

Residence hall fee to increase Substance free housing for Fall

BY MAUREEN KANE
The Battalion

On-campus residents will once again dig a little deeper into their pockets for rent next year because of an average rent increase of 5 percent for the 2001 fiscal year.

According to the preliminary budget information released by the Department of Residence Life, this increase is necessary because "an insufficient amount of money has been spent in the past to repair and upgrade the residence halls and apartments."

The increase is expected to generate \$1,152,010, which will be spent on increased utilities, supplies, increased costs of residence hall maintenance and repair, and increases in dormitory administration costs, such as salary increases and general operational cost increases.

This percentage increase means students living in the residence halls can expect an increase of about \$30 to \$82, depending on the hall in which they live. Rent in non-air-conditioned halls will increase by \$30 and rent for modular hall residents will increase by \$82.

Julie Cast, president of the Residence Hall Association (RHA) and a junior marketing major, said the increase was anticipated.

"Every year rent goes up a little to make up for inflation and deferred maintenance," Cast said. "From a student perspective — they are happy the rate isn't as high as it has been the past couple of years."

The money generated by the rent increase will also be spent on deferred maintenance tasks which are prioritized into critical maintenance, potentially critical maintenance, necessary but not yet critical maintenance, recommended maintenance, and new code requirements.

The goals of these tasks are to "upgrade/improve current residence hall facilities by increasing spending on renovations, maintenance, and furniture replacement; to renovate and upgrade the balcony style residence halls; and to design and construct additional on campus housing for the future."

The Department of Residence Life compared rental rates in the Bryan-College Station community to those of on-campus residence halls and found that rental rates in the community did not increase in the 1999 fiscal year, and increased 2.7 percent in the 2000 fiscal year. On average, rental rates have increased over 55 percent during the period from 1990-1999.

Residence hall rental rates increased 9 percent in fiscal year 1999, and 7 percent in fiscal year 2000.

RESIDENCE HALL

RENT

↑ **INCREASE 5%**

2001 FISCAL YEAR

- STUDENTS CAN EXPECT AN INCREASE OF \$30 TO \$80
- THE INCREASE IS EXPECTED TO PRODUCE \$1,152,010
- THE INCREASE WILL BE USED TO OFFSET INCREASED COST OF RESIDENCE HALL UTILITIES, SUPPLIES, AND MAINTENANCE

RUBEN DELUNA/THE BATTALION

BY MAUREEN KANE
The Battalion

Trying to keep beer out of the minibridges of underage students living in on-campus dorms will not be a concern of the resident advisers because of the latest housing option offered at Texas A&M.

Over 700 incoming students have registered to live in substance-free housing in Fall 2000.

Substance-free housing was approved by the Residence Hall Association (RHA) last spring.

This type of housing has been successful on other campuses, and because of student and administrator support, the Department of Residence Life has decided to implement this program at A&M, said Chareny Rydl, Associate Director of Dormitories Administration.

To be eligible for substance-free housing, students must sign an agreement.

"Residents living in substance-free housing will not use alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs there, and will not return under the influence of these substances," Rydl said.

Students living in substance-free housing will also be expected to refrain from participating in any behavior that disrupts the life of the community, such as going off campus and drinking and then returning to the residence hall.

While many universities have designated specific residence halls as substance-free, Sue Foster, assistant director of dormitories administration, said at A&M, "it would not be practical to suddenly take over four buildings. There

needs to be a more gradual change, so we decided to go with the option of making different floors substance-free."

Foster also said that trial substance-free floors will be located in different styles of dorms on each side of campus to give students with varying financial situations an equal opportunity to live in a substance-free environment.

Substance-free floors will be located in Eppright Hall and Wells Hall, on Southside, and in Davis-Gary Hall and McInnis Hall, on Northside.

"The students who want to live on these floors have an easier time finding other people who don't share substance use as a recreational pursuit. We feel confident we'll fill it — hopefully with a nice mix of returning and new students," Foster said.

Julie Cast, RHA President and a junior marketing major, said the RHA organized surveys for all on-campus residents last year, and they expressed a need and desire for substance-free housing. Cast said a lot of student input was taken into consideration by the Department of Residence Life when making the decision to implement the new housing program.

"A majority of the students thought there was a need for this. Hopefully, it will expand to more floors and halls," Cast said.

The Department of Residence Life does not expect any residents of substance-free housing to break their housing agreements. However, if a resident does break the agreement, the resident may then be relocated on campus, or possibly removed from on-campus housing, Rydl said.

Condolences to be sent to Prairie View

BY JEANETTE SIMPSON
The Battalion

The Student Senate will consider the approval of a \$1 library usage fee increase and two referendum bills Wednesday — but first, they are taking some time out to send condolences to a university which has found itself in a situation similar to one that Texas A&M University experienced three short months ago.

A resolution is on the Senate's agenda to send the condolences of A&M to Prairie View A&M for the loss of four of their students in a car accident last Thursday night.

"It is important that we include this resolution in our meeting this evening, because Prairie View A&M did so much for [Texas A&M] during the Bonfire collapse," said Brian Minyard, speaker of the Student Senate and a senior biochemistry and political science major.

The four members of the men's track team were killed on their way to a meet in Pine Bluff, Ark., when their van swerved to avoid a stopped car and flipped over. The Senate will also consider a bill which recommends a \$1 increase in the library usage fee, making the fee \$6 per credit hour.

"The library has been consistent in responding to the needs of the students. This bill is important because it ensures the library will continue in their trend of

See STUDENT SENATE on Page 2.

System creates worry

BY BRANDIE LIFFICK
The Battalion

Sophomore journalism major Lynley Shults was surprised when she filled out a student information form in one of her classes.

Students were asked to list their birthdays on the form.

"[My professor] then went to the rosters and got our Social Security numbers, and then went into Bonfire or something and looked up our grades from past classes," Shults said. "My prof was really great. But I wonder about other profs who do this — I wonder if it makes a difference in the end. If they look at one student's grades and say 'Oh, this is a straight A student, I'll just bump his up to an A. But this one is used to making Bs; that one can stay.'"

The professor (whose identity Shults would not reveal) placed the students into groups, appointing those with higher grades as team leaders.

"He told us that he did this afterward, and that was what our groups were going to be based off of," Shults said. "I know he was just trying to create better groups, but I was upset about it."

With seven open access labs featuring over 1,200 computers, students are given ample opportunity to take advantage of online services presented by Texas A&M. In some cases, professors also take advantage of these online services.

Steven McGinnis, lab supervisor at the Blocker Building open access computer lab, said he has never heard about security problems, like other students trying to break into each others' accounts.

"If a student were to come to us and felt like their account has been violated, we refer them to the security department of CIS [Computer Information Services]," McGinnis said. "No individual has the right to go into someone else's account."

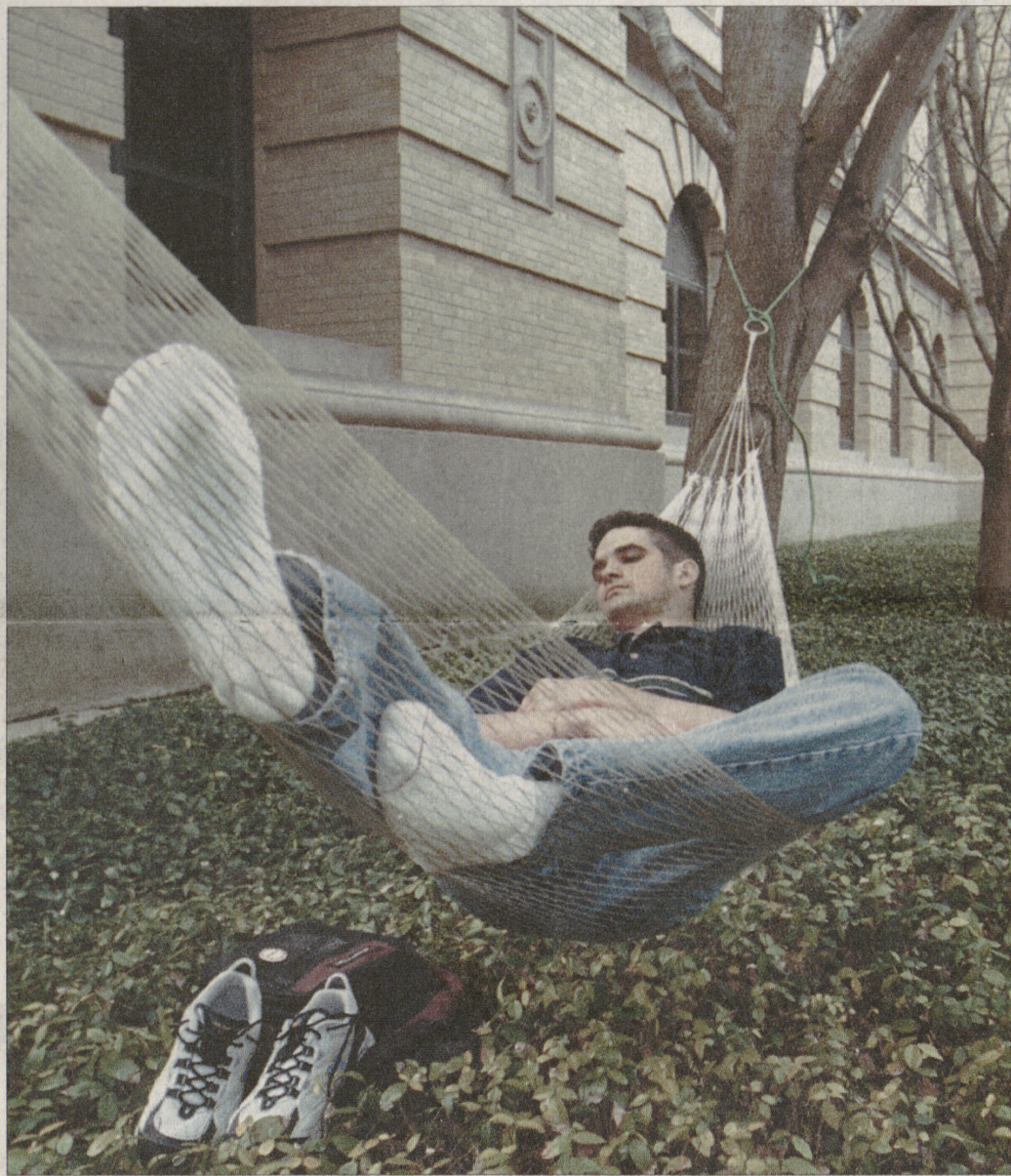
To use a computer in any one of the open access computer labs, students must first claim a password and set up their account. This password is then required every time students want to use a computer. McGinnis said students who forget their password must go to one of the labs and present a form of photo identification.

"We require a photo so that no one could possibly pose as someone else. You must come yourself; we don't allow you to get passwords for roommates, family members, or over the phone," McGinnis said.

Senior political science major Dave McCaughrin uses the Student Computing Center two to three times a week to check e-mail, look at Web-sites, and use the Bonfire system when scheduling his classes.

"I feel that my information is overall pretty safe — at least I like to think so," McCaughrin said. "Those that use it for other things — well, I guess we just have to hope that they are using it strictly for honest activities."

Lazy day



Brian Robertson, a senior industrial distribution major, relaxes in a hammock that he set up in the trees outside the Academic Building.

STUART VILLANUEVA/THE BATTALION

Speaker calls world to Jubilee

BY DANA JAMUS
The Battalion

Both Jewish and Christian faiths consider 2000 to be a Jubilee year, where slaves are set free and debts are forgiven. Jubilee 2000, an organization demanding the relief of Third-World countries from all debt, hopes that the people of Third-World countries will be freed from slaving to repay debt.

Seydina Senghor, cofounder of Jubilee 2000, spoke Tuesday about the mission of the organization at a presentation sponsored by the Students for Peace, Students for a free Tibet, Amnesty International and the India Association.

Jubilee is a religious concept adopted from Hebrew scripture which states slaves should be freed, debt forgiven and land redistributed for a new beginning every 50 years, Senghor said.

Jubilee 2000 asks that debtor countries alleviate the debts of Third-World countries so they can focus on abolishing poverty issues.

Senghor said Bill Clinton has already agreed to remove 100 percent of bilateral debt from developing nations. England and France have followed suit but to a much lesser degree and with less commitment.

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Seydina Senghor, cofounder of Jubilee 2000, called for cancelation of Third World debt.

JP BEATO/THE BATTALION

News in Brief

A&M, Palo Alto College announce partnership

The Texas A&M System and Palo Alto College in San Antonio have formally announced a partnership that will bring junior, senior and graduate level course offerings to the college in south San Antonio.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board approved the new additions Jan. 27, after the state legislature requested that the A&M system create a Texas A&M University-Kingsville System Center-Palo Alto.

"The future of Texas depends heavily upon access to higher education for all of its residents," said A&M System Chancellor Howard D. Graves in a press release. "I believe this center will be another important advance in providing that access to South Texas."

The center will begin offering classes in Fall 2000.

Higher Education Board holds annual conference

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's annual conference will be held Wednesday, Feb. 16 through Friday, Feb. 18 at the Bush Presidential Conference Center. The board oversees all public universities, health-related institutions and community and technical colleges in Texas.

The conference will address on campus planning issues like facility inventory procedures, space project models, room utilization and construction delivery methods and legislative updates.

Campus planning, construction and maintenance officials, physical plant directors and other administrators from public colleges and universities will attend.

Registration for the conference begins at the College Station Hilton at 2:00 p.m.

Comstock re-enrolls full-time via the Internet

John Comstock, a Texas A&M student injured in the 1999 Aggie Bonfire collapse, has enrolled as a full-time student at A&M just days after transferring from College Station Medical Center to a Dallas rehabilitation center.

Comstock, who remains partially paralyzed, will be taking classes via Internet-based distance-learning.

Comstock has already expressed a desire to return to A&M and live in his old dorm, Moses Hall.

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Batt Radio

•Listen to KAMU-FM 90.9 at 1:57 p.m. for details on the Light party.

Batt Online

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