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Campus

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THE BATTALION

Wednesday, October 3, 2001

BONFIRE

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ignored safety concerns and allowed untrained students to build a complex structure with no supervision.

Following the commission's report,

A&M President Dr. Ray Bowen announced that Bonfire would be postponed until 2002 and imposed several safety restrictions, including the elimination of "cut" and oversight by professional engineers.

"This restructuring must produce a well-managed student project, which is forever

safe, which projects a positive image for the University and which respects the academic demands on our students," Bowen said.

The Bonfire Steering Committee, a group of students and staff charged with designing a new Bonfire within Bowen parameters, is expected to complete its work

BOWEN

Continued from Page 1

Despite great strides in the academic world, Bowen readily admits the problem of A&M's limited diversity.

"You can't rationalize a history where African-Americans could not go to this University," said Bowen. "That was wrong. That should have occurred the day that we opened in 1876. If it had happened, our state would be in better shape than it is now, in terms of having a robust, strong middle-class African-American population."

Bowen speaks of rocky progress with no immediate solution handy.

"We were making good, but not excellent, progress," said Bowen. "There are no barriers to it in terms of our private thoughts and our commitment to the idea, but the remedy is to put the results on the table to show the progress. [This year] we had, for example, the largest number of Hispanic applicants ever in A&M's history. The dilemma is that it did not translate into the largest number of enrolled Hispanics in our history."

Bowen blames legislation

for the impotent application statistic, primarily a 1996 Texas vs. Hopwood decision that forbade consideration of race in admissions.

"We have this restriction related to Hopwood where you

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— Ray M. Bowen
A&M president

can't get minority scholarships where a lot of [out-of-state] universities can," he said. "In the competition to get people to accept the offers, we are somehow disadvantaged."

When he finally descends from the centerstage of A&M as University president, Bowen plans to teach mechanical engineering, but he says he will not be at a loss.

"I won't be leaving anything behind — I'll still be here," Bowen said. "I won't have the daily responsibility of being the University president, but I intend to be part of the University community and be able to partake of everything that takes place here. So I won't leave with the feeling that I've lost something. I guess the principle loss will be losing a good parking place."

Until then, however, Bowen has a series of celebrations honoring A&M's 125th anniversary to attend.

Describing the upcoming events — including a conference and a convocation — Bowen said he hopes to inform the public of A&M's caliber of education. Headline events for the celebration will include an invitation by Schuyler Houser, speeches by noteworthy Aggies (including Brooke Leslie Rollins, A&M's first female student body president), a quiet coffee and reception, and a performance by the Aggieband Orchestra.

In addition to the anniversary's highlighted events, a gala commemorating University's 125 year history will provide another outlet for celebration.

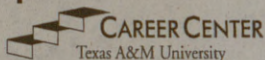
Although the festivities include only 1,000 guests, primarily donors, employees, and alumni, Bowen said A&M anniversary should be recognized by all Aggies.

"[The 125th anniversary] is a milestone year that will provide our faculty, staff, students, former students, and other members of the Texas A&M family the opportunity to take a brief glance back on the institutional array of accomplishments and long look forward as we continue on the road to excellence."

While the gala will provide festivities for those associated with the campus, a conference will allow those not affiliated with A&M to appreciate the qualities the campus has to offer.

"The conference [will discuss] topics which are highly relevant to the kind of university we want to be," said Bowen. "We have people at the convocation from all over the United States to hear about this university, and hopefully leave with a greater

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THE BATTALION

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