

Campus buses emit harmful exhaust fumes

BY JEANETTE SIMPSON
The Battalion

When Esteban Garza, a freshman biology major, came to the Texas A&M campus he looked forward to walking around and enjoying campus.

Yet, Garza soon discovered that although he did like A&M's campus, the billowing clouds of black exhaust from the lumbering white buses made walking around the campus an unpleasant experience.

"We know that our older buses do not meet current federal EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) standards and that the exhaust caused by the buses is a problem on the campus," said Gary Jackson, shuttle bus manager.

Thirty-three of the 59 buses on the Texas A&M Bus Operations fleet are almost 20 years old. The newest buses were purchased in 1996. However when

the older buses were purchased in 1982, they met the EPA standards of the time.

But when standards were raised there was not a clause that required the older buses to meet those standards, Jackson said.

"The buses are maintained and inspected by Bus Operations. Every 3,000 miles a minor tune up is done, and every 6,000 miles a major tune up is done in effort to keep their emissions as clean as possible," he said.

Currently the buses are not required to pass an annual emissions test. The engines in the buses are no longer made. The newer buses have a cleaner-burning, more efficient diesel engine, comparable to a car's engine.

Jackson said there is not enough money to purchase new buses.

"My suggestion to the University is while they

are raising other fees to maintain buildings and other facilities, why not raise the bus pass fee a dollar or two to fund replacing the fleet, or researching techniques to clean the buses' exhaust up," said Garza.

Jackson said that Bus Operations and the University are aware of the pollution problem and are currently researching different speculative plans to replace and update the bus fleet.

"We are looking at changing the bus exhaust system, so that the exhaust is piped out through the top of the bus, he said. "This way it is not at the level of pedestrians."

If the funds become available for Bus Operations, the 33 buses from 1982 will be replaced first. Then the remaining 26 buses will be replaced every two years until the entire fleet is updated, Jackson said.



GUY ROGERS/THE BATTALION

Most Texas A&M buses are not required to meet Environmental Protection Agency standards because they were built before regulations were in place.

Hump it, Ags!



STUART VILLANUEVA/THE BATTALION

Sophomore **Josh Ray** (right), junior **Ricky Wood** and other yell leader candidates perform a mock yell practice for students outside the MSC on Wednesday.

Candidates discuss how to handle bonfire decision

This is the fourth in a five part series. The four candidates for student body president were each asked five questions in separate interviews.

BY ROLANDO GARCIA
The Battalion

Regardless of the decision on the future of Aggie Bonfire, the next Texas A&M University student body president will have to deal with reaction from all affected by the decision — from students to families of the victims to Aggies worldwide.

The four presidential candidates outlined differing approaches to coping with the possible outcomes.

When the commission investigating the 1999 Aggie Bonfire collapse releases its report and when A&M administrators decide if and how to continue the tradition, media will descend upon the campus, senior marketing major Jeff Schiefelbein said, and student leaders must present a united front behind the university.

"I feel confident that what the commission is doing now and what the administration decides is going to be what's best for this University, so I'd stand by that decision either way," he said.

Schiefelbein said news reports of alcohol and mismanagement at the site sent the wrong image of A&M to the rest of the country, but the upcoming decision will give students a chance to present the University as it really is.

"I think Bonfire has gone from tragedy, to mourning, to an opportunity. This is the year the whole nation will look at Texas A&M and figure out why we're unique. When



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Students question candidates during election forum

BY BRADY CREEL & BRANDIE LIFFICK
The Battalion

Candidates in the upcoming elections for student body president and yell leader were given the chance to speak to their potential constituents during a forum Wednesday in the Memorial Student Center Flag room.

Each student body president candidate was given the chance to introduce themselves and speak about their platform for five minutes.

The Election Commission devised a series of questions concerning three areas affecting students at Texas A&M —

academics, communication and diversity. After the candidates' impromptu responses, they were asked to identify Texas A&M's greatest downfall.

Bobby Tucker, adviser to the Student Government Association, mediated the forum.

"If you don't remember a single thing I say, I hope you remember this one question," said Corey Rosenbusch, a junior agriculture development major. "Are you building people, or are you building your dreams, and using people to do it?"

Rosenbusch pointed out that he is older than the other candidates. Having served as president of the state and national Future Farmers of America organizations, Rosenbusch took

two years off from school, before enrolling at A&M as a member of the Class of 2001.

"We feel that we have reached out to students and gathered their ideas and that we can serve as student body president that will listen to what you need every single day," Rosenbusch said.

Rosenbusch used the word "we" repeatedly in his speech and responses. When asked about this collective reference, he said he was referring to the entire student body.

Brandon Garrett, a senior international studies and economics major, introduced himself by reflecting on his decision to attend A&M and Student Body President Will Hurd's influ-

ence on his presence here.

Garrett told how his grandfather had wanted to attend A&M in 1940 but was unable to do so because he is African-American. He went on to become a doctor and a colonel in the United States Marine Corps. Garrett said his grandfather was one of the reasons he chose to attend Texas A&M.

"I want to be your student body president because I want to make sure every student who is qualified, and has been admitted to Texas A&M, has the opportunity to attend this University," Garrett said.

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New campaign aims to increase diversity

BY KIMBERLY OLSON
The Battalion

Alexis Martinez, a sophomore civil engineering major, was surprised by the lack of diversity among students when he first came to Texas A&M.

"My first impression, as a freshman, made me feel out of place and isolated," he said.

Many new Aggies find the student body intimidating and unwelcoming to minority students.

The Not On Our Campus (NOOC) campaign, a student run organization, aims to enhance Texas A&M's diversity by meeting the needs of all students regardless of race, sexual orientation, or ability.

Maco Faniel, chairperson of the campaign and a sophomore speech communications major, said he hopes to improve A&M's image to potential students by improving the racial climate on campus.

"The Not On Our Campus campaign is a campaign that strives to eradicate any act of intolerance, bigotry or hate on the campus of Texas A&M University," he said. "The campaign stands to create a campus of tolerance and unity."

The campaign plans to increase public awareness of diversity issues by distributing buttons and a portfolio with a proclamation outlining steps for a more diverse and welcoming campus community. A human chain will be made around the Memorial Student Center and different buildings around campus to represent the stand against hate during the campaign week.

Angie Castro, a program adviser for the MSC, anticipates the campaign will make a positive impact on the availability of programs for multicultural students and bring the campus community together to prevent and fight acts of intolerance.

"We hope to raise awareness by the inclusion of all students through broad outreach," Castro said.

Bill Anderson, president of the MSC Student Council and senior mechanical engineering major, expects assistance from students.

"I think the campaign is great. Texas A&M is a community, and we should support that idea because we are all Aggies, regardless of race or ethnicity," he said.

The NOOC campaign week is April 10-14.

Senate argues proposed fees do support Vision 2020 plan

BY JEANETTE SIMPSON
The Battalion

Arguing that the Student Senate must support Vision 2020 — the Texas A&M plan to be recognized as one of the 10 best public universities in the nation by the year 2020 — the Student Senate did not approve the Computer Access/Instructional Technology Fee Disapproval Bill in their meeting Wednesday night.

This bill would have suggested that the Board of Regents consider not approving the \$1.25 increase or the changing of the fee's title.

The fee increase, if approved by the board, will go toward increasing instructional technology equipment, and will also fund a center to provide instruction.

"The \$1.25 increase per semester credit hour over the current Computer Access Fee is being proposed to keep the classroom instructional multimedia equipment near state-of-the-art and to support faculty in utilizing instructional technology," said Dr. Pierce Cantrell, associate provost for Information Technology.

Academic Affairs chairperson Brent Spencer, a senior microbiology major, is against the bill, saying that increasing the fee is crucial to the development of the University.

"This fee is going to provide for better teaching instruments in the classroom and also give the University important tools in recruiting the best faculty possible," he said.

In an effort to voice student reaction to the possibility that the Academic Operations Committee (AOC) could end early registration for student workers, the Student Senate approved the Student Worker Early Registration Resolution.

"With this resolution we are working to try to prevent

the AOC from following through with eliminating student worker early registration," said student senator Kristin Snyder, a junior political science major. "We want them to consider student input before making this decision."

If the AOC does decide to eliminate student worker early registration, it would not affect the registration process until Spring of 2001. The registration process for Summer and Fall 2000 would not be affected.

"Texas A&M is the only university with early student worker registration; having that option available is a unique message that we send to the student population," said student senator Elizabeth Palka, a junior international studies major.

The Student Senate also approved the Special Sessions Bill, which allows the Senate to call themselves into an unscheduled session if the need arises in an emergency or in the case of impeachment.

The Proposed Fee Increase for 2000 Approval Bill was also on the agenda. This bill, passed by the Student Senate, approved the increase in the International Student Fee, the University Authorized Tuition (UAT) and the Equipment Access Fee.

The International Student Fee will only apply to students who come to A&M from other countries, said David Kessler, a student senator and senior English major. The UAT fee increase will be per college and will provide for faculty pay raises and other funding needs within the colleges.

Two new orders of business concerning parking were brought before the Student Senate. The first bill would reorganize the commuter and resident parking lots. The second addresses the allocation of spots that will be available to visitors in the planned West Campus garage.

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