

# THE BATTALION

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## Budget cuts jeopardize journalism program

By Melissa McKeon  
THE BATTALION

The recent cutbacks in the state budget have prompted the College of Liberal Arts to consider possibly cutting the journalism department.

The journalism department at Texas A&M, which at one time was the Liberal Arts College's second largest department, has been struggling in recent years and now the College of Liberal Arts may close the department altogether.

Dr. Charles Johnson, dean of the College of Liberal Arts, said that because of state cutbacks, the journalism program is being targeted for a huge cut.

"I don't see substantial investment in the program at this point," Johnson said at a recent meeting with former journalism graduates, according to The Bryan-College Station Eagle.

Johnson said students already enrolled in the program would be allowed to finish their degree course work in the event the department is eliminated.

Johnson also said he cannot speculate on the fate of the program until the College of Liberal Arts has more information concerning the financial situation and University planning.

"The budget situation is very fluid and we are in the planning stages trying to consider a range of options and strategies," Johnson said.

Loren Steffy, president of the Former Journalism Student Association and Dallas bureau chief for Bloomberg News, said that nothing has been decided for sure, but an external auditing service examined the department in 2001, to look for areas that needed improvement.

Areas the team's evaluation included were budgets, faculty background and courses offered.

The audit team found that enrollment was too high, which stretched the faculty too thin across

the department.

One of the options included dissolving the department entirely. But its recommendation called for strengthening the department by increasing the number of experienced faculty, making plans for a new building and trimming enrollment figures to 400, a loss of approximately 400 students in the program at the time.

The yearly budget for the journalism department is \$1 million, of which 40 percent would be cut.

"We are in the planning mode and in our plans the projected budget cut for the department of journalism would be \$400,000," Johnson said.

That will be the budget for each year beginning Sept 1, 2003, Johnson said. That budget will be in effect for two fiscal years.

Steffy said the cuts will further weaken the journalism program.

### Journalism Department at a glance

Budget now:	\$1 million
Projected Budget:	\$600,000
Total students in program:	700
Number of faculty:	6

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SOURCE: JOURNALISM DEPARTMENT

"This is the only department in the college looking at a cut of this size," Steffy said. "A cut of this size will put the future of the department into question."

The other colleges in the department are looking

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### Bucket o' flowers



JOHN C. LIVAS • THE BATTALION

Senior agricultural development **Katie Scott** adds dried flowers to her floral design in preparation for Perspective 03, a sculptural floral design gallery. The exhibition will showcase student floral designs April 17 through June 1.

## Moment of silence may pass Senate

By Natalie Gott  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AUSTIN — Public school students would be required to observe a minute of silence each day to pray, meditate or reflect after reciting both the U.S. and Texas pledges of allegiance under legislation given preliminary approval in the Senate on Tuesday.

Under current law, school districts have the option of holding a period of silence, during which students may reflect or meditate.

"I personally believe it's a good idea for all Texas students uniformly, throughout the state, to say the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag, to say the Pledge of Allegiance of the Texas flag, and then to have 60 seconds during which, at their option, they can reflect, they can meditate, they can pray, they can worry about the next math exam," said bill sponsor, Sen. Jeff Wentworth, R-San Antonio.

Students could be excused from saying the pledges if they had a written request from

their parent or guardian under the legislation.

The bill was given tentative approval without debate. Lawmakers are expected to take up the bill for final approval Wednesday.

Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst said the bill was important.

"I can't imagine anyone that would be opposed during these very tough times to let our youngsters take a moment of silence in schools and have silent prayer," Dewhurst said.

While he did not speak out against the bill on the Senate floor, Sen. Juan Hinojosa, D-McAllen, later was critical of it.

"It's a camouflage. It's a smoke screen," Hinojosa said. "The real purpose and intent of the bill is to allow school prayer in the public school system."

He said prayer is an issue that belongs with families and churches. He also said students were not mature enough to respect other people's religions.

"They'll make fun of each other," Hinojosa said.

Wentworth said the bill does not provide for audible

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## Fish drill team suspended

By Rolando Garcia  
THE BATTALION

Operations of the Fish Drill Team have been temporarily suspended while Corps of Cadets officials investigate an incident in which a group of cadets allegedly ransacked another cadet's dorm room.

The elite freshman rifle squad was reinstated last year after being disbanded in 1997 for hazing violations when a freshman member accused older cadet advisers of beating and cutting him. Criminal charges were brought against nine students accused of hazing the freshman or knowing about the hazing and failing to report it.

Col. Anthony Groves, the Corps' assistant commandant for operations and

training, said the unit's drill practices were suspended Saturday when officials were notified of the incident, which occurred Friday. Groves said the investigation thus far points to an isolated instance of misbehavior by five cadets and not an organizational problem.

Groves said five freshmen cadets in the unit went to confront another drill team member who had not been getting along with others in the unit. Finding the cadet's room empty, the group ransacked the room, emptying the cadet's closet and drawers and leaving the items strewn on the floor.

"We're very sensitive about things connected to Fish Drill Team, and we (suspended the unit's operations) until

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## HIV student shares story

By Molly Cain  
THE BATTALION

Doctors originally said he would never reach the age of 30. When he reached that milestone, Brian, who is HIV positive, decided to fulfill his long-time dream of going to Texas A&M.

Brian, who asked that his last name not be used, tested positive for HIV in 1991. He recounted his experience in a presentation titled "Living with HIV: A Student's Perspective" at the Stark Gallery in the Memorial Student Center on Tuesday. The event was sponsored by Student Health Services as part of a week of activities intended to raise student

awareness about HIV/AIDS.

Although his future is uncertain, Brian, now 34, said he is upbeat and determined to succeed.

"I will always be an Aggie," he said. "I'm graduating on May 9 and you're all invited."

According to the Texas Department of Health, HIV is a virus that causes AIDS, a disease that disables the body's ability to fight off infection by destroying white blood cells.

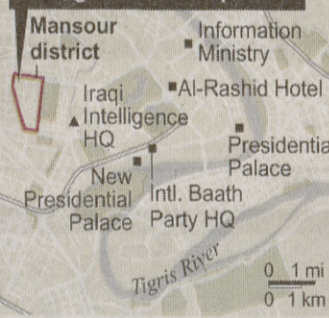
Throughout the ordeal, Brian said the support he has received from family, friends and his faith helped him cope with the illness and strive for success.

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### OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM Leadership strike

Coalition bombs aimed at top Iraqi leadership, possibly including Saddam Hussein and his sons, devastated a residential complex in the Mansour district of Baghdad Monday afternoon.

Four 2,000-pound bombs struck a residential complex, leaving a 60-foot-deep crater.



SOURCES: National Imagery and Mapping Agency; Omni Resources; Associated Press

## U.S. troops seize military airport in Baghdad

By Chris Tomlinson  
and David Espo  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, Iraq — U.S. forces battled the tattered remnants of Iraq's army for control of downtown Baghdad on Tuesday, crushing a counterattack and seizing a military airport. Saddam Hussein's fate was unknown after an attempt to kill him from the air.

Inside the capital to stay, some Army units routed Iraqi fighters from a Republican Guard headquarters. Others discovered a 12-room complex inside a cave, complete with white marble floors, 10-foot ceilings and fluorescent lighting.

U.S. Marines battled snipers as they fought deeper into the capital from the east. They seized the Rasheed Airport

and captured enough ammunition for an estimated 3,000 troops. Ominously, they also took a prison where they found U.S. Army uniforms and chemical weapons suits possibly belonging to American POWs.

The toll on civilians from four days of urban combat was unknown. But the World Health Organization said Baghdad's hospitals were running out of supplies to treat the burns, shrapnel wounds and spinal injuries caused by the fighting.

Two cameramen were killed and at least three others wounded when an American tank fired a round into the Palestine Hotel, headquarters for hundreds of journalists. Commanders said hostile fire had been coming from the building, although the journalists said they witnessed none.

Separately, the Arab television network al-Jazeera reported that a U.S. warplane attacked its office on the banks of the Tigris River, killing a reporter.

On the city's northern side, Army forces set a Republican Guard barracks ablaze. Warplanes flew their bombing runs unchallenged, and smoke poured out of the Ministry of Planning building in the city's center.

"We are continuing to maintain our ability to conduct operations around and in Baghdad, and remove them from regime control," said Capt. Frank Thorp, a spokesman at U.S. Central Command.

State-run Iraqi television was knocked off the air, depriving the regime

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A palace under construction near Baghdad International Airport is hit with a bomb Tuesday, as troops from both the 3rd Infantry division and 101st Airborne division worked to clear the surrounding grounds.