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Additional cuts to help trim A&M's \$16 million deficit

By Rolando Garcia
THE BATTALION

The staff hiring freeze imposed by Texas A&M President Robert M. Gates is only expected to net a small portion of the \$16 million A&M must slash from its budget.

Gates said an early estimate calculates the freeze could save approximately \$5 million, although the precise figure is still being determined.

Hiring Freeze

Expected to net a small portion of the \$16 million Texas A&M must cut from its budget

A&M has about 240 vacant staff positions

Does not apply to faculty

TRAVIS SWENSON • THE BATTALION

SOURCE: OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR FINANCE

"It's been a frustration for everyone because the numbers keep jumping around," Gates said.

With the state government facing a budget shortfall this year, Gov. Rick Perry requested all state agencies cut spending by 7 percent. A&M receives one-third of its budget from state funding.

Dr. Jerry Strawser, chair of the finance committee tasked with recommending budget cuts to Gates, said his group would meet Monday to begin considering options and prepare its list of spending cuts.

"We need to have a better handle of what's out there to see where spending can be cut," said Strawser, the dean of the Mays College of Business. "Its going to be a very busy Monday."

The University must present its cost-cutting measures to the state by Feb. 6, Strawser said. He added it was unlikely the spending cuts would result in layoffs.

Gates also said that if the freeze is still in place when a candidate is found to fill the newly

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MSC president named

By Janet McLaren
THE BATTALION



DACUS

Elizabeth Dacus was chosen as Memorial Student Center (MSC) Council President for the 2003-2004 academic year on Saturday by an interviewing team of four students and three staff members.

Dacus, a junior accounting major, will continue serving as executive vice president for Human Resources on this year's MSC Council until her inauguration April 14.

In the meantime, Dacus will work with the current MSC Council President Barry Hammond in transitioning from the 53rd council to the 54th.

"We will be discussing the priorities for the MSC," said Hammond, a senior economics major, "and Elizabeth will select her staff for the next council."

Dacus said she will take her position seriously. "I see this as a job of service to the MSC, its committees and volunteers as well as to the campus and the community," she said.

MSC Director Jim Reynolds, who served on

the interviewing committee, said Dacus was chosen based on her interview and strong performance in other positions in the MSC.

"Elizabeth has a broad base of experience in various areas," Reynolds said. "She has performed well on committees, in intermediate positions, and ultimately as vice president."

Hammond said he was confident in Dacus' ability to perform well in the new position.

"Elizabeth has a high level of skill, experience, and empathy," Hammond said.

Hammond said she is well-equipped to handle the presidency.

"She is a very people-focused individual which will help her sell her ideas and strategies to improve the MSC," he said.

Dacus said students can expect to see changes in the MSC next year.

"I would like to see an increase in

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Would-be shoe-bomber Richard Reid sentenced

By Denise Lavoie
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Richard Reid, the al-Qaida follower who tried to blow up a trans-Atlantic jetliner with explosives hidden in his shoes, was sentenced to life in prison Thursday by a judge who warned him: "We are not afraid ... We are Americans. We have been through the fire before."

The 29-year-old British citizen cried, "You will be judged by Allah!" before being dragged from the courtroom in handcuffs.

Reid received the maximum sentence after declaring himself a soldier of war and denouncing U.S. foreign policy toward Islamic countries.

"Your government has sponsored the rape and torture of Muslims in the prisons of Egypt and Turkey and Syria and Jordan with their money and with their weapons," said Reid, who converted to Islam eight years ago.

U.S. District Judge William Young would have none of it.

"We are not afraid of any of your terrorist co-conspirators, Mr. Reid," said the judge. "We are Americans. We have been through the fire before."

The judge then pointed to the American flag behind him and said: "You see that flag, Mr. Reid? That's the flag of the United States of America. That flag will fly there long after this is long forgotten."

"That flag will be brought down on the day of judgment," Reid replied.

Reid had faced 60 years to life for trying to blow up an American Airlines flight bound from Paris to Miami just three months after the Sept. 11 attacks. Prosecutors said Reid had enough plastic explosives in his shoes to blow a hole in the fuselage and kill all 197 people aboard.

Passengers and crew members overpowered Reid, using seat belts and their own belts to strap him to his seat. Two doctors aboard the flight injected him with sedatives and the jet was diverted to Boston.

Federal prosecutor Gerard Leone Jr. told the judge that in Reid's mind "the

religion of Islam justifies the killing of innocent civilians. In his mind, the horrific and homicidal attacks of Sept. 11 were but a missed opportunity."

As Reid sought to justify his actions, several crew members who were on the flight looked stunned, glancing at each other in the courtroom and shaking their heads. One woman wept.

In Washington, Attorney General John Ashcroft praised the sentence and called the passengers and crew heroes who averted a disaster.

"The sentence imposed on Richard Reid says to the world that terrorists cannot escape American justice," Ashcroft said. "We will hunt them down, stop them and we will put them away."

When Reid pleaded guilty last October, he said he was a member of al-Qaida, pledged his support to Osama bin Laden and declared himself an enemy of the United States.

Prosecutors and the FBI said witnesses had reported Reid was present at al-Qaida training camps, and that he had helped making the bomb from an al-Qaida bomb maker.

Defense attorneys said Reid was trying to defend Islam, which he credits with saving him from a life of drug use and despair. They described a troubled childhood and young adulthood, when Reid was plagued by poverty, racism and crime.

In arguing for a life sentence, prosecutors this month submitted a videotaped simulation of what Reid might have accomplished, showing a fiery explosion causing severe damage to a wide-body jet.

Reid tried furiously to light a match to his shoes but he was unable to ignite the fuse. Authorities have speculated the shoes were moist from sweat. One of the flight attendants, Carole Nelson, said there were more than 20 children on the plane.

"I can still see the fearful look on their faces as they huddled together after Richard Reid tried to blow them out of the sky with their families," she said.

During his speech, Reid said there was no comparison between the children on the plane and the number of children he believes have been killed because of U.S. policies.

On the way up



JOSHUA HOBSON • THE BATTALION

Brett Boissevain, a senior at Clariden High School in South Lake, rings the bell at the top of the rock climbing structure in front of Rudder Tower. It was brought

out by the U.S. Army. The "Army Virtual Tour" is an educational tool that incorporates interactive technology and models of what a future soldier will look like.

University of Maryland students admit to using cell phones to cheat on exams

By Stephen Manning
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Six University of Maryland students have admitted cheating on an accounting exam by using their cell phones to receive text messages with the answers, the school said Thursday. Another six students were implicated in the case.

The scheme worked this way: Test-takers brought their cell phones into the exam with them. They used the phones to contact friends outside the classroom. The friends looked up the exam answer key that had been posted on the Internet by the professor once the test had started. Then the friends messaged the answers back to the test-takers.

Officials with the university business

school said they caught the students in a sting: A fake answer key with bogus answers was posted online after the exam began last month; then the exams were checked to see which test-takers put down the bogus answers.

It appears most of the 12 students hatched the plan independently of each other, said John Zacker, head of the university's office of judicial programs. He said it was the biggest cheating scheme uncovered on campus involving cell phones.

"We've had isolated cases in past semesters, but not in these numbers," he said.

The case highlights the struggle schools face as they try to keep up with technologically savvy students. Hitotsubashi University in Japan failed 26 students in December for

receiving e-mailed exam answers on their cell phones.

The scope of the Maryland case is unprecedented nationally, said Diane Waryold, executive director of Duke University's Center for Academic Integrity. It is also a sign that students might have a technological edge on their older professors, she said.

"It's a generational issue," she said. "It's safe to say our students are far more sophisticated."

The six Maryland students who confessed will fail the class and have a mark placed on their transcript that indicates they cheated. Five others either met with school officials or are awaiting trial by the school's student honor council.

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Cushing Library archives Sen. Phil Gramm's papers

By Nicole M. Jones
THE BATTALION

Sen. Phil Gramm has sent 1,000 boxes of papers to be archived at Texas A&M's Cushing Memorial Library.



GRAMM

The papers contain correspondence, press releases, files, audio and video tapes, clippings and memorabilia and other materials documenting Gramm's 24 years in the United States House of Representatives

and Senate.

Gramm made a deal with A&M in the 1980s to give his archives to the University when his career came to a close, and now the documents are at Cushing Memorial Library for the use of A&M students.

"We've been in contact with Mr. Gramm off and on ever since he was first elected to Congress," said Charles Schultz, curator for Cushing Memorial Library. "Just before his term ended, he reiterated his promise to give us the papers."

Storing the archives of political figures at major universities

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