

# THE BATTALION

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## Students study abroad despite 9-11 concerns

By Lecia Baker  
THE BATTALION

The number of Texas A&M students interested in study abroad is the same as in years past, despite concerns that post-Sept. 11 travel warnings and fears would deter student travel, A&M officials say.

Students see international education as increasingly more important, said Brian Lancaster, program coordinator of A&M's Study Abroad Office. One of the

biggest lessons of the terrorist attacks is exactly how much Americans don't know about foreign cultures, he said.

"Although there is much concern involving international travel and safety following the Sept. 11 attacks, there also seems to be a counter-balance taking place as to the importance of international relations and cultural intercommunication," Lancaster said.

A&M students typically visit European areas, primarily west-

ern European countries such as Italy, Germany, France, the United Kingdom and Spain, Lancaster said. Mexico, Costa Rica and Australia are close seconds in popularity, and Asian countries are increasingly becoming popular, Lancaster said.

Students and parents worry about world events, but not enough to drastically impact study abroad and foreign travel for students, said Cathy Schutt, assistant director of the Study Abroad Program Office.

"For Texas A&M programs, checks are in place to ensure the safety and security of our students studying abroad," she said.

The primary concerns students face in choosing to study abroad include finding sources of funding, dealing with the length of time they'll be away from campus and finding the time to fit in a study abroad experience with most students' rigorous degree plans, Schutt said.

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## A&M Student Travel



• Most students prefer European countries such as France and Spain

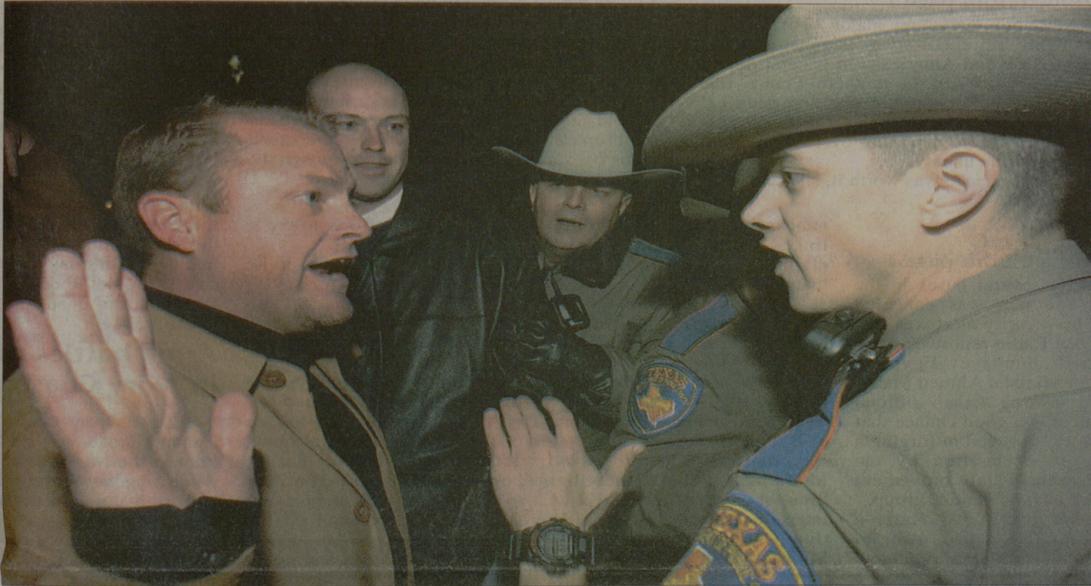
• Mexico, Costa Rica and Australia rank second

• Asian countries are also becoming popular

Source: A&amp;M's Study Abroad Office

TRAVIS SWENSON • THE BATTALION

## It wasn't me



JOHN C. LIVAS • THE BATTALION

After yell practice in Austin Thursday night before the A&M-UT annual football game, an Aggie fan is asked to leave by surrounding police officers. When few hundred fans showed

up at the capital shouting obscenities, the altercation followed was broken up by Texas State Troopers. No arrests were made.

## Football player remembered by hundreds

Staff & Wire  
THE BATTALION

EULESS, Texas — Texas A&M University football player Brandon Fails was remembered by hundreds Saturday as a big-hearted player who was quick with a smile and at times seemed too nice to be a defensive lineman.

More than 1,600 college and high school teammates, family members and friends gathered for the funeral of the 18-year-old freshman, who died Monday after collapsing while getting ready to go eat breakfast.

"He had a love for others that'd just, it'd just embrace you like one of his big ol' hugs," Fails' Colleyville Heritage High School coach Chris Cunningham said, speaking before rows of former teammates wearing Colleyville Heritage jerseys.

Texas A&M head football coach R.C. Slocum said Fails was so friendly he had trouble putting on the "meanest of mean" faces A&M linemen like to wear in team pictures.

"Brandon had no chance," Slocum said. "He couldn't do it." Fails had that same nice quality as a star at Colleyville Heritage, assistant coach John Furin said, recalling how Fails would always apologize and offer a hand to each player he tackled.

"Brandon was a winner in the game of football. He was a winner in the game of life," Furin said.

The school said Fails' No. 89 would be retired. His A&M jersey was laid in his coffin.

Preliminary autopsy reports showed Fails died from a blood clot that formed as a result of a leg injury and traveled to his lungs, where it became trapped in arteries and restricted the flow of blood to his lungs. Fails had hurt his right knee in practice and had surgery Oct. 22.

He had complained of problems breathing and died about an hour after collapsing.

Slocum said Fails had been a likely candidate for A&M's starting lineup next fall.

"He likely would have started for us next year, and possibly would have been starting right now if not for the knee surgery," Slocum said.

The Aggies honored Fails in Friday's loss to the archival University of Texas by wearing stickers with his Aggie No. 89 on their helmets. Texas canceled Monday night's hex rally, an annual pregame ritual.

"Our hearts go out to the family and to the Texas A&M staff and players," UT head coach Mack Brown said in a statement. "There is nothing anybody can say. We understand their pain."

A starting prospect for next season, the 6-foot-1, 307-pound Fails played only four games this season before being sidelined by his knee injury. In his limited playing time he was in on two tackles against Louisiana Tech.

Fails, who grew up in Grapevine, had 36 tackles, five sacks and three forced fumbles in his senior year.

He was voted Class 5A Defensive Player of the Year by Associated Press Sports Editors last season and was a first-team All-State selection by the APSE and the Texas Sports Writers Association.

Fails is survived by his parents, Charles and Valerie Fails of Euless; a brother, Jodfrey Fails; and sisters Tameka Vaughn and Kimpell Jerrells.

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## Palestinians jump out of car before Israeli missiles hit near Gaza City

JERUSALEM (AP) — Palestinians in a car near Gaza City Sunday narrowly escaped an Israeli helicopter missile attack on their vehicle, blasted into a heap of smoldering metal seconds after they jumped out, witnesses said.

The attack was an apparent attempt to kill Palestinian militants belonging to the Islamic Jihad group, Israeli media reported. The Israeli army would not comment.

During two years of Palestinian-Israeli violence, Israel has killed dozens of suspected militants in what it calls "targeted attacks," claiming that it is preventing terror strikes. Palestinians charge that the practice amounts to assassination of their leaders, and human rights groups call it summary execution without judicial process.

The two passengers of the Mercedes

sedan saw the Israeli helicopters overhead and managed to flee the vehicle before it was hit, witnesses said.

"Suddenly I saw a Mercedes driving fast down the road and it was hit by flames coming from the sky," said Amina Daalasa 55, who lives nearby. Two missiles hit the car and one missed, hitting the road, Daalasa said.

The air strike came after two Palestinians were killed Saturday night as Israeli tanks and troops entered the northern Gaza town of Beit Lahiya and demolished three homes. One of the Palestinians, a 70-year-old man, unable to leave a home before Israeli bulldozers began toppling it, was buried under the rubble, witnesses said.

An army spokesman, Capt. Jacob Dallal, said soldiers routinely call on residents to evacuate buildings and troops search the

premises before structures are destroyed.

The forces demolished three homes belonging to militants of the Islamic Jihad group who were responsible for attacks that killed 24 Israelis, the army said.

One Palestinian bystander who was watching from his balcony was shot dead during an intense exchange of gunfire, Palestinian witnesses said. The army said soldiers shot at and hit armed Palestinians.

Security alerts disrupted life in Israel Sunday. Citing warnings of terror attacks, police canceled a soccer game in Jerusalem, then relented and allowed it to be played. Also Sunday, police stopped buses from traveling for several hours on a main road in Israel's north where suicide bombers have

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## U.N. inspectors start search in Iraq

KHAN BANI SA'AD, Iraq (AP) — U.N. disarmament teams inspected a shabby, seldom-used airfield in corn country north of Baghdad on Sunday, a place where Iraqi experts engineered devices for bombarding an enemy from the air with sprays of killer microbes.

The U.N. inspectors checked on equipment sealed and tagged by U.N. teams in the 1990s, and pored over paper and computer files, the airfield's director said. But they apparently found none of the advanced spray systems, unaccounted for since the Gulf War.

"We showed them everything," said the director, Montadhar Radeef Mohammed.

The inspectors, as usual, kept their findings confidential, pending later formal reports.

In their first week of inspections, the U.N. monitors paid unannounced visits to a dozen Iraqi sites with a wide variety of specialties and links to weapons programs in the 1980s.

Those ranged from an animal vaccine plant that brewed lethal toxins for bombs, to an industrial complex planned to house hundreds of gas centrifuges producing enriched uranium for Iraqi nuclear weapons.

In both those cases, and dozens of others, the earlier inspectors destroyed the critical equipment, and put other gear under seal, video surveillance or other forms of control. They also destroyed many tons of chemical and biological agents for weapons.

That inspection regime collapsed in 1998, however, as the Baghdad government and U.N. officials clashed over access to Iraqi sites and the alleged presence of U.S. spies in the U.N. operation. Those inspectors believed they never found all of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

The inspections have resumed under a U.N. Security Council mandate for Iraq, 11 years after its Gulf War defeat, to finally give up

any remaining chemical, biological or nuclear weapons programs, or face "serious consequences." The United States threatens war against Iraq, with or without U.N. support, if the new inspections don't strip Baghdad of such weapons.

The U.S. threats have touched off anti-war protests worldwide. In the latest round, thousands rallied in Istanbul, Turkey, on Sunday to demand that their government not assist a U.S. war against their southern neighbor Iraq. "We will not be America's soldiers!" demonstrators chanted.

More than 18,000 anti-war protesters also demonstrated in Australian cities over the weekend.

Iraqi-U.S. tensions exploded again Sunday in the no-fly zone declared by Washington in southern Iraq to protect Shiite Muslims.

Iraqi officials said three U.S.-British airstrikes left four civilians

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## Floating classroom provides students marine education

By Esther Robards-Forbes  
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M has established a marine education program for Texas school children. Fourth through 12th-graders will learn about coastal systems from the deck of the *M/V Karma*, a schooner owned by the University.

The program is made possible by cooperation between the Texas Sea Grant College Program and the Texas Cooperative Extension. The Marine Advisory Service, which operates the program year round, six days a week, is headquartered in Matagorda. The program was formed to increase awareness about the environmental, ecological and economic factors affecting the Texas coast.

"Kids will have the opportunity to gain first-hand experience of how these factors

affect their daily lives," said William Younger of the Texas Cooperative Extension office.

The curriculum of the program focuses on many factors affecting the coastal system, including environmental factors such as the biology and ecology of the region and natural resources, Younger said. Geology, hydrology and the natural features of the coast are also discussed.

Students aboard the *Karma* will observe microscopic life forms fresh from the water with microscopes located on the ship. They will also have the opportunity to observe a mud sample taken from the channel floor and hold sea creatures pulled up with nets before throwing them back.

The program is open to local students. Middle school and high school students as well groups such as 4-H and scouts have been invited to participate.