

# THE BATTALION

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Texas A&M University

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## Officials say A&M needs racial preferencing

By Rolando Garcia  
THE BATTALION

Despite efforts by Texas A&M President Robert Gates to increase minority enrollment by promoting a more welcoming campus environment, some University officials suggest that without racial preferences, Gates' plan will do little to entice more black and Hispanic students to A&M.

Gates, who has made increasing the ethnic diversity of the student body a top priority, has said the perception that A&M is hostile to minorities may prompt minority students admitted to A&M to opt for another school. Although Gates has emphasized that his plan to promote diversity does not

involve quotas or preferences, those on the front lines of the admissions process say the primary obstacles to increasing minority enrollment are the legal constraints preventing the University from offering minority scholarships.

"We need to have more freedom in dispensing scholarships and to be more target-specific," said Joe Estrada, assistant provost for enrollment.

Since the 1996 Hopwood decision, Texas schools have been prohibited from considering race in admissions and financial aid.

A&M is at a disadvantage when out-of-state schools can offer minority students more scholarship money, said Frank Ashley, director of admissions.

The lure of better financial packages

from other schools is one of the primary reasons why only 53 percent of Hispanic applicants and 47 percent of black applicants who were admitted to A&M in 2002 chose to enroll. By comparison, 64 percent of white applicants who were admitted decided to come to the University.

"It's hard to compete when all we can tell (minority applicants) is 'apply, and if you get accepted, we'll see what we can do,' but another school can come and guarantee them a scholarship," Ashley said.

Unable to offer financial incentives, University officials believe a better sales pitch will convince more minority students to choose A&M. As part of the recruitment

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## Racial Admission Numbers

Percentage of white students admitted who attend Texas A&M

64%

Percentage of Hispanic students admitted who attend Texas A&M

53%

Percentage of black students admitted who attend Texas A&M

47%

SOURCE: OFFICE OF ADMISSIONS

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## Cloning at A&M still limited to animals

By Lecia Baker  
THE BATTALION

Despite one religious sect's claims to have produced a successful human clone, Texas A&M's cloning efforts will be limited strictly to animals due to moral and ethical issues, said Dr. Mark Westhusin, associate professor of the veterinary medicine department.

"Texas A&M is not at all interested (in human cloning)," Westhusin said. Clonaid, a human cloning company founded in 1997, announced in December the birth of the first human clone, a baby girl named Eve.

Westhusin said although Clonaid's claim that it has produced more than one human clone is as yet unsupported, it is technologically possible.

"It's hard to know if Clonaid's claim is true or false, but we will see a human clone in our lifetime," he said. A&M does have the technology to produce a human clone but does not have access to human eggs, Westhusin said.

The complexity of the issue remains in finding volunteers, he said.

The cloning process is the same for all species. The component's needs are eggs and a technician with the skills to complete the transfer, Westhusin said.

Westhusin said A&M's current focus is cattle cloning.

"We want to know how and why some (clones) do not develop normally," he said.

Bret Evers, a junior biochemistry and genetics major, studied the efficiency of cloning in a lab last year. Evers agreed that cloning humans is possible, but said it is not an efficient process yet.

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## Welcome to my lab



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Agronomy graduate student and teacher, **Casey Cook** prepares a group of plants for Monday afternoon. The plants include wheat, ryegrass, cotton, and many others which his class will germinate in an ongoing experiment.

## Hiring freeze affects staff, not faculty

By Rolando Garcia  
THE BATTALION

A&M President Robert M. Gates announced a staff hiring freeze Monday and said more spending cuts were on the way as the state government copes with a fiscal emergency.



GATES

To avoid a budget shortfall this year, Gov. Rick Perry has requested that all state agencies impose a 7 percent budget cut. A&M, which receives approximately a third of its budget from state funds, must cut \$16 million from the 2003 fiscal year budget, which ends in September.

The hiring freeze, which will not affect faculty, will last at least until the end of the state legislative session in May and possibly until the end of the fiscal year, he said.

"We need a better picture of what the fiscal future will look like," Gates said.

He also imposed a freeze on anyone at the University using state funds for travel.

Gates said he must approve any exceptions to both the hiring and the travel freeze.

A newly formed finance council, chaired by Dr. Jerry Strawser, dean of the Mays Business School, will recommend other cost-saving measures by next week, Gates said. It is not yet known how much money the hiring freeze will save, and possible spending cuts include postponing capital investments, such as equipment, and cancelling consulting contracts, he said.

"We're going to do our very best to minimize the impact on students, faculty and academic programs," Gates said.

The finance council will report to the 35-member Academic Programs Council (APC), which includes college deans and top administrators. The APC will make final budget cut recommendations to Gates.

Strawser said his committee, which is operating under short notice, would work quickly to calculate the precise savings possible cuts would bring.

"It's too early right now to say how much (the hiring freeze) will save," Strawser said. "We just need to see how many positions are open and what they're valued at."

## Unity Project leaves \$4,000 debt

By Melissa McKeon  
THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M students who directed and built the Unity Project bonfire this past semester are in personal debt for more than \$4,000.

Luke Cheatham, Unity Project spokesman,

### UNITY PROJECT EXPENDITURES / REVENUES 2002 - 2003

EXPENDITURES	
Land lease/insurance	\$5,500
Bus rental	4,500
T-shirts	3,300
CD's	2,100
Supplies	723
Activities prior to bonfire	4,000

REVENUE	
Sales: T-shirts, CD's, photos, admission, parking and concessions	\$16,377.75
Donations	\$5,072.24

SOURCE: WWW.BONFIRE2002.COM  
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## Gates proposes tuition increase to lower faculty to student ratio

By Allyson Bancy  
THE BATTALION

At an open forum Monday, President Robert Gates proposed an increase in University Authorized Tuition (UAT), a move that will bring the UAT from \$44 per semester credit hour to \$46, the maximum allowed by the state legislature.

Gates justified the increase with a list of areas in the University that need improvements, including faculty, diversity, students and space.

The most critical change must come in faculty, Gates said. He said the University must hire more faculty and increase faculty salaries.

The amount of faculty at A&M has decreased by 13 percent in the past 20 years, while

A&M's student population has grown by 28 percent.

Gates said his primary objective is to decrease the student/faculty ratio from 22 students per faculty member to 16 students per class. The increase in tuition would generate \$2.2 million that would be used to hire 300 more faculty members, increase faculty salaries, and make adjustments to educational programs.

Gates also mentioned A&M's drop in 2002 from the top tier of the annual rankings published by U.S. News and World Report.

Gates mentioned another publication, Kiplinger's Magazine, that ranked A&M number 51 in the category of "100 Best Buys for public colleges and universities."

The need to increase tuition

has been brought about by decreasing state support, Gates said.

"State funding hasn't kept up with our needs," Gates said. Tuition and fees have increased, while general revenues have decreased.

Gates said that if no changes are made in the future, A&M students will bear a greater portion of University costs than the state. He also said A&M's administrative costs are the lowest of any Texas public university.

Gates said that with declining state support, the University has to seek money elsewhere.

"Right now we are going to squeeze money out of the programs and resources we have,

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