

Bureau to increase census return rate

BY APRIL YOUNG
The Battalion

As of Wednesday, the return rate for the Census 2000 questionnaire in Brazos County totaled 55 percent, slightly above the state's return rate of 52 percent and nearly matched the national average of 57 percent. The College Station Census Bureau staff is urging residents to complete and return their Census 2000 questionnaire before the April 14 deadline, in order to avoid the need for a personal interview.

"Our non-response operation will begin on April 24

Privacy issue affecting long-form return rate

WASHINGTON (AP) — Americans who received census long forms are returning questionnaires at a slower rate than those who got the less-detailed short forms, an indication that concerns over privacy may be affecting this year's count, the Census Bureau's director said Wednesday.

As of Tuesday, 60 percent of the short forms, which went to 100 million households, were returned, compared with 48 percent of the 20 million long forms sent out, Kenneth Prewitt told the House Government Reform subcommittee on the census.

Some congressional Republicans last week reported hearing from constituents who complained that census questions were too intrusive.

The short form is eight questions long and takes roughly 10 minutes to fill out. The long form has 53 questions which asks for more detailed information and takes about 35 minutes to complete.

Some critics have questioned why people are asked on the long form, for example, about their home's plumbing. That information, Census Bureau officials said, is used in part to determine areas in danger of ground water contamination.

A question found on both forms that some consider intrusive asks for a person's race. Responses are used as a basis for federal voting rights and civil rights regulations.

Long forms usually come back slower than short forms, Prewitt said. While it is too soon to know how privacy concerns will affect the final count, Prewitt told lawmakers that "the widespread attack on the long form could have serious consequences."

for all residents who have not returned their form," said Danny Stone, office manager for the College Station Census Bureau. "Workers will go into the community to track down and fill out forms for all of the housing units who did not send in their form."

Stone said students living on campus will be accounted for when the forms are delivered to campus on April 10.

"The dorm supervisors will help us by handing out the forms and seeing that all students who live on campus receive their forms and place them in the confidential envelope for return," Stone said.

Stone said the bureau expects a good turn-out in accounting for students living on campus, but students living off-campus are being targeted to return their questionnaires before going home after finals.

"Students who live off-campus should have already received a form in the house or apartment where they live, and they must turn them in before they leave [after] finals for sure," Stone said. "It's going to be difficult to get a solid count on students if they get out of town before we get the head count on them."

Kristi Haverstick, a senior psychology major living off-campus, said she and her roommate have already filled out the census form and mailed it in.

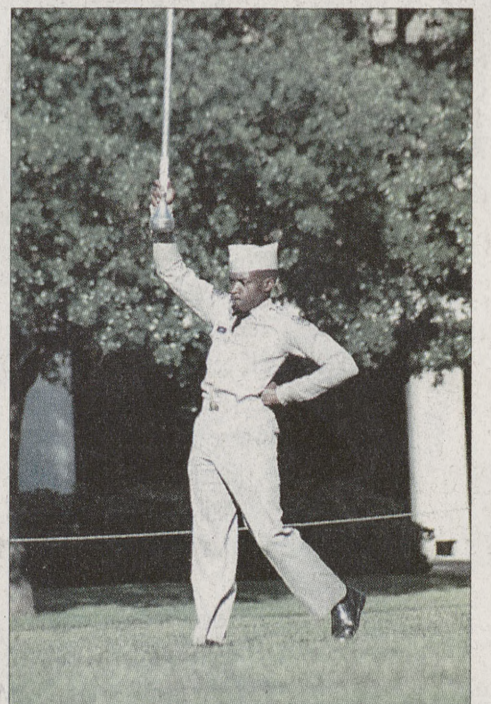
"My roommate and I filled out the census about three days ago and sent it back," Haverstick said. "It didn't take too long. It just asked for general information like your birthday, how many people live in your house, your address and stuff like that."

Stone said residents who haven't received their census questionnaire should call the College Station Census Bureau at 595-1021 to get information on how to receive one.

Geographic Area	Initial response rate (%)	Target rate (%)
National	57	70
--Texas	52	66
--Brazos County	55	64

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And the band played on



SALLIE TURNER/THE BATTALION

Todd Darby, a junior biomedical science major, directs the Corps band Wednesday afternoon. Bottom: (L) Philip Sterling is inspected by the current drum majors who are part of the drum major selection committee. They inspect technique, form and uniform. (R) Todd Darby leads the band. Results for the try-outs are as follows: Band Commander, Ernest Hunter, a sophomore engineering technology major; Head Drum Major, Jesse Clayburn, a junior construction science major; Infantry Drum Major, Jason Griffin, a junior industrial distribution major, and Artillery Drum Major, Mike Waun, a sophomore business administration major.

Student Senate recommends 2 KINE credits

BY JEANETTE SIMPSON
The Battalion

The Student Senate approved an item of emergency legislation Wednesday disapproving the proposal to cut the core curriculum requirements in kinesiology to one credit hour.

The current core curriculum requires four credit hours of kinesiology. The proposal presented by the Core Curriculum Committee of Faculty Senate would require only one credit hour of kinesiology.

The bill approved by the Student Senate asks the Faculty Senate to consider making the core curriculum requirement for kinesiology two credit hours. The Student Senate wrote this bill after reviewing surveys completed by students currently enrolled in Kinesiology 199 classes.

A majority of the students surveyed feel that the four credit hours required should be maintained, said student senator Christine Adamson, a sophomore accounting major.

Not all senators felt it was in the Uni-

"By passing this resolution, the Student Senate is saying that we ... will not tolerate these acts of hate, intolerance and bigotry."

— Trent Collier
student senator

versity's best interest to ask the Faculty Senate to consider changing the core requirement to one credit hour of kinesiology.

"As an engineering major whose college could have potentially gained technical hours in the kinesiology requirement had been lowered," said student senator Shannon Davis, a sophomore biomedical engineering major. "I cannot

advocate maintaining the present four kinesiology classes if it means I might not take an engineering class that may enable me to more successfully complete and perform in the technical work force."

The proposal will be addressed at the April 10 Faculty Senate meeting.

The Student Senate also approved a resolution expressing support of a campaign to curtail acts of intolerance and to eradicate such incidents at Texas A&M.

The weeklong Not On Our Campus campaign begins Monday.

"By passing this resolution, the Student Senate is saying that we are open to change on the A&M campus and will not tolerate these acts of hate, intolerance, and bigotry," said Trent Collier, student senator and a sophomore biomedical science major.

The Student Senate also introduced a bill that — if approved — will create an individual committee in the Student Government Association for the Lupe Medina Program.

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Genetically altered foods under debate

WASHINGTON (AP) — Foods made from genetically engineered crops are safe, but the government needs to tighten its monitoring of biotech plants to ensure they will not cause allergies or harm the environment, a panel of scientists said Wednesday.

Better methods are needed to identify potential allergens, including long-term studies of feeding the crops

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to animals, according to a study sponsored by the National Research Council, an arm of the National Academy of Sciences.

The 261-page study, which focused on plants that have been genetically engineered for protection against insects and viruses, said none of the varieties developed so far posed allergy problems.

Overall, the federal regulatory process for approving pest-protective crops "is working well," said Perry Adkisson, a former Texas A&M University chancellor who chaired the panel.

"We found no distinction between the health and environmental risks posed by plants modified through

modern genetic engineering techniques and those produced by conventional breeding practices. ... Just because a plant is transgenic doesn't make it dangerous," Adkisson said.

Genetic engineering involves transferring one or more genes from one organism into another to give it specific traits.

A variety of biotech corn, known as Bt corn for a bacteria gene that makes it toxic to a pest, became especially controversial last year after a university study suggested its pollen could be killing Monarch butterflies. A soybean that proved allergenic after scientists inserted a gene from the Brazil nut was withdrawn before it reached the market.

The council's study said that more research is needed to prevent biotech crops from killing harmless insects, including the Monarch, and to stop pest-resistant genes from spreading into weeds.

Biotech crops caught on quickly with U.S. farmers in the late '90s and were planted on at least 70 million acres nationwide last year.

Biotech food has met consumer resistance in Europe — in Britain it's derided as "Frankenfood" — and in Asia.

Genetically Engineered Crops

- Caught on in late 90s
- Planted on 70 million acres
- Pose no allergy problems
- Controversial Bt corn may kill monarch butterflies



GABRIEL RUENES/THE BATTALION

Critics of genetic engineering said the panel was biased because many of its members have received funding from the industry and that the report could undermine efforts to increase regulation of biotech foods. "A panel that leans overwhelmingly toward a pro-biotech position ... cannot be expected to produce an independent report with an objective conclusion," said Rep. Dennis Kucinich, D-Ohio.

The 12-member panel included 11 scientists, most of them university researchers, and one attorney, an expert in government regulation who has represented the industry. Officials with the National Academy of Sciences acknowledged that some members of the committee had conflicts of interest but said they were needed because of their expertise.

Research funds increase

1999 fiscal year sees largest collection ever

BY STUART HUTSON
The Battalion

Along with fiber-optic sensors, maroon carrots and pig-flu vaccines, Texas A&M University research has produced something else — a lot of dough.

According to figures reported by the Office of Research and Graduate Studies, funding for research conducted by A&M and affiliated agencies, such as the Texas Engineering Experiment Station, totaled \$402.203 million for the 1999 fiscal year, the largest amount for research ever collected by the University.

"This is really a significant step for the

University over a quite remarkable threshold," said Robert A. Kennedy, vice president for research and associate provost for graduate studies. "It speaks to the success and quality of research by A&M faculty and students, and of A&M's contributions to the state and nation."

The University received \$149.151 million in federal funds, \$94.66 million in state

and local government funds, \$115,069 million in institutional funds from sources such as endowments and \$8.601 million from other sources such as non-profit organizations.

In 1998, Texas A&M research funding ranked 1st in Texas and 10th in the nation with \$393 million. Nationwide, the John Hopkins University came in first with \$853 million, the University of Texas-Austin was ranked 30th with \$244 million and the Baylor College of Medicine was ranked 36th with \$216.

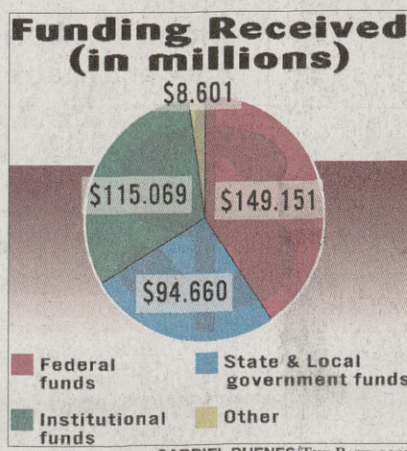
Kennedy attributes the large amount collected by the University, in part, to the benefits A&M's research programs offer to the state and nation.

"There has been a lot of talk lately that a major factor in the success of the economy is the continuing contributions from research programs at universities," Kennedy said.

"Among those universities, A&M is definitely a major force."

Terry Young, the executive director of the Texas A&M Li-

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