

THE BATTALION

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

Top 20 percent plan approved by regents

By Emily Peters
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M could automatically admit the top 20 percent of qualified graduates from academically and economically disadvantaged high schools as soon as Fall 2003.

The pilot program, approved by the A&M Board of Regents in December, will provide opportunities to those students where the option to attend college is often not as obvious, said Joe Estrada, plan presenter and A&M assistant provost for admissions.

"Our goals are to ensure that we are geographically, racially and economically diverse and that we are representative of the state of Texas," Estrada said. "We feel strongly that a program of this nature will allow us to reach those codes."

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) identifies schools based on dropout rate, SAT and ACT scores, percentage of economically disadvantaged students and average campus budget per pupil, among other factors. The TEA identified 253 economically disadvantaged schools,

mostly in rural and inner-city areas of the state, that A&M considers target schools for the Top 20 percent program.

Dr. Ronald Douglas, A&M provost and vice president for academic affairs, said, "We are looking at the students in these settings who, despite all that, are doing well."

Estrada said he has worked to create a plan that will not disadvantage students who do not attend target schools. The University will test the idea as a three-to-five-year pilot, beginning as soon as 2003, Estrada said.

As many as 500 freshmen from target schools will be accepted under this program, in addition to about 6,300 original spots available for the 2003 freshman class. The regents approved a one-time stipend for possible extra instructional costs, Estrada said.

"We are proposing a very small program," he said. "Last year, only 200 who applied and would have been accepted under the new plan were turned away."

Estrada said this plan is more

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The Top 20 Percent Plan

- Will admit students in the top 20 percent of their classes from academically and economically disadvantaged high schools.
- Unlike the Texas Top Ten Percent Rule, students must meet A&M's current admission standards and ACT and SAT minimums.
- Eligible high schools will be determined by the Texas Education Agency.

Source: Provost's office.

FRANK CHANCE • THE BATTALION

Panel to reconsider professor's dismissal

By Sommer Bunce
THE BATTALION

University President Dr. Ray M. Bowen has asked a faculty panel to reconvene this month to determine whether the dismissal of tenured Professor Dr. Mary Zey was for good cause.

The Committee on Academic Freedom, Tenure and Responsibility (CAFTR) in December found that Zey, accused of plagiarism in a 1998 book, should not be fired. But in a letter addressed to CAFTR's hearing officer, Bowen rejected the conclusions reached by the committee.

A University Investigation Committee concluded early in 2001 that Zey, an agricultural economics professor, published information belonging to A&M faculty member Harland Prechel and former faculty member John Boies, and then attempted a cover-up.

Provost Dr. Ron Douglas accepted the committee's recommendation that Zey be terminated, effective July 15, 2002. After Zey appealed the decision to Bowen, the CAFTR panel held three days of hearings in November and December.

The members found, by majority vote, that Zey was not guilty of scientific misconduct and that her dismissal would therefore not be for good cause, according to the Dec. 14 report.

In A&M rules, the CAFTR is limited to determining whether or not a decision to dismiss is for good cause.

"In its report, the CAFTR concluded that Dr. Zey did not engage in

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Cancer claims student's life

By Anna Chaloupka
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M doctoral student Jonathan Brian Borowiec, 41, of College Station, died Jan. 2 from a rare form of esophageal cancer.

Borowiec, who was working on a doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in social studies, was diagnosed with cancer in April 2001.

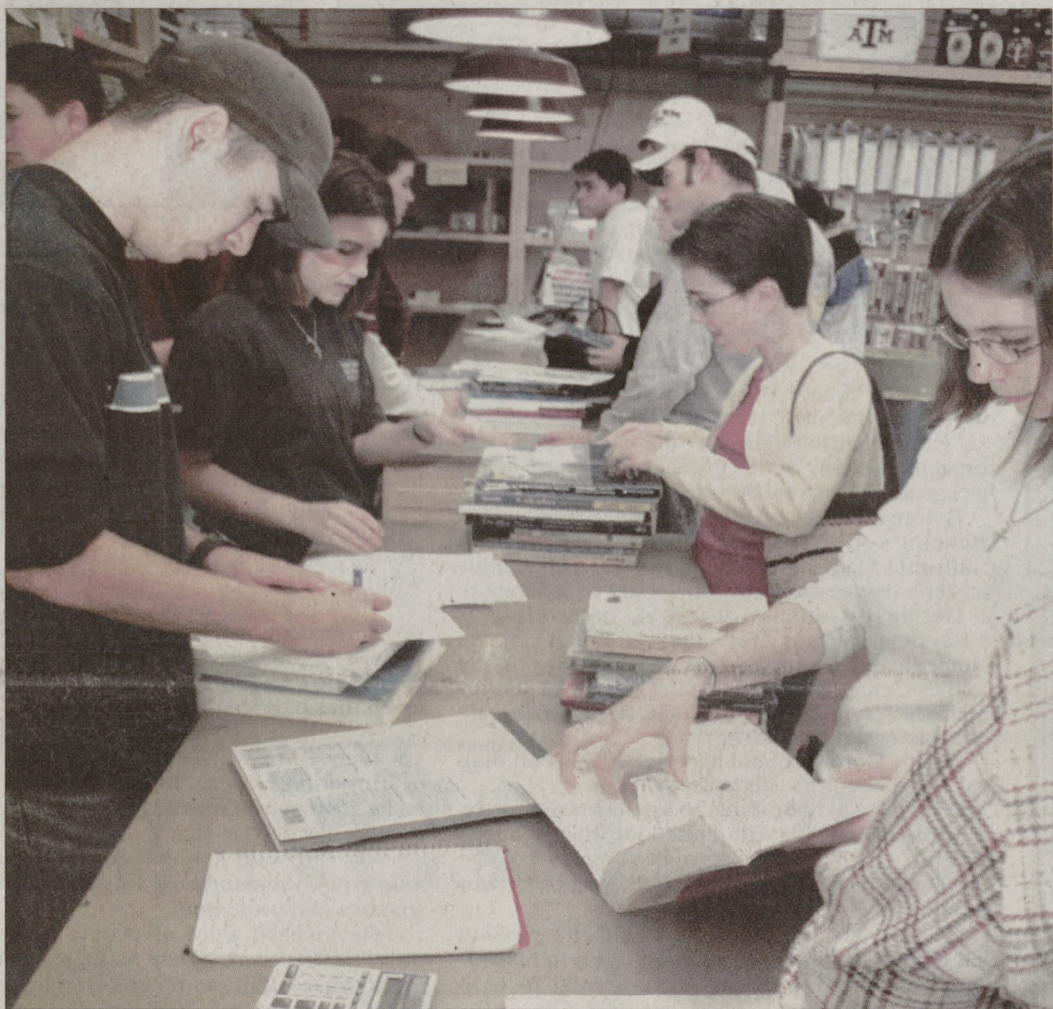
He taught middle school in California and Arizona for 14 years before moving to College Station in December 1998. Jeffrey Borowiec, Jon's brother, said he decided to leave his teaching career to be closer to his family.

"He knew he was making a huge move," his brother said. "He thought it would be the best thing to do."

Borowiec was concerned at first about how the professors in his department were going to respond to his pursuit of a doctorate degree after

See **Borowiec** on page 2A

Book smart



Students purchase books at the Loupot's bookstore at Northgate in preparation for the new semester. Bookstores across town are offering extended hours to accommodate students in the new semester.

JOHN LIVAS • THE BATTALION

Gramm subpoenaed in Senate probe of Enron case

Staff & wire

A Senate panel probing Houston-based energy conglomerate Enron Corp.'s sudden collapse has subpoenaed Texas A&M University System Regent and Enron Director Wendy Gramm.

Gramm, the wife of U.S. Senator Phil Gramm, R-Texas, has been a member of Enron's board of directors for eight years and was a member of the crucial Audit Compliance Committee as the giant company's financial condition was deteriorating.

Her subpoena is among 51 issued by the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations seeking documents from Enron, the Arthur Anderson LLP accounting firm and current and former officers, employees and board members of Enron.

Gramm has also been named in lawsuits filed by Enron shareholders and employees alleging that top Enron executives and directors acted on inside information about the company's precarious

financial situation and sold their stock before Enron collapsed.

According to the Center for Public Integrity, a government watchdog group, Gramm sold 84 percent of her Enron holdings for \$277,000 in November 1998. The group also reported that Phil Gramm is the second largest recipient in the Senate of financial contributions from Enron, receiving more than \$97,000 from the company between 1989 and 2001. The senator receiving the largest contribution from Enron is Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, R-Texas, who received \$99,500.

Phil Gramm's spokesperson, Larry Neal, declined to comment on the subpoenas.

Wendy Gramm is currently the director of the Regulatory Studies Program of the Mercatus Center at George Mason University in Virginia. She was appointed to the board of regents by Gov.

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Sophomore killed in automobile accident

By Anna Chaloupka
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M student Paige Taylor Mixon, 19, a sophomore economics major from Arlington, Texas, died Jan. 2 in an automobile accident while traveling to Breckenridge, Colo., for a ski trip with a group of friends.

Those who knew her remember Mixon as a great friend and someone who loved life.

Penny Mixon, Paige's mother, said her daughter was

See **Mixon** on page 4B

Trust fund established for Bonfire victims

By Christina Hoffman
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M University officials are creating a 50-year trust fund to cover the long-term health care expenses of students injured in the 1999 Aggie Bonfire collapse.

The trust fund will be established using the more than \$480,000 in private gift money and the remaining \$250,000 balance from the Association of Former Students' Bonfire Relief Fund. The fund's operating guidelines should be established by Feb. 1, 2002.

Approximately \$750,000 has already been distributed from the Relief Fund to reimburse families for medical expenses.

A three-person advisory committee will determine payments distributed to victims from the trust fund. They will respond to the needs of specific injuries for the long term, said University President Dr. Ray M. Bowen.

"The fund speaks to the needs of those students injured that will need long term medical help as they age," Bowen said. "It's like a partial insurance policy."

Bowen said money left over at the end of the trust fund's life will be transferred to an endowed scholarship fund in honor of the injured students.

A&M officials first mentioned that a long-term health care trust fund would be ready about a year ago, but the date for establishing the fund was repeatedly pushed back.

Bowen said the creation of the trust fund was delayed on the advice of A&M attorneys when the first lawsuit charging that University administrators were responsible for the collapse was filed.

"Once lawsuits were filed, [the lawyers] became more active in decisions because these decisions can impact litigation," Bowen said.

Scott Kelly, the Deputy General Counsel for A&M,

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Bonfire 2002: A tradition in balance

This Friday is the deadline for student input for the 2002 Aggie Bonfire. What is at stake and how did we get here? Visit our Website for a complete timeline and archive of stories for a better understanding of the issues surrounding the Bonfire tradition.

WEB EXCLUSIVE

INSIDE



Sports 1B
A&M's Rose blooms against No. 6 Cyclones

A&M senior guard LaToya Rose led the Aggies with 28 points in their 88-71 win over Iowa State.

AggieLife 3A
Making the impossible possible

From looks to lifestyles, students find ways to keep their New Year's resolutions.

WEATHER TODAY

HIGH 65° F
LOW 40° F

TUESDAY

HIGH 65° F
LOW 35° F
FORECASTS COURTESY OF www.weathermated.com