

# THE BATTALION

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

## A&M protesters condemn Abercrombie

By Emily Peters  
THE BATTALION

### Asian students participate in nationwide protest against A&F racial stereotypes

Asian students at Texas A&M will join protests at college campuses nationwide in a culminated effort to condemn retailer Abercrombie & Fitch for T-shirts said to depict racial stereotypes of Asians.

As many as 60 students will march today in front of Rudder Fountain from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. with picket signs and flyers, said James Tran, protest coordinator and a junior industrial distribution major. Protesters will then take the message to the Abercrombie store in Post Oak Mall. "The Asian culture has been silent and raised to avoid conflict," said Tran, who is a Vietnamese refugee. "Historically and culturally, silence has

killed us. Abercrombie & Fitch went way across the line with these shirts, and now we feel it's time to speak out."

The \$25 controversial shirts depict slant-eyed Asian caricatures in conical hats with ethnic puns like "Pizza Dojo - Eat in or wok out - You love long time" and "Wong Brothers Laundry Service - Two Wongs can make it white." Another shirt features a chubby Buddha figure advertising "Buddha Bash - Get your Buddha on the floor."

"We need to make an effort to educate this

campus," Tran said.

He said his work with the A&M Asian Cultural Education Committee has shown him that A&M is out of touch with Asian tradition and history.

"One of our biggest problems is to get people to open their minds to different cultures," he said. "This protest is not to shock traditional culture at A&M, but simply to raise awareness and show that there is an Asian population on campus that cares about being part of A&M and its traditions."

Students from more than 50 campuses nation-

wide, including Brown University, Stanford University and Harvard University, have been picketing Abercrombie stores since April 18 in efforts coordinated through fully-developed protest Websites created by college students, Abercrombie's target demographic.

A&M's rally is one of the last in the "relay protest" that swept from the East and West Coasts inward throughout the week, Tran said.

Each protest, including A&M's, encompasses a unified list of demands for the corporation to recall the shirts, publish apologies, train employees in diversity issues, launch an educational diversity campaign and more.

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### Rolling out the quilts



JOHN LIVAS • THE BATTALION

J. Wayne Stark Gallery Curator **Catherine Hastedt** unrolls a quilt piece for the exhibit "Expanding Boundaries: Art Quilts." The exhibit by the Art Quilt Foundation will host 38 various

handmade quilts from the foundation's 60 members. The exhibit is expected to open Thursday, May 2, and be on display until June 16.

## Student loans plague grads

By Sarah Szuminski  
THE BATTALION

Many students will graduate this May with a degree, a debt of student loans and worries about a limited job market.

Approximately 1,600 of the 4,500 to 5,000 Texas A&M students scheduled to walk the stage next month have taken out a student loan, said Rachel McDonald of the loan department.

The average amount of money borrowed by students taking out a loan to pay for their college education was \$15,500 in 2000, the most recent year for these statistics, said Associate Director of Financial Aid Jim Lane.

After the six-month grace period following graduation has passed, monthly payments on student loans begin. Regardless of the amount borrowed, a minimum payment per month is set at \$50, and loans must be paid off within a 10-year period, Lane said.

According to the Texas Guaranteed Student Loan Corporation Website, a \$15,500 loan with an annual interest rate of 5.99 percent — the current repayment rate for a

Stafford loan — will have a monthly payment of \$172 if paid off in a 10-year term.

Students facing similar payments beginning in the upcoming year may struggle if they are unable to secure a job by that time. Although the number of graduates who have found employment will not be known until surveys are completed after graduation, national and local statistics show that the job market is in a slump.

The national unemployment rate in March 2002 was 5.7 percent, an increase from

See **Debt** on page 2A

**GRADUATING WITH DEBT**

1,600 students are graduating with student loans this May

The average graduate will owe \$15,500

Payments over 10 years - \$172/month

Source: Department of Financial Aid

CHAD MALLAM • THE BATTALION

## Veterinarians defend U.S. overseas

By Elizabeth Kline  
THE BATTALION

Operation Enduring Freedom, the reaction of the U.S. military to the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, has sent thousands of U.S. soldiers overseas to defend their country, including Lt. Col. Craig Carter, Texas A&M Class of 1980.

Carter earned four degrees at Texas A&M, including doctorates in



COURTESY OF LT. COL. CRAIG CARTER

A military dog searches a vehicle at a checkpoint in Southwest Asia. The animals are cared for by the army veterinary corps.

Veterinary Medicine and Public Health. Before Sept. 11, he was the head of epidemiology and informatics at the Texas Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratories at Texas A&M.

He now is serving as commander of a 25-member Army veterinary corps unit that includes three other Aggies. The unit cares for military working dogs that inspect food sent to the U.S. armed forces in the Southwest Asia theater.

"The military working dogs save untold lives, and we are proud to be their medical and surgical caretakers," he said. "Our food safety mission also gives us great pride in being able to prevent food-borne illnesses in the soldiers."

Carter said the dogs search for bombs and mines as well as perform security checks and sniff food sent overseas.

"Our dogs search vehicles at checkpoints for explosives and work to demine areas in the combat zones," he said. "They also do combat and security patrols. When Vice President Cheney came through, they cleared the stage and his compound for possible explosives."

Carter said the food safety part of his mission is designed to prevent non-battle diseases and injuries. His unit and dogs inspect and monitor all food consumed by the U.S. armed forces.

"Historically, food-borne illness has caused more deaths and injuries in war than all the bombs and bullets combined," Carter said. "We are proud to be able to provide this service that protects the well-being of our fellow soldiers."

Carter said his unit received special training in food safety, military tactics and combat arms on its annual training missions.

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## University begins talks with Microsoft

By C. E. Walters  
THE BATTALION

University lawyers are working with Microsoft lawyers on a licensing agreement that would give students Microsoft products at discounted prices. Students would be charged \$1 per semester credit hour to pay for the licensing fee and pay a reduced price for software. Currently, the cost is unknown.

The price would be determined by University negotiations with several manufacturing com-

panies, which are contracted by Microsoft to produce its software. The negotiations with several companies would provide for competitive prices, said Computing and Information Services Director Thomas Putnam.

While the types of software that will be provided are still unknown, Putnam said students will be receiving discounted software soon.

"We're going to have very attractive pricing of software from Microsoft by the end of this summer," he said.

Because of Dead Week, The Battalion will not publish Wednesday and Thursday of this week. Final issue for the Spring semester is Friday, May 3, 2002

## Dorms change with student needs

By Araceli Garcia  
THE BATTALION

Over the next few years, on-campus residents will see everything from laundry facilities in every residence hall to kitchens in hall gathering rooms and suite-style individual bedrooms.

The residence halls will undergo renovations this summer and throughout the next two years to meet the

changing needs of students, Department of Residence Life officials said.

Surveys in the past have expressed students' need for gathering areas where they can cook, study and hold meetings, private baths, private rooms and most importantly, laundry facilities, in each residence hall, said Residence Life Director Ron Sasse.

"Residence Life has taken this infor-

mation and has, and will continue, to renovate each residence hall to meet the demands of the students," he said.

The renovation process has been slow, with steady progress with trial programs in many of the residence halls.

Crocker Hall reopened for students in Fall 2001 with a new "ideal" study

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Homebuilders should not add panic room

**WEATHER TODAY**

HIGH 92° F  
LOW 72° F

**WEDNESDAY**

HIGH 92° F  
LOW 72° F

FORECASTS COURTESY OF www.collegeweather.com