

THE BATTALION

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107 YEARS AT TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

Grad school awards program named

By STEPHEN METCALF
The Battalion

To Matt Wilkins, Saturday's ceremony announcing the birth of a new graduate student awards program at Texas A&M marked one of the University's most tangible efforts to improve its graduate studies and meet its Vision 2020 goals.

Wilkins, president of the Graduate Student Council, said the Senator Phil Gramm Graduate Assistant Scholars Award Program will allow the University to recognize the excellence of students in the graduate program for their research and teaching.

The program is named for

Gramm, U.S. senator and former A&M economics professor.

Wilkins, an aerospace engineering graduate student, is one of 7,328 students in the growing A&M graduate program.

Provost and Executive Vice President Ronald G. Douglas said graduate students make up 16 to 17 percent of the University's total enrollment, compared to other 20 to 25 percent at other major universities.

"The reputation of a university rests in large part in its graduate program," Douglas said. "Having strong graduate programs means you have strong research, and it means knowledge is being created in your depart-

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— Ronald G. Douglas
A&M provost and executive vice president

ments, and, more importantly, the teaching of the faculty incorporates new knowledge and new insights in undergraduate classes."

Douglas said improving graduate programs is important to A&M's Vision 2020 plan, in which the University seeks to be considered one of the 10 best public universities in America by 2020.

Although Saturday's ceremony was a noticeable change in the graduate programs, it is not being the only change. Douglas said the University has been conducting external reviews of the doctoral programs. Reviewers talk to faculty and students and write reports back to the University, giving the University feedback and a way to evaluate programs. The University will have conducted about 25 reviews

of doctoral programs by the end of the year.

"We will also be providing additional graduate student stipends that come out of the Available University Fund (AUF)," Douglas said.

The AUF comes from the earnings of the Permanent University Fund (PUF), a large state endowment that provides for the University of Texas and the A&M systems. Last November, a proposition was passed that changed the method of calculating the earnings, and as a result, additional money will be paid to both systems this year and in future years.

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Senator Phil Gramm Assistant Scholars Award Program

Recognizes 10 graduate students for excellence in teaching or research

Provides \$5,000 and permanent recognition for recipients

Endowment funded with \$1 million raised through private gifts

RUBEN DELUNA/THE BATTALION

Reliant Energy to provide 'trading floor' for Wehner

By ARATI BHATTACHARYA
The Battalion

A touch of Wall Street excitement will spread to the Lowry Mays College and Graduate School of Business through a \$3 million gift from Houston-based company Reliant Energy Inc.

The "trading floor," which is appearing across many college campuses, will enable students to use the latest technology and information to manage simulated investment portfolios of up to \$1 million.

"We expect our new endowment to show students real-life applications, like the capabilities of an internship," said Dr. Timothy Dye, lecturer for the finance department. "The purpose will not be day trading, but rather a focus on analysis and research. It will have a Wall Street look and feel to it."

The trading floor is part of a two-phase plan. Scheduled to open in January 2001, phase one will create a temporary home for the prototype center in 210 Wehner. Phase two will include the expansion of the Wehner College of Business Building with a new 3500-square-foot wing. The trading floor will move to this new location once the wing is open for classes in Fall 2003.

The trading-floor idea began at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1994. Dye said the benefit of a financial marketing laboratory for students has been realized by many academic programs and trading floors have now turned into a "national hype" for major universities.

Dr. John Dinkel, associate dean for the business college, said Texas A&M would be behind if it did not incorporate a trading floor into the business curriculum. "Trading centers and student-managed funds are one way to put our students into the games," Dinkel said. "They have become a required part of any major business school."

Reliant's gift, which is being donated in increments of \$1 million, is being invested by the development foundation.

Dr. Michael Kinney, an associate professor for accounting, explained that the annual income will be geared toward renewing data feeds, upgrading software and other maintenance items to keep the system up-to-date.

"Students will be able to simulate various risk-management and stock strategies also, while choosing which stocks to purchase and sell," Kinney said. "The trading of stock and commodities will give our students a competitive advantage in the workplace."

Dye said, not only will the gift assist in better preparing business students, but the Houston-based company has always showed an interest in being involved with A&M, and its cooperation with the program will be another effective way to recruit top-notch students.

In support of the business school's aim to integrate the trading floor into all majors and disciplines, Kinney said, the floor will be of utmost benefit to the professional program in accounting (PPA). The largest PPA track is financial management; the new grant will aid those students seeking career positions like investment banking.

"Students have shown a natural interest in it themselves," Dye said. "Although we are now budgeting open-access times, and several classroom presentations will revolve around the new facility, many student organizations are also trying to plan for their own simulations. We are trying to make it so the trading floor will be useful to all business students."

Building a future



STUART VILLANUEVA/THE BATTALION

Jared Klostermann, a sophomore petroleum engineering major, relaxes between classes by building with Legos at the creativity booth at Rudder Fountain on Wednesday. The booth was set up for Beat The Hell Outta Stress Week, sponsored by the Student Counseling Service to help students manage their stress.

Lowry Mays College of Business TRADING FLOOR

The trading floor will allow students to use the latest technology to manage investment portfolios of up to \$1 million. Completion of the project is scheduled in two phases.

PHASE 1: Trading floor opens Jan. 2001

PHASE 2: Trading floor moves into new wing at Wehner

RUBEN DELUNA/THE BATTALION

Ags take over PTTS routine

Students handle administration

By RICHARD BRAY
The Battalion

Standing under the hot sun in a Parking, Traffic and Transportation Services (PTTS) uniform, Student Body President Forrest Lane experienced first-hand the daily tasks of a PTTS job.

"This is going to improve our working relationship because, when you see where they come from, you understand their perspective better," Lane said. "I think one of the things we saw today which was really interesting was the number of fake permits that are out there. I never realized

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STUART VILLANUEVA/THE BATTALION

Rob Ferguson and Forrest Lane ticket President Bowen's car Wednesday as part of the PTTS job swap.

Study abroad takes students on world tour

By TAMRA RUSSELL
The Battalion

An increasing number of Texas A&M students are realizing that some of the best educational experiences can be found outside the Bryan-College Station area — way outside the area.

Adrienne Leis, a graduate student in the Lowry Mays College and Graduate School of Business, spent two summers in the marketing study abroad program, one as a student and one as a chaperone. Leis said it was educational and one of the best times of her life.

"I learned a tremendous amount about foreign busi-

Overseas programs offered for various degree options

nesses, how they are run and about different cultures," Leis said. "It was a great experience, and the contacts and friends I made will last forever."

The College of Business is just one of the eight colleges that offer study abroad programs for the summer and fall. Colleges of agriculture, architecture, education, engineering, geosciences, liberal arts and veterinary medicine offer programs for students of all

majors to study in Europe, Asia and other continents for course credit.

Cathy Schutt, assistant director of Study Abroad Programs, said roughly 1,000 A&M students join the programs every year. She said she hopes that the applications will come in by Thanksgiving this year in order to process them before December so students can take a one-hour course prior to the trip to prepare them.

The fees vary from program to program, but many, such as that of the College of Engineering, are about \$4,500, including airfare, room and board, insurance, and planned field trips. The cost does not

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Tech Med School building underway

AMARILLO (AP) — Texas Tech University broke ground on a \$21.8 million Medical School and Allied Health Center in Amarillo Wednesday that will allow the school to expand its programs in women's health, agriculture medicine, genetics and pediatrics.

The 158,000 square foot Texas Tech Allied Health and medical school building is expected to be completed within 18 months.

It will sit adjacent to the university's pharmacy school and give a more campus-like feel to the Amarillo facilities, said Texas Tech Chancellor John T. Montford.

"Every day some child, some person, some senior citizen is helped by this investment," Montford said. "We want to

make sure our people on the High Plains enjoy the same quality of health care as any other person in the nation."

The school is part of a city complex that includes 17 health facilities, such as Baptist St. Anthony's Health System, which specializes in acute care and rehabilitation; Northwest Texas Healthcare System, which focuses on trauma and pediatric care; a VA hospital; and Don & Sybil Harrington Cancer Center.

The complex treats more than one million people a year from Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado and New Mexico.

"It gives the school tremendous potential because all of these places are very different and have very different needs," said Dr. Steven Burke, the re-

gional dean for the Amarillo campus, which is part of Amarillo's medical center complex.

David R. Smith, president of Texas Tech's Health Sciences Center, said the expansion comes as many other health science centers across the country are cutting back.

"We decided the best move was to go forward, not hunker down," he said.

And that is good news for Amarillo and smaller communities surrounding it, said Michael R. Bourn, executive director of the Amarillo Economic Development Corporation.

"We were very involved in the funding of the Pharmacy School and we had hoped six years ago it would lead to something like this, and it has," he said.

House bill to provide college aid

WASHINGTON (AP) — Eight women's colleges and universities, including one in Texas, would receive up to \$70 million to help preserve and repair aging buildings under a bill passed in the House Tuesday.

The bill, passed on a voice vote, authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to make matching grants of up to \$14 million available to the colleges

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