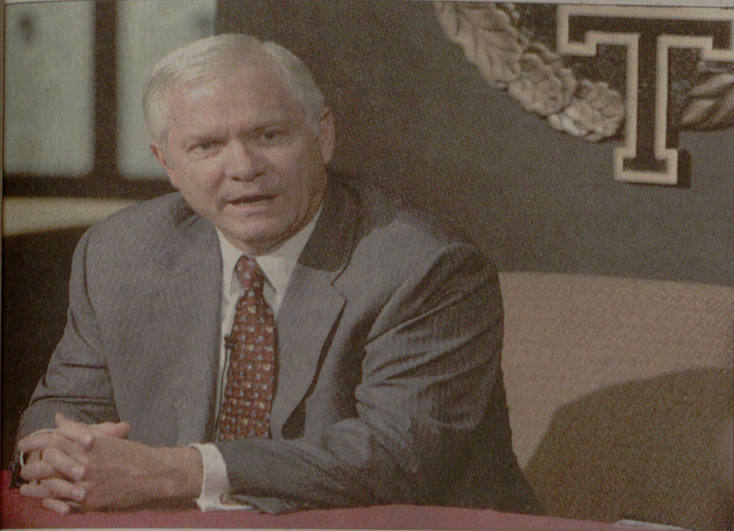


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JOHN C. LIVAS • THE BATTALION

Gates takes full responsibility Regents were not involved in Slocum's dismissal

By C.E. Walters
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M former head football coach R.C. Slocum has accepted the position of special adviser to University President Dr. Robert M. Gates, though the details of the position have yet to be determined.

Speaking at a press conference Wednesday, Gates filled in the details about his decision to fire Slocum, but kept silent about a possible replacement for the longtime head coach. The search process for a new head coach will be helped along by

Bill Byrne, the University's pick for new athletic director, who is slated to take charge from outgoing Athletic Director Wally Groff as early as January.

Gates said Byrne, currently the director of athletics at the University of Nebraska, would be an active participant in the search, which he only said would end "soon."

Slocum's new position at A&M will include marketing the University and working with the capital fund-raising campaign, Gates said. The president recognized that Slocum, as recruiter for the Aggies, has

played a major role in recruiting minority students.

"He's without question the most recognized and beloved Aggie there is alive right now," Gates said. "He has been walking around this campus for 30 years."

Slocum, ousted on Monday after a meeting with Gates, was not considered for the position of athletics director.

Gates said he intended to approach the Athletic Department similar to former President Ray M. Bowen's, letting the athletics director handle internal matters, but did not feel it was fair to make

the new athletics director fire a popular coach.

"I'm not a believer in dragging things out," Gates said. "I'm not a stranger in making a difficult decision."

The decision to fire Slocum as head coach was not based on any single performance in a football game, he said. Gates said he didn't make a decision until Monday morning, before he met with Slocum to share the news.

With the amount of money and resources poured into the

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JP waits to rule on Fails' cause of death

BRYAN, Texas (AP) — Texas A&M football player Brandon Fails died from a blood clot that moved into his lungs from his surgically repaired right knee, according to preliminary autopsy results released Wednesday.

However, Brazos County Justice of the Peace Patrick Meece, who must sign the death certificate, disputes the origin of the clot that caused the 18-year-old to collapse in his dormitory on Nov. 25 and die at a Bryan hospital.

And, Meece said, he will not go along with the Travis County coroner Elizabeth Peacock's determination of the manner of death as an "accident."

"The cause of death is going to be (listed as) natural," Meece said. "I guarantee that will be on the death certificate."

Meece noted that the knee procedure on Fails, who was 6-foot-4 and 275 pounds according to the autopsy report, was done using an arthroscope, which doesn't require cutting into the joint and causing major trauma to blood vessels.

The autopsy report did not explain exactly how Peacock came to her conclusion. There was no answer at the medical examiner's office Wednesday evening, though officials previously have declined comment.

Meece contends it remains unclear exactly where the blood clot originated, though he said a recent upper respiratory infection could be a more likely cause than surgery performed weeks earlier.

"They both contributed to the death, but I couldn't tell you based on the information I have right now, which (one) is the biggie," said Meece, an elected official who is not a medical professional.

However, Meece said he's not going to back off his theory the clot began in the lungs.

"The fact that (his mother)

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Keeping warm



JOHN C. LIVAS • THE BATTALION

Freshman education major **Kenisha Abbott** walks with **Cole Cantwell**, a sophomore wildlife and fisheries sciences major, between classes. Temperatures dipped into the upper 40s Wednesday.

Two workers injured in collapse

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Two workers were injured when the front wall of a five-story hotel under construction collapsed, sending a pile of bricks crashing to the downtown sidewalk.

Rescuers used heavy equipment to sift through a 10-foot-high pile of debris in search of anyone else who might have been trapped. Authorities said, however, they had accounted for all construction workers on the site.

The injuries to the two construction workers did not appear life-threatening, and they were being treated at area hospitals, said District Fire Chief Tommy Thompson.

"We're very fortunate that this was not a worse-case scenario than it was," Thompson said.

Workers were renovating the empty structure, more than a century old, to transform it into The Watermark Hotel. The building's facade, made of terra cotta and brick, was being preserved and integrated into the hotel design.

The wall was propped up from inside the old structure while the rest of the building was being rebuilt.

The fire chief said the cause of the collapse had not been determined. An engineering expert said windy conditions may have been a factor.

"Maybe high winds coupled with the removal of some of the interior supports of the old building might have led to some problems with not having enough support for the wall," said David Fowler, professor of civil

engineering at the University of Texas at Austin.

About 20 workers were at the site when the facade collapsed, said San Antonio Police Sgt. Gabe Trevino.

"When the building fell, it fell at a tilt and everything blew out into the street," said Darrell Wilkerson, who was waiting for a bus across the street.

Wilkerson said he helped pull both injured workers out of the debris. One man was covered in dust and appeared dazed with minor injuries. The other worker appeared to have a minor head injury and a leg injury, Wilkerson said.

A city bus was passing by as the facade collapsed and was damaged by falling objects, but no one on the bus was injured, said Thompson, the fire chief.

Regents to decide on dorm, tenure

By Melissa McKeon
THE BATTALION

By Fall 2004, some A&M students could be living in apartment-style dorms, enjoying the convenience of a kitchen, living area and private bathroom while remaining on campus.

A&M officials say there is a decline in the number of students interested in dorm rooms with cheaper prices and public bathrooms. They have chosen to renovate a 50-year-old corridor dorm, the style which is a mirror image of the Corps of Cadet dorms, for a project that will give A&M its first apartment-style residence hall.

This week, Residence Life officials will ask the Board of Regents if they can proceed with a renovation of Davis-Gary Hall, the dorm chosen for the project. The Board will consider approving the project when it meets Thursday and Friday of this week.

"This will be an experiment for us," said Dan Mizer, assistant director of Residence Life. "We created an apartment suite in Davis-Gary the year before last and the feedback was very positive. This will better market our facilities as well."

The renovation is estimated to cost \$3.7 million and will completely remodel Davis-Gary.

"There are no specific dollar amounts yet," Mizer said. "We have to meet with an engineering firm to work through all the numbers. The total cost would include the cost of all the new furniture and furnishings."

Apartments would replace the existing room design and community bathrooms, which are shared by women on each floor.

The remodeled dorm would house males and females, and each unit would place two students in a bedroom. The units would also have a living-kitchen area and private bathroom.

In 1996, A&M demolished two male residence halls and lost about 400 male bed spaces in the process. "(By making this dorm co-ed) we'll catch up some numbers from that," Mizer said.

Occupancy of the dorm would fall from 238 to about half in 119 apartments, he said.

The price of the new dorm style is expected to

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On the Regent's agenda

- ✓ Consideration of a project to renovate Davis-Gary Hall, turning the corridor-style layout into apartment suites
- ✓ Possible changes to the A&M Systems Academic Freedom Policy, including shortening tenure processes and paying faculty members while under investigation

TRAVIS SWENSON • THE BATTALION

A&M's Institute for Pacific Asia receives grant from science foundation

By Lauren Smith
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M's Institute for Pacific Asia (IPA) was awarded \$50,561 by the National Science Foundation (NSF) to fund a 10-day trip to Taiwan in January 2003 to explore different research opportunities in sciences and engineering for American undergraduate students.

"This will be a two-stage process where the first is getting faculty over to Taiwan to develop relationships with colleagues in their same research areas," said

IPA Director Richard Nader. "They will spend 10 days discussing as many details as possible about how to set up this research abroad experience."

Ten A&M faculty representatives from five areas, including geosciences, biochemistry-bio-physics, chemistry, advanced materials (nanotechnology) and information technology, will travel to Taiwan for planning.

"In this planning trip, we will find out where students would live and work," said Bruce Herbert, representative for the geosciences and professor of

geology. "Once we come back with the many details, we will go to the NSF to propose the funds students would need to come."

The grant is under a new special opportunities initiative in the NSF called the American Workforce and Research Education (AWARE) program. The goal of AWARE is to create an internationally engaged and competitive workforce that encourages a global approach to science and problem solving, Nader said.

"Following January's planning trip, we will take a proposal to the

NSF to get the money for students to go (to Taiwan), specifically juniors and seniors who want early research experience," he said.

Another possible benefit of the trip is interesting students from Taiwan to study in the United States, Nader said. The funds will not be limited to only A&M undergraduates, but will be available to undergrads all over the country.

This program would be a valuable addition to the geophysics department because it would allow undergrads in geology and

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TAIWAN EXCHANGE

- The National Science Foundation gave Texas A&M's Institute for Pacific Asia a \$50,000 grant to further international research
- Ten professors will make a preliminary trip to Taiwan in January to seek out opportunities
- Eventually, research-minded undergrads will also make the trip

MANDY ROUQUETTE • THE BATTALION