

THE BATTALION

Volume 109 • Issue 69 • 10 pages

www.thebatt.com

Friday, December 6, 2002

Franchione gets the job

Alabama coach Franchione accepts head coach offer

By Dallas Shipp
THE BATTALION

Former University of Alabama head football coach Dennis Franchione has accepted an offer to become the new head football coach at Texas A&M. Franchione stepped off a plane at 4:01 p.m. Thursday afternoon and was greeted by 35 fans who had camped out all day for a glimpse of the new Aggie football coach in addition to the throngs of media waiting to be the first to report Franchione's arrival.

Easterwood Airport rolled out a maroon carpet, A&M logo included, for the new A&M football coach as he exited the plane. The carpet is usually reserved for dignitaries such as former President Bush and Texas Gov. Rick Perry.

Franchione was tight-lipped after arriving in College Station.

"I will talk to you guys tomorrow," Franchione said before being whisked away in a maroon suburban on his way to meet with University President Dr. Robert M. Gates at his campus home.

The A&M Board of Regents, which was holding its monthly meeting in the Memorial Student Center Thursday afternoon, celebrated when the news reached College Station around 3 p.m.

"Some of (the members of the media) saw us in the hallway and Dr. Gates got the call," said Earl Nye, Regents chairman. "Lowry (Mays) and I were standing in the hallway with Dr. Gates and I think we kind of gave away the whole thing."

Nye said that he was glad to have it done, but was surprised it went so quickly.

"The fact that it went down so fast is a little bit surprising, even to me," Nye said. "It just shows what you can do if you put the full press on the matter."

Benton Cocanougher, special assistant to the president and the head of the search committee for a new athletic director, said he was pleased to have Franchione on board.

"I think (Franchione's) record speaks for itself," Cocanougher said. "It will be exciting for all of us."

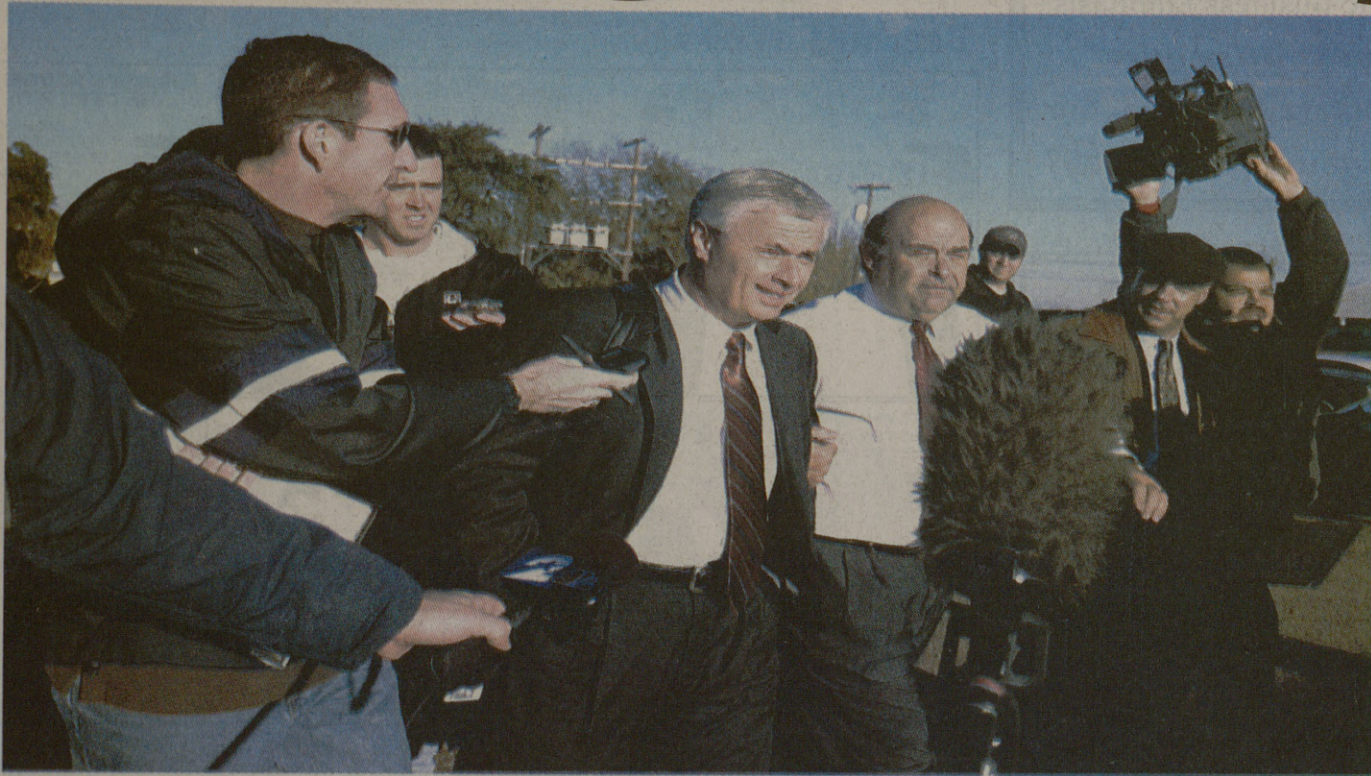
While the regents were giving each other high-fives in celebration, Alabama officials were upset by Franchione's decision to leave.

Franchione telephoned Alabama Director of Athletics Mal Moore at 3:20 p.m. Thursday afternoon to inform the university that he had accepted the head coaching job at A&M. Moore immediately began the search to replace Franchione.

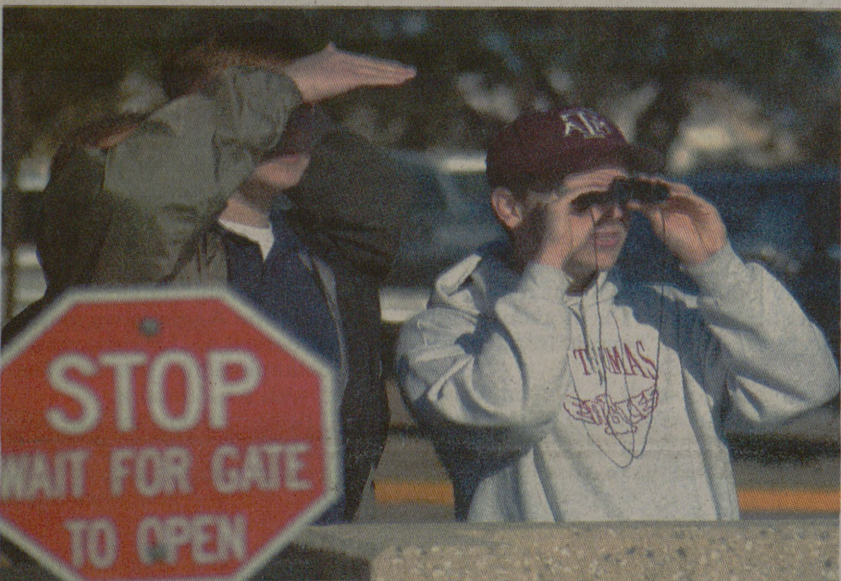
"I have formulated a short list of potential candidates," Moore said in a statement released by the Alabama Athletic Department. "I feel strongly this hire needs to be an experienced head coach on the college level, and a person who will have a long-term commitment to the University."

The Bryan-College Station Eagle reported Thursday night that Franchione's contract with A&M may be worth \$1.3 to \$1.4 million per season. Early reports indicated the contract would be a five-year deal but A&M officials would not

See **Franchione** on page 2



JOHN C. LIVAS • THE BATTALION



JOHN C. LIVAS • THE BATTALION



CRIMSON TIDE FILE PHOTO

Top: Former head football coach Dennis Franchione is escorted to a university vehicle after arriving at Easterwood Airport. Bottom left: Franchione talks to University of Alabama quarterback Tyler Watts during the game against Middle Tennessee State University earlier this season. Bottom right: Atmospheric sciences graduate student Doug Ames and Roberto Gasparini wait eagerly for Franchione's arrival Thursday afternoon.

Students anticipate new coach's arrival

By True Brown
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M students and fans began lining the fence around Easterwood Airport's General Aviation building as early as 10 a.m. Thursday in anticipation of the arrival of the new Texas A&M head football coach, Dennis Franchione.

A crowd that started at five fans had grown to a few dozen by the time Franchione's plane touched down a little after 4 p.m. Eager fans showed up decked out in A&M clothes and at least one had an Aggie flag. Some brought beer.

The festive atmosphere came to a head as Franchione exited the plane to a chorus of whoops and cheers.

Roberto Gasparini, an atmospheric sciences graduate student, was in a group that showed up early in the afternoon.

"We stuck around just to show him how serious we are," Gasparini said. "(Franchione coached) in Texas for a while, but TCU (where he coached from 1998-2000) is not A&M. I'm not dogging TCU, but we have 80,000 people here when we play Baylor."

Some in attendance gathered after reading posts on the popular Web site www.texags.com.

"I saw it posted that he would be out here today so I decided to come on out here and enjoy the good time," said Alan Bass, a junior industrial

See **Students** on page 2

Alabama fans react in backlash to Franchione's decision

By Dallas Shipp
THE BATTALION

Fans at the University of Alabama had a different perspective on Dennis Franchione's decision Thursday to leave Alabama for the top football coaching job at Texas A&M.

Alabama fraternity members from Delta Kappa Epsilon decided to show their displeasure with

Franchione's decision by hanging a sign on the front of their house that reads, "Hey Fran," with an obscene gesture below.

Tide fans say they feel hurt and betrayed by Franchione's decision to leave.

"The title of head football coach of Alabama has such a strong influence on not only the team and university, but even the state," said

Jordan Hernandez, an Alabama junior and football fan, during a phone conversation Thursday night.

Franchione was under contract with Alabama until 2007, and he was set to sign an extension that would bring him \$1.5 million a year for ten years.

"A lot of people thought Franchione was going to stay at Alabama," Hernandez said. "He

had made a lot of statements that he was here to make sure Alabama turns around and to an extent he turned it around. Then he turned to greener pastures."

Franchione didn't say much after arriving at Easterwood Airport in College Station Thursday afternoon, but he did address feelings shared by

See **Alabama** on page 2

1 Franchione's head coaching career begins at Southwestern College in Kansas	1 Franchione joins Pittsburgh State in Kansas as head coach for the first of five seasons	1 Franchione named National Coach of the Year	1 Franchione named National Coach of the Year	1 Franchione starts the first of two seasons at Southwest Texas State University	1 Named Region IV Coach of the Year	1 Moves to University of New Mexico	1 Franchione finishes with a Western Athletic Conference Mountain Division title and a 9-4 record for the season	1 Franchione led Texas Christian University to a 28-19 win over Southern California in the Sun Bowl, the first bowl victory for TCU since 1957	1 TCU wins Western Athletic Conference title	2 Franchione named head coach at the University of Alabama, Dec. 4	2 Alabama finished 7-5, with a 14-13 win over Iowa State in the Independence Bowl	2 Franchione announced as Aggie head football coach, 8:30 a.m. Dec. 6
9	9	8	8	9	9	9	9	9	9	0	0	0
8	8	1	1	9	9	9	9	9	9	0	0	0
1	4	7	7	0	2	7	8	9	0	1	1	2

Student Senate encourages hike in student service fees

By Eric Ambroso
THE BATTALION

The Student Senate passed a bill Wednesday night that will recommend the current student service fee rate be raised to \$12.57 per semester hour for 2004.

The bill would raise the student service fee by \$.71. It was engineered and researched by the Student Service Advisory Board (SSAB), which reviewed presentations from the 21 departments at Texas A&M that receive money from student service fees. The SSAB then systematically determined which organizations should receive funding and exactly how much.

Gabby Oroza represented the SSAB in presenting its final

research to the Student Senate. The senate voted 32-13 to endorse the recommendation made by the SSAB to raise the student service fee by \$.71.

The majority of the revenue made by the increased student service fee will go towards salaries, Oroza said. Different University departments will use the money to hire advisers and staff members, both of which are in low supply.

"One reason for the increase is an increase in the number of Aggie Nights," Oroza said.

Aggie Nights was started last year to give students an alternative night life free of alcohol. Held in the Memorial Student Center, Aggie

See **Senate** on page 8

Texas replaces TAAS with tougher test

By Amy Adams
THE BATTALION

A new, tougher standardized test will soon be administered in Texas public schools that will replace the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) and determine if students move up to the next grade.

The Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), approved by the State Board of Education in November, will be administered for the first time in March to students in grades three through nine. The new test is part of the state's accountability system, which rates schools based on test scores and other factors.

All educational administrators and facilitators will be held accountable based on the test and ratings.

Despite the concern first raised by the standardized TAAS test, local professionals say the TAKS won't leave teachers "teaching the test." Instead, some say, TAKS allows teachers to explore more subject areas, though critics point out the broader scope of the test means teachers will only spend more time teaching about it than before.

The test will validate what teachers are teaching, helping to ensure that students are learning under state guidelines, said Clark Ealy, director of assessment, accountability and evalua-

tion for the College Station Independent School District. TAKS will do a better job of measuring whether students learned the material during the school year, Ealy said.

"The new test is beneficial because it raises the bar for students in Texas," he said.

TAKS is more difficult and rigorous than the old test, with more problem solving, reasoning and in-depth reading comprehension.

Third-graders will receive three chances to pass the reading portion to advance to the fourth grade. In high school, 11th-graders must pass all portions of the test, but they get as many chances as they need. The test must be passed in order to graduate.

Teachers are concerned that the new test will be too difficult and prevent students from advancing, said Jessica Pany, professional development specialist at Crockett Elementary in Bryan.

In order to prepare students for the test, Pany has provided after-school tutorials since November. Teachers have also had in-depth training during the past two years to aid in the test teaching process, Pany said.

"Although the new test will be harder, it will raise the

See **Testing** on page 2