

Aggie Ring Delivery



**ON NOVEMBER 10TH, 2000
THE ASSOCIATION HAS PLANNED
A PARTY IN YOUR HONOR!**

HERE'S WHAT YOU DO TO JOIN IN THE CELEBRATION:

- Come pick up a numbered ticket anytime after 8:00 a.m.
- Return to the building around 2:00 p.m. to enjoy the festivities we'll have food, drinks, and games set up for your enjoyment.
- Then at 3:00 p.m. we will start delivering rings!!!

**CONGRATULATIONS!
WE'LL SEE YOU ON NOV. 10TH
AT THE CLAYTON W. WILLIAMS, JR. ALUMNI CENTER!**

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**The Association
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**Sat. Nov. 11th 10am-- Veteran's Day ceremony and
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A&M students log onto information superhighway

BY SOMMER BUNCE

The Battalion

The Internet has been used by college students for everything from researching papers to downloading MP3s. One new trend, however, has the potential to solidify the Internet's necessity in students' lives — online classes.

Whether a student opts to stay home one semester or needs a class that will not fit into his or her schedule, Web-based, telnet and other forms of technology-mediated instruction are becoming more available and accessible to Texas A&M students.

"These classes give students some flexibility in their schedules," said Dr. Beth Thebeaux, director of distance education. "The reality is that students don't have to be in a seat three times a week. People have different ways of learning, and we're just trying to tap into that."

Within the next five years, Thebeaux said, she predicts online classes will dramatically change the university experience. Already, the University offers nine master's degrees online.

Faculty members experiment with different technological tools for education, she said, explaining that there is no common way to teach an online class.

Each professor chooses the technology that would best support his class material, she said.

Students enrolled in Dr. Graham Allen's online Math 151 classes use a scientific notebook program to access the complete course on the Web. WebCalc, co-authored by Allen, Dr. Michael Stecher and Dr. Phillip Yasskin, brings together years of the professors' teaching experiences to present a complete course to online students, including text, exercises and online quizzes.

Allen's students meet in a com-

puter lab on campus at specified times to cover the day's lessons independently, with each student reading material and working problems. Spontaneous learning groups form, Allen said, and students approach him with specific questions and gain knowledge from self-taught, informal learning.

"When you lecture, you have to address your talk to a generalized audience, leaving some students bored and others feeling snowed-in," Allen said. "But the type of learning definitely has merit in this. I cruise the room, and I find that students in this format are actively engaged during the period, working at their own

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director of distance education

pace, not sitting idly by, like in the lecture format."

Math 151 was first offered online in Spring 1998 and has since had about one to four sections each term. The classes serve as an experiment in the format of the distance education class Allen said he hopes to create.

Professors first need to be cognizant of students' needs to make math courses that would benefit distance learners.

A&M began its first fully online

course with a section of telnet writing in 1994. The online of that class currently has 40 students. However, telnet and other classes must have limits, just as other classes, Thebeaux said. "These classes are not yet at a level where students can take graded quizzes."

Allen's Web-based students take a common exam alongside Math 151 students.

"Teachers still have to grade the student's paper," Thebeaux said. "These classes may be different, but they are still very much the same fundamentally."

In preparing an online class, a professor must convert a lecture into a class that is understood and accessed by students he may never meet in person, Dr. Lloyd Korhonen, director of A&M's Center for Distance Learning Research.

Classes over the Internet are an emerging form of distance education that covers the needs of students first and then seek to attract classes that will attract the students A&M would like to have on the campus, Korhonen said.

"The trick is to keep all these in perspective," he said. "All is very possible, and with the Internet we can reach anyone. But there are a lot of people out there who they can deliver anything to — but you have to stay with it, you know, and who you can reach be effective. We deal with groups, the cadre of students that can identify with."

Online and telnet classes are listed by department and alongside traditional classes in a schedule book.

Students can access the Center for Distance Learning Website at <http://cdlr.tamu.edu>.

Cheer Card Friday - November 10



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