on the decision.

"The Athletic Department should hold student input in high regard," Spencer said.

"The Student Senate passed the resolution to express its disappointment that our input was not considered," he said.

Hurd agreed with the resolution.

"Web voting is a great step in the right direction for A&M. . . preserving the integrity of the election process will be of most importance."

— Will Hurd
Texas A&M student body president and a computer science major

"I think it is important whenever a decision impacts students that everyone consult this group [Student Senate] which offers a voice for the 42,000 plus students on this campus," Hurd said.

Not all of the student senators supported the resolution. Several senators expressed concern about the resolution's effect on the Senate's relationship with the University.

"I am against this resolution because [Student Senate] work continuously to build relations with departments throughout this campus," said Peter Schulte, student senator and a senior management information systems major.

"Resolutions like these tear those relations down," he said.

David Kessler, student senator and senior English major, also opposed the resolution.

"I feel that when interacting with administra-

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University Online Web used for admissions

BY BRADY CREEL
The Battalion

The months of anxious waiting for college acceptance letters to arrive in the mailbox may be a thing of the past.

The number of high school students applying online to public Texas universities this year more than doubled since last year, Dave Stones, manager of Student Information Systems at the University of Texas-Austin, said.

Stones said 42,600 online applications have been delivered this year, compared to only 17,000 at this time last year.

He said students who apply online get their responses about three weeks earlier than students who apply on paper.

The Texas State Legislature created a common college application, allowing students to have a uniform, consistent method of applying for admission to public four-year universities in Texas. This method included an online application form.

Stones said the rise in the number of online applications can be partially attributed to the students' and universities' growing familiarity with the common form.

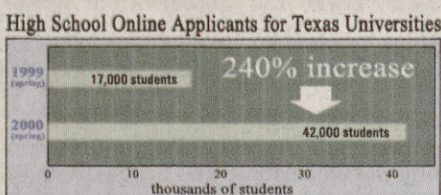
"It seems to be working very well," said Sharon Cobb, assistant commissioner for Student Services for the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. "But I think that is because every university in Texas is doing it."

Kathy Heffner, a clerk in the counselor's office at A&M Consolidated High School, said some high school students are experiencing trouble with the online applications because they do not realize they still have to pay fees and send in documents such as transcripts and test scores.

"A lot of kids hit send and didn't realize they had to get a transcript," Heffner said. "They didn't realize the things you had to [do] physically — without the computer."

Heffner said that regardless of potential problems, her office strongly encourages students to apply online.

Heffner estimated that 80 percent of the A&M Consolidated students applying to public universities in Texas use the online application.



ROBERT HYNCEK/The Battalion

Resnet, Unix available to off-campus users

BY SARA PROFFITT
The Battalion

Off-campus students may now enjoy the same high-speed computer access to online resources such as Resnet, Unix and library databases previously only available to resident hall students and via computer labs.

The Virtual Private Network (VPN) is a new computer program that allows off-campus students and faculty uninterrupted access to the on-campus network through use of a high-speed cable modem, said Ellen Mitchell, a Texas A&M network analyst.

Previously, such a connection was not available because of a University "firewall" program which prohibited any off-campus computer from tapping into the A&M system.

VPN allows users to bypass this firewall program and be recognized as an on-campus user.

Mitchell said one benefit of the connection is the ability to access the Resnet, a network of student computers through which students may exchange digital music, video clips and other computer programs.

"What I miss the most about moving off campus is the Resnet," said Lacy Fehrenbach, a former Lechner Hall resident and junior molecular and cell biology major. "I miss being able to download music, class notes and pretty much anything that I ever really wanted. All I had to do was look around at what other people had shared on their computers."

Mitchell said off-campus access to the Resnet is not promoted by Computing and Information Services (CIS), "but as far as we know it will work."

Thomas Putnam, director of CIS, said the firewall is necessary to protect the campus' computers from hackers who may wish to damage programs and stored information.

Putnam said VPN keeps information safe from hackers by coding, or "encrypting," data being sent from off-campus to on-campus computers, so that only computers with the proper encryption codes may read the coded messages.

"VPN is a good way for people on cable modems ... to get full access to on-campus resources safely," Putnam said.

The function of VPN may be explained by analogy to airport security.

Putnam said.

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Putnam said.

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BRADLEY ATCHISON/The Battalion

Jared Hayes, a senior computer science major, surfs the Web Wednesday. Now, off-campus students may use on-campus computer resources.

Forum for abolition of death penalty

The Just Peace Institute will present "Beyond 'An Eye for an Eye,'" a public forum about the abolition of the death penalty tonight. The purpose of the forum is to empower activists and unify the anti-death penalty movement. The forum will feature a panel of speakers from organizations advocating the abolition of capital punishment in Texas.

One speaker, Ron Carlson of Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation, is the brother of a victim of Karla Faye Tucker, who was put to death in early 1997. Carlson met and became friends with his sister's killer and was present at Tucker's execution on her behalf.

The forum will be held at 7:30 p.m. at Friends Congregational Church in College Station. A reception will be held after the panel discussion.

Volunteers showed interest at fair

The Volunteer Opportunity Fair, sponsored by the Volunteer Services Center (VSC), featured 20 agencies seeking student volunteers Tuesday and Wednesday. "The agencies said that they got a lot of people on their sign-up lists. They also said that they were real impressed with the quality of the students," Lori Salter, staff coordinator for the fair, said.

So many interested students stopped by the AIDS Services booth, they ran out of applications and had to go and make more copies, Salter said. Most booths gave away brochures, but Planned Parenthood gave out condoms and a senior citizens' home had students make St. Valentine's Day cards for their residents.

"There are no dates set for next semester's fair until the All-University Calendar is set," Salter said.

Disabled students share challenges

BY MAUREEN KANE
The Battalion

Amber Preston, a sophomore agricultural journalism major, lost her hearing due to complications she suffered after fracturing her skull in a car accident.

Because she does not have a visible physical disability and speaks perfectly,

Preston said one of her biggest challenges is people's disbelief when she tells them about her disability.

Preston was a speaker Wednesday at Services for Students with Disabilities' (SSD) panel discussion for Disability Awareness Day. The panel of three students and three faculty/staff members began with a description of each panelist's disability and the challenges those disabilities pose in their lives.

Preston said some activities that non-disabled students take for granted, like going dancing, are challenges for her. Preston has learned to follow her dancing partner's lead closely, instead of depending only on the beat of the music.

Preston said it is always a challenge "learning how to do things in your own unique way."

The panelists also discussed the role of professors and other faculty in accommodating students with disabilities, the progress made in building accommodations since the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as well as the general attitude toward students with disabilities at Texas A&M.

Reinhard Stebner, a panelist and a junior computer science major, said at A&M, if a student with a disability needs assistance, people are always ready to help, whereas "in the average city, help would be hard to find."

He also commented on the attitude of professors toward students with disabilities.



STUART VILLANUEVA/The Battalion

Shaunna Redfield, a junior education major, and Rebecca Jackson, a senior English major, play basketball as part of Disability Awareness Day.

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Batt Radio

- Listen to KAMU-FM 90.9 at 1:57 p.m. for fate of Houston's Westheimer Party.

Batt Online

- Check out *The Battalion* online at battalion.tamu.edu.