

Chancellor announces cancer diagnosis

Graves will continue with most responsibilities during treatment

BRADY CREELE
The Battalion

Texas A&M University System Chancellor Gen. Howard D. Graves announced Tuesday that he has been diagnosed with soft-tissue sarcoma cancer. Graves plans to delegate much of the system's management to his team of vice chancellors as he begins treatment for what doctors are calling a rare disease.

"The long-term expectation of the doctor is that this will be a cure," Graves said. "This is not something that would just extend my life by a few months. They would be able to take it and excise it, and that would be it. Then I could get back to full health and get back to work."

Graves, 61, has been chancellor since August 1999, when the position was left vacant by the System's first chancellor, Dr. Barry Thompson. The chancellor oversees all universities and agencies in the System, including Texas A&M.

Graves' sarcoma is a soft-tissue mass located on his renal vein, above his left kidney. It surrounds approximately 3 inches of his aorta. Approx-

imately one-half of 1 percent of all cancer cases are sarcomas.

Texas A&M University System

- 23,000 faculty and staff members
- 98,000 students
- \$ 1.8 billion budget

Universities	Agencies
• Prairie View A&M University	• Texas Agricultural Experiment Station
• Tarleton State University	• Texas Agricultural Extension Service
• Texas A&M International University	• Texas Engineering Experiment Station
• Texas A&M University-Commerce	• Texas Engineering Extension Service
• Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi	• Texas Forest Service
• Texas A&M University-Kingsville	• Texas Transportation Institute
• Texas A&M University-Texarkana	• Texas Veterinary Medical Diagnostics Laboratory
• West Texas A&M University	• Texas Wildlife Damage Management Service

RUBEN DELUNA/THE BATTALION

Graves said the first symptoms were thought to be indigestion pains in De-

cember. Graves visited his family doctor, whose examination eventually led to a Jan. 15 CT scan, which revealed the cancerous mass.

Graves said he was given a worst-case scenario by his doctor: often-fatal pancreatic cancer. Then his doctor recommended Graves see a specialist at the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston.

Dr. Robert S. Benjamin, chairman of the M.D. Anderson Department of Sarcoma Medical Oncology, is the surgeon who diagnosed Graves' sarcoma last week and dismissed the possibility of pancreatic cancer.

Graves said Benjamin was optimistic that he would have a full recovery.

"I felt good when he said 'I've shrunk sarcomas a lot bigger than yours,'" Graves said with a laugh. "When he said that, it was uplifting and confidence-building."

Benjamin was unavailable for comment, but Valerie Stienner, a nurse on Benjamin's staff, said Benjamin's optimism is always a good sign for his patients. Graves said that once he is healed, he intends to return to work.

"I would like to continue to serve Texas and Texans," he said.

GASTON TO LEAD SYSTEM

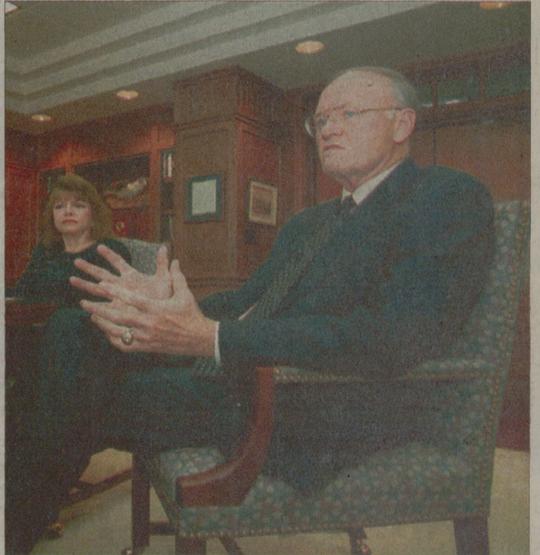
During the next 12 months, Graves' work schedule will be hit-and-miss as he receives treatment and continues to manage the System through his team of vice chancellors.

"There will obviously be some draw-down in my ability to work day by day," Graves said. "But I've got a team that I am incredibly proud of that I can delegate the leadership to."

Graves said he mentioned retirement to the Board of Regents, which wanted him to remain in his position. Graves said the regents urged him to take time for himself.

"I will stay as involved as possible, but the regents have said my first priority is to get well," Graves said. "I expect the proficiency of this organization to continue."

During the past 15 months, Graves said, he has been working with Dr. Jerry Gaston, deputy chancellor, in agreement that Gaston has full authority of the System if Graves is unavailable. Graves said he has no reservations about delegating authority to his team.



STUART VILLANUEVA/THE BATTALION

Chancellor Graves announces, in an informal press conference on Tuesday morning, that he has been diagnosed with sarcoma cancer.

See **GRAVES** on Page 8.

Hard hitting



PATRIC SCHNEIDER/THE BATTALION

Simon Canavess, a sophomore general studies major, works out on the punching bag. Canavess has been using the bag for four years to improve his arm muscles.

KTFB will disband because of finances

BY SOMMER BUNCE
The Battalion

Facing mounting bills, lack of support and a few regrets, Keep the Fire Burning (KTFB) will disband at its next meeting in March, said board member Joe Dyson.

The group, which canceled its plans to build an off-campus bonfire last fall, has returned donations to contributors, will close out its bank account and will remove itself from the state's list of nonprofit organizations.

"We're trying to end this quietly — hopefully no damage was done," said Dyson, a junior geology major.

KTFB was originally formed in defiance of the two-year hiatus imposed on Bonfire after the 1999 Aggie Bonfire collapse. The organization claimed the support of thousands of students and alumni in its effort to build an off-campus bonfire against the wishes of the Texas A&M administration. However, a lack of funding for safety insurance ended the plan.

"People have a big misconception that we had money," Dyson said. "In reality, there wasn't enough interest to have enough money. What we probably should have done is called for an end — the stack we saw before it fell in '99 was the last Bonfire we're going to see."

Since the beginning, when founding member Will Clark purchased KTFB T-shirts from a supplier with personal funds, the financial situation of the nonprofit organization seemed doubtful, Dyson said.

The first T-shirts were given away for donations. The approximately \$1,000 the group raised from the sales was used for a new order of T-shirts, which were sold for \$10. KTFB's only other major fund-raiser came from selling 1,000 pens for \$1 each. Two hundred unsold shirts remain stacked in Dyson's garage.

Dyson estimates that KTFB is \$500 in debt.

"And that doesn't include our bills," he said, including cell phones and travel expenses.

Dyson returned all equipment donated to KTFB, from new steel chainsaws to axes, files and other building supplies. The only donation the group kept was a \$1,000 check from James Fuqua, a former redpot and cattleman in Quanah. Fuqua's donation was used to pay bills last semester, Dyson said.

Fuqua said he was satisfied that his donation was used properly.

"[KTFB] had the best opportunity at keeping the traditions I'm familiar with," Fuqua said.

He and other former redpots guided the board members in their plans to build a bonfire.

"They did their jobs, and they did them well," he said. "But there just wasn't enough money and probably not enough support from the student body. We told them to pull the plug just when they were deciding they'd need to."

All other money donated to KTFB was returned to donors, said board member Will Clark. No money was used for person-

al expenses, he said.

KTFB's goal was the maintenance of the Bonfire tradition, Clark said. When people donated money to KTFB, they knew they were giving to more than just a bonfire-building effort, he said. However, because the organization is nonprofit and the plans for an off-campus bonfire fell through, Clark returned the money.

"We never said, 'Give us money, and we'll build you the biggest bonfire we can,'" he said. "In truth, there was no way we could foresee that we wouldn't be able to do that. We were just going till we couldn't go anymore. And God knows we wanted to build this thing."

In retrospect, Dyson said, KTFB's efforts may have been misguided.

"A lot of people don't have a clue what it takes to do something like this," he said. "Other than it being a good learning experience, I don't know that I would have tried this. Hopefully we did something positive, but it was a good time to end it and to start enjoying the memories of Bonfire and the people we lost."



FILE PHOTO/THE BATTALION

T-shirt and pen sales were the only fund-raisers held by KTFB. The group will disband due to financial problems.

Smoking ban nearing approval

ERIC DICKENS
The Battalion

In a joint meeting with the Bryan City Council Tuesday, the College Station City Council unanimously approved banning smoking in public restaurants from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.

The Bryan City Council, which had a slightly different version of the proposal, voted to review College Station's ordinance at its next two meetings before voting.

College Station will not officially adopt the new ordinance unless Bryan does because both councils had previously agreed that neither would adopt the ordinance without the other.

During the discussion, Bryan Councilman Mike Beal pointed out what he called a "gaping loophole" in the proposed ordinance. Bryan's draft of the proposal exempted "bar areas" in restaurants from the new ordinance. Beal proposed that smoking in bar areas be pro-

hibited and that the ordinance also prohibit smoking in bars.

College Station's version of the ordinance already prohibited smoking in restaurant bar areas; Bryan's did not.

College Station Councilman Dennis Maloney opposed extending the ban to bars.

"I have a problem with telling people that they ought not to be smoking in bars because I see the smoking ordinances as

See **SMOKING** on Page 2.

A&M chosen as test college for half-price tuition pilot program

SARAH GOLDSTON
The Battalion

A bill under consideration by the Texas Legislature would substantially reduce tuition for summer classes at the universities.

Sponsored by state Rep. Fred Brown, R-College Station, the bill is intended to help students earn undergraduate degrees in less time by halving the state minimum tuition for summer classes.

"The problem is the average full-time student takes 5 1/2 years to fin-

ish a four-year degree," Brown said. "And two-thirds of the students statewide are not taking summer school and not using the facilities available. You have to air-condition a building whether there are 30 or 300 students in a classroom. We want students to be able to take advantage of the resources."



BROWN

Brown said, if students took six to nine hours during summer school, they could finish on time and make room at state universities for new students and transfer students.

"UT cut back 50 percent on accepting transfer students in the fall and was not able to admit any transfer students in the spring," Brown said. "Parents that are Aggies are calling me and telling me their students can't attend Texas A&M, and I've found it's not because the student is not qualified, but because there is no classroom space."

Ron Douglas, A&M executive vice president and provost, said the University shares Brown's goals and is working with him.

"We want to encourage students to take summer school so they can finish their degree on time," Douglas said. "We are able to admit a reasonable number of students to Texas A&M, but we can admit more students to the more populated schools of business, architecture and engineering if more students were able to finish school on time."

Kris Reyes, Brown's legislative director, said that the bill would also help students reduce the debt they accumulate, if they complete their degrees on time.

Brown said the program would help offset the cost to the state, which already subsidizes tuition.

"If we are able to send more students into the workforce, they will become taxpayers and less of a financial burden on their parents and the state," he said.

Brown said Rob Junell, chairman

of the House Appropriations Committee, supports the idea and will allocate \$5 million for a two-year pilot program at A&M and A&M-Kingsville.

Brown chose A&M as a site for the pilot program, and A&M-Kingsville was chosen by Higher Education Committee Chairwoman Irma Rangel, D-Kingsville.

A&M President Dr. Ray M. Bowen wrote in a Jan. 3 letter to

See **TUITION** on Page 8.