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THE BATTALION

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Duke receives letter of reprimand, no removal

By Rolando Garcia
THE BATTALION

A Memorial Student Center (MSC) Council officer who told police he had been kidnapped and robbed and then admitted to fabricating the story received a letter of reprimand Monday from the MSC Council.

Chris Duke, MSC executive vice president for marketing and senior political science major, avoided removal from his position, but will be placed on deferred suspension. Duke will be allowed to continue in his role as MSC vice president, but if he gets in trouble again, the lengthy performance review process will be skipped and the matter will go to the executive committee of the MSC Council. The council is composed of students and senior MSC staff.

Duke underwent a formal investigation and sanction process that has only been invoked a handful of times in the 50-year history of the MSC. The last inquiry into the improper behavior of an MSC officer resulted in the 2001 removal of then MSC President Josh Rowan.

"The council responded in a way they felt was most appropriate," said MSC President Barry Hammond.

Hammond, a senior finance major, declined to discuss the council's decision. The MSC bylaws provide for removing a council officer, but no mention is made of lesser sanctions, and Hammond said he is not aware of any disciplinary process of a council officer that resulted in a letter of reprimand.

Duke declined to comment.

Duke contacted Corpus Christi police Oct. 8 and said he had been kidnapped outside his College Station apartment by a man with a gun and forced to drive to Corpus Christi, where Duke said the man robbed him and left. Duke later admitted the story was false, but police declined to press charges.


DUKE

Hammond said the letter of reprimand would remind Duke that he had "not followed protocol" but would not say how Duke's behavior did not comport with MSC ethics. The incident was investigated by Dr. Dave Parrott, dean of Student Life, and although Hammond would not release Parrott's report, he said Parrott concluded Duke did not violate student rules or MSC rules.

Hammond said the letter of reprimand is in keeping with the MSC's practice of upholding the Aggie Code of Honor while allowing student leaders to learn from their mistakes.

The MSC, with an annual budget of more than $6 million, is one of the University's largest student organizations. Hammond said he did not believe Duke's misbehavior would blemish the organization's prestige and standing in the A&M community.

Design time

JOHN C. LIVAS • THE BATTALION

The projects for the sophomore environmental design studio were on display at the Langford Architecture building. The project took three weeks to complete and allowed 32 students to satisfy fictitious clients with different concepts.

United Airlines files for bankruptcy court protection

CHICAGO (AP) — United Airlines made the largest bankruptcy filing in aviation history Monday, saying it was the only way to keep the world's No. 2 airline flying after two years of heavy losses.

The Chapter 11 filing was the sixth-largest ever as measured by assets.

The suburban Chicago-based company has lost $4 billion in the last two years due to a slumping economy, flawed business strategies and the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. It faced debt payments of $875 million later this week.

"We're in control of United's destiny," United CEO Glenn Tilton said in a telephone interview. "We've made a good decision for United. It is in fact Chapter 1. ... This is a tremendous opportunity for United to transform this company and to emerge stronger than ever."

Tilton told customers and employees at O'Hare International Airport that the carrier would keep flying. "We are now going to take this occasion to create a new beginning for United," he said.

Tilton said he expects the bankruptcy process to be completed within 18 months.

At a bankruptcy hearing at 7 a.m., Chief Judge Eugene R. Wedoff issued orders allowing United to keep operating until another hearing Monday when he is to issue further orders allowing the airline to continue its operations.

United said it obtained $1.5 billion in financing from several banks to continue operating, and had $800 million in cash on hand.

An attorney for United, James Sprayregen, told the judge the company was losing $20 million to $22 million a day this month and desperately needed to cut costs.

The company and a coalition of union leaders were scheduled to meet Tuesday to begin talks about reducing costs.

The airline has promised to keep flying while it sheds costs under the auspices of a bankruptcy judge and overhauls its business plan to try to become profitable again. As of Monday's filing, United had assets of $22.8 billion and liabilities of $21.2 billion, the company said.

United operates about 1,700 flights a day, or about 20 percent of all U.S. flights. It has the most extensive worldwide route structure of any airline.

The bankruptcy filing will come at a steep price for the 83,000 employees who own 55 percent of the company. A bankruptcy court judge is almost certain to order wage and job cuts and could dissolve the employee stock ownership plan.

Two of United's unions, the Air Line Pilots Association and the Association of Flight Attendants, said both sides must work together during restructuring.

"Any successful restructuring of United in bankruptcy must involve continued cooperation and collaboration among ALPA, United management and all of the company's labor unions," the pilots' union said.

Bush nominates next Treasury secretary

John W. Snow, 63

Bush names Treasury nominee

Education – Bachelor's degree, Kenyon College, University of Toledo, 1962; Ph.D. in economics, University of Virginia, 1965; law degree, George Washington University, 1967.

Experience – President and chief executive officer, CSX Corp., 1985-present (chairman since 1991); vice president, CSX, 1977-85; administrator, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 1976-77; deputy undersecretary, Department of Transportation, 1975-76; assistant secretary for governmental affairs, DOT, 1974-75; deputy assistant secretary for policy, plans and international affairs, DOT, 1973-74; adjunct professor of law, George Washington University Law School, 1972-75; assistant general counsel, DOT, 1972-73; Wheeler & Wheeler law firm, 1967-72; assistant professor of economics, University of Maryland, 1965-67.

Family – Wife, Carolyn; three sons.

SOURCE: Associated Press AP

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bush turned to railroad executive John W. Snow to be his new Treasury secretary on Monday and signaled his determination to push ahead with a new round of tax cuts to jump-start the sluggish economy.

Three days after shaking up his economic team by firing Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill and Lawrence Lindsey, the head of his National Economic Council, Bush announced he would nominate Snow, the president of Richmond-based CSX Corp., one of the nation's largest railroad freight lines, as O'Neill's successor at Treasury.

In many ways, Snow, 63, has a resume similar to O'Neill's. Both men served in the Ford administration where they worked with Dick Cheney and then both left the government to pursue business careers.

However, O'Neill, the former head of Alcoa Corp., proved to be a gaffe-prone economic spokesman for Bush, infuriating Republicans in Congress and roiling financial markets with his comments. Snow is seen as a more cautious public speaker and a politically savvy operator who will be better able to sell the Bush program in Congress and on Wall Street.

"I look forward to joining your economic team to advance a pro-growth, pro-jobs agenda," said Snow, who holds a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Virginia and has been an active participant in public policy debates in Washington, at one time as chairman of the influential Business Roundtable.

Determined not to repeat his father's mistake of appearing to be insensitive to rising joblessness during economic hard times, Bush told reporters that he would soon be proposing "specific steps to increase the momentum of our economic recovery and the treasury secretary will be at the center of this effort."

Bush pledged to provide more tax relief, saying "many Americans have very little money left over after taxes." He also said he wanted to put forward proposals to bolster investor confidence, which has been shaken by the loss of trillions of dollars in stock market wealth, and to help Americans save for retirement.

Congressional and business lobbyists who have been briefed by administration officials said Monday that Bush was considering a package of tax cuts and spending measures that would cost between $250 billion and $300 billion over 10 years.

These officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said that the major tax cuts the administration was considering were accelerating the personal tax rate reductions scheduled to take effect in 2004 and 2006, lowering the tax on corporate stock dividends, long a Republican goal, and boosting tax breaks to encourage businesses to invest in new plants and equipment.

Report shows Texas' admissions plan not increasing diversity

By Jeremy Osborne
THE BATTALION

A new report by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (USCCR) shows the Texas admissions percentage plan is not working to increase diversity among student bodies on college campuses.

The plan automatically admits students from the top 10 percent of Texas high school classes to the universities of their choice.

The percentage plan (HB 588) was adopted in 1998 after the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals 1996 Hopwood v. State of Texas decision that effectively ended affirmative action in Texas.

The study analyzes admissions at state-supported universities and professional programs that are not bound by HB 588.

"The Hopwood decision has had a lasting impact on the participation of minority group members in Texas' institutions of higher learning, especially at its flagship institutions," the report said. "Minority undergraduate and graduate enrollment and admissions largely, except for the rare instance, declined at Texas' public institutions."

For instance, from 1994 to 2001, the percentage of African Americans enrolled at the University of Texas dropped from 5.3 to 3.0 percent.

The report's findings also show that, since the 1998 implementation of the plan, only in the 1998-1999 academic year did percentages of minority students admitted to UT increase significantly.

"I think this is an issue the legislature must address and resolve they can't simply postpone it as they have for 10 years," said Dr. Marco Portales, Texas A&M professor of English.

In order to combat this decline, the A&M System Regents tentatively approved a plan proposed by assistant provost for enrollment Joseph Estrada in December 2001. The plan called for the admission of the top 20 percent of students from about 250 low-performing or disadvantaged schools.

"I think it's a well-intentioned plan," Portales said.

The plan was halted in March after public scrutiny and questions of legality.

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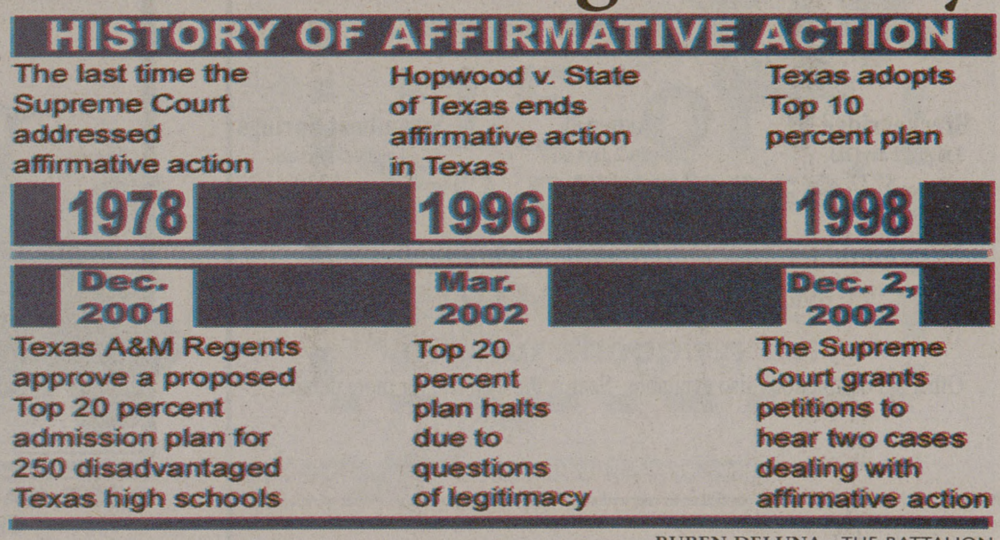

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