

Bonfire report release date in question

BY ROLANDO GARCIA
The Battalion

When the report detailing the causes of the 1999 Aggie Bonfire collapse is released, students will be preoccupied with final exams and most will leave town a few days later.

But contrary to widespread perception, University officials said the awkward timing was not by design.

"This was not an attempt to keep students from being involved," said Deputy Director of University Relations Lane Stephenson. "It was given strictly by the work of the commission."

Leo Linbeck Jr., chairperson of the special commission appointed to investigate the collapse, said the University played no role in setting the report's May 2 release date.

"The date was set because that's when the report would be finished. We conducted the investigation as expeditiously and as thoroughly as possible," Linbeck said.

With the peer review process complete, the investigative teams are now fine-tuning their final reports and conclusions, Linbeck added.

Although administrators will decide the future of bonfires during the summer when most students will be away from College Station, Stephenson said an announcement would be made following the release of the report detailing opportunities for students to voice their opinions.

Andrew Smith, an associate director of the Student Counseling Service, said the release of the report could trigger tragic memories and emotional reactions for some students.

"It's a difficult time anyway with finals, and so we definitely have concerns that this will make it an even more stressful time for a lot of students," Smith said. "It's tough for people close to a tragic event when it's in the news again, and they have to try to understand and deal with it all."

Smith added that the Counseling Service would place an ad in *The Battalion* to remind students of the support services available to them.

While the release of the commission's findings come at an inopportune time, Smith said it will help to bring some closure to those affected by the tragedy.

"It's part of the healing process. It's a necessary pain, and something we have to face," Smith said.

In the days and weeks following the report, more than just the fate of bonfire may hang in the air. In a January interview with *The Bryan-College Station Eagle*, Texas A&M President Dr. Ray M.

Bowen said he will resign if the commission concludes the accident was the result of poor leadership on the administration's part.

"I personally take responsibility for everything that happens at A&M. At the end of the day, the buck stops here," Bowen said. "I would do that on a variety of issues. If, for example, there was a serious financial situation that led back to my indifference, I would take the responsibility. How can I say to someone, 'I want you out of this job,' when I'm at the top of that command? I have to set the standard."

Stephenson, clarifying Bowen's comments, said it was premature to discuss any possible resignations.

"The intent of what he said was that if he were asked to resign, he would, because he serves at the pleasure of the [Texas A&M] Board of Regents," Stephenson said.

May 2

The Special Commission on the 1999 Aggie Bonfire will release its report detailing the cause of the collapse at a press conference in Reed Arena at 1:00 PM.

GABBY RUENES/THE BATTALION

Row, row, row, your boat



ELIZABETH O'FARRELL/THE BATTALION

Bryan Ng, a junior biology major, kayaks in Rudder Fountain Wednesday afternoon to promote TAMU Outdoor's high adventure trips.

University offers reward in Kujawa murder case

STAFF AND WIRE

Texas A&M University and the Association of Former Students are offering a reward of up to \$10,000 for any useful information concerning the recent shooting death of Texas A&M student Kerry Kujawa. Anyone with helpful information is encouraged to call the University Police Department at (979) 845-2345 and request to

speak with a criminal investigator about it, said Bob Wiatt, director of security and University Police.

The Hays County Sheriff's Office announced Wednesday that it has taken the position of the lead investigative agency in the search for Kujawa's killer. The sheriff's office will also be working in conjunction with the Texas A&M Police Department and the Texas Rangers.

The sheriff's office is holding a press conference at 10:30 a.m. in San Marcos.

Kujawa's funeral is being held at 10 a.m. today in his hometown of Richmond, Texas, at the Sacred Heart Church.

Kujawa, a junior mechanical engineering major, was a National Merit Scholar and was awarded the President's Endowed Scholarship at A&M.

Kujawa is survived by his parents, John and Lucille Kujawa, and his brother, Kraig Kujawa.

Memorial contributions may be made to Sacred Heart Catholic Church, "Touch the Future," 507 South Fourth Street, Richmond, Texas, 77469 or the Kerry J. Kujawa Scholarship Fund, c/o Pecan Grove Postal, 1860 FM 359, #104, Richmond, Texas, 77469.

Campus roads evaluated

Access task force addresses on-, off-campus travel

BY MAUREEN KANE
The Battalion

For freshman Sterling Smith, traveling the road to achieve a higher education at Texas A&M University is nothing compared to the daily journey of driving down its streets.

"On-campus roads can definitely use some improvements," said Smith, an environmental design major. "The main road coming into campus from Texas Avenue is not exactly in beautiful shape. As an Aggie, I would want visitors to enter campus on a road that wasn't as cracked, bumpy or old-looking. This same comment can be made for any of the roads around campus."

On-campus road conditions are just one of the complaints of the faculty, staff and students of A&M about traveling on campus that are addressed in the Campus Access Task Force's report.

Other than improving road conditions, suggestions include improving bike lanes and bus services, as well as a recommendation to move the railroad that runs along Wellborn Road.

Also suggested was the creation of "transit hubs" located at key points on main and West Campus, according to Peter Schulte, a

task force member and senior information systems major.

"People could park at the transit hubs and ride the bus to campus," Schulte said.

Schulte said that one of the main goals of the Campus Access Task Force is to limit campus traffic to buses, University vehicles and emergency vehicles. The Task Force is also looking at investing in different types of vehicles to suit the needs of the students.

"The Campus Access Task Force is looking at the big picture — taking into account every possible problem that could arise with transportation," Schulte said.

Mary Miller, associate vice president for administration and one of

the co-chairs of the Campus Access Task Force, said, "We are making a recommendation that the University implement a mandatory transportation fee for students. We

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STUART VILLANUEVA/THE BATTALION

James Foster, a Parking, Traffic and Transportation Services (PTTS) employee directs traffic in front of Parking Area 50.

RHA opposes free newspaper program

BY CYRA GATLING
The Battalion

The Resident Hall Association (RHA) opposed the implementation of the Texas College Readership Program, which would provide students unlimited access to seven newspapers including *The Battalion*, *The Bryan-College Station Eagle*, *The Dallas Morning News*, *The Houston Chronicle*, *The New York Times*, *USA Today* and *The Wall Street Journal*.

"We have disapproved this program until we receive further information," said Josh Kaylor, RHA president and a freshman computer science major.

Currently, the program is in a trial period in Krueger, Dunn, Clements and Crocker halls to determine if the distribution of these newspapers should continue and move into other residence halls.

The RHA also opposed an \$8-\$10 per student semester room fee increase for the unlimited access to these newspapers. The fees would be required for all students living on campus.

"We do not have enough information to support the [fee increase]," Kaylor said.

Surveys designed by the Department of Student Life Studies were distributed by hall staff in the trial residence halls. The

data analysis of the surveys was completed by Student Life Studies.

Only 8.9 percent of the surveys were completed by residents, and RHA believes this number is not large enough to adequately represent the entire campus.

In other business, the RHA approved additions to their current officer impeachment and removal procedures.

This new procedure requires the RHA executive officers to conduct a hearing that will allow all involved parties equal speaking time and require RHA officers and an RHA adviser to be present at the hearing. A four-fifths vote of the RHA officers is needed to remove an officer.

Additionally, the construction of the West Campus Parking Garage will begin in December 2000, after the last home football game, said Sherry Wine, the executive associate director of Parking, Traffic and Transportation Services.

The parking garage will have approximately 3,700 spaces and about 2,000 of those spaces will be for visitors, Wine said.

She said the parking spaces are to accommodate resident students first, then commuter students. A shuttle service will be available to take on-campus students to take back to their halls.

Texas A&M System to allot \$2 billion renovation plan

BY RICHARD BRAY
The Battalion

In order to improve facilities, the Texas A&M University System has announced a five-year, \$2 billion capital plan for building renovations and additions.

The plan identifies capital improvement projects for each of the system's nine universities, eight agricultural and engineering agencies and the health science center, and the plan includes approved and pending projects.

Tom Kale, the Texas A&M System vice chancellor for business services, said the capital plan will control the flow of money throughout the system.

"The purpose of the capital plan is to plan for not only the construction projects but also the cash flow and how we intend to pay for these things over a period of time," he said. "Each of these institutions have various capital needs and capital requirements over the next decade, and we need to be able to plan how we're going to finance them, where we're going to get the money and how the cash flows will work, so it doesn't put us into financial difficulty."

Kale said the funding for the capital plan is provided

by a combination of bonds and money from students.

"The money comes from various sources," he said. "It comes from either student fees or it will come from tuition revenue bonds that are authorized by the state legislature. Some of the projects in the capital plan are contingent upon appropriations in the next session of the [state] legislature to these individual institutions and agencies."

Kale said the College Station campus will receive more than \$324 million to repair campus facilities.

"[The College Station campus] has proposed projects that range anywhere from apartment-style residence halls to science buildings to a lot of physical plant projects," he said.

Kale said amounts were submitted by the universities and then approved by the A&M System Chancellor Howard Graves.

"The amounts are decided by the institutions themselves submitting their plans to the chancellor," he said. "He looks at those, accepts them and we put them in an overall capital plan for the system."

"Graves released a statement that said 'This capital plan is a demonstration of the promising future which the Texas A&M University System institutions offer the state of Texas.'"

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— Tom Kale
Texas A&M System vice chancellor for business services

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