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Corps aims to diversify its ranks

By Karen Yancey
THE BATTALION

The new Junior Cadet Achievement Program, started by the Corps of Cadets in 2002 to diversify the Corps, is expected to bring results this fall, Corps staff said.

The program focuses on recruiting high school students from the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps, said Sgt. Gen. Maj. Dennis Hastings, assistant director of recruiting for the Corps.

The Junior ROTC is a program that offers leadership training mirroring that of the military.

"We are focusing on the Junior ROTC because it is beautifully diverse," Hastings said.

About 38 percent of the Junior ROTC is black, 37 percent white, 24

percent Hispanic and the remaining 1 percent consists of Asians and other ethnic groups. Forty-nine percent are women and 51 percent are men, Hastings said.

"Among the ladies, 60 percent are in leadership positions," he said. There are half a million Junior ROTC cadets nationwide, and 650 high schools in Texas have Jr. ROTC programs.

The JCAP recognizes the achievements of Junior ROTC cadets and invites them to see the Corps at Texas A&M, Hastings said.

"The first time they ran the program in 2002 it was a success, and they have run the program two more times since then," he said. "It is significant for A&M to be attracting these outstanding minority students because they are highly sought after by other schools."

Applicants to the JCAP are represented by 30 different states, and requests for applications have come from Italy and Germany.

Students coming from the JCAP will be more diverse in gender and ethnicity than the typical class entering the Corps, Hastings said.

"(A&M) President (Robert M.) Gates has been extremely supportive of our progress in this program," he said.

The key factor of success in the program is the Commandant of the Corps of Cadets, Lt. Gen. John VanAlstyne, he said. Since he came here, he has been a strong force pushing the program forward. Maj. Joseph "Doc" Mills, director of public relations for the Corps, said they will not know what the numbers for the freshman class will look like until freshman orientation

week. However, he pointed out that the Corps can only admit students who are already accepted to A&M.

"Since A&M is not very diverse, the Corps is not very diverse," Mills said.

Hastings said current cadets are aware of what is happening because they are directly involved in the Spend the Night with the Corps program where they see the people who are interested in joining.

"The cadets are involved in contacting these outstanding students, hosting them and in the post-recruiting effort,"

Goals for diversifying THE CORPS

Junior Cadet Achievement Program, started in 2002

New equal opportunity officer position

Increase the Corps' retention rate of freshmen female cadets



RUBEN DELUNA • THE BATTALION
SOURCE: CORPS OF CADETS

he said. Commander Paula Monge has hosted many Spend the Night with the Corps programs.

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Fiery destruction



SHARON AESCHBACH • THE BATTALION

Bryan firefighters battle a blaze in the 5000 block of Leonard Road near Riverside Campus on Monday evening. Though the cause remains undetermined, resident Leslie Shirk said flames may have

ignited near the hot water heater in her garage. Shirk and her son returned home from dinner in time to witness two sides of their house collapsing. Shirk said her cat and dog died in the blaze.

Gates: fall tuition will hold steady

By Melissa Sullivan
THE BATTALION

There will be no further tuition increases for the fall, Texas A&M President Robert M. Gates said in a memo Monday.

However, students should brace themselves for an increase in the spring semester.

"We will do all we can to keep that increase as low as possible," Gates said.

The University's funding for the next two years seems to be positive as A&M ended up with a total reduction in state revenue of about .5 percent, Gates said.

The budget includes an allocation by the Legislature of \$10 million for each of the next two years to add more faculty.

Gates said A&M is not suffering as many deficit problems as institutions in 40 other states, and overall, the state of Texas has been treated well.

"In some (states), state funding for higher education is being slashed," Gates said. "Both academic programs and tuition are being affected dramatically. That has not happened here."

During the past 10 years,

the number of tenured faculty at A&M has declined in eight of the nine colleges, and that puts a negative burden on the student-faculty ratio, class size, the percentage of freshmen and sophomores taught by tenured faculty and the overall national rank of the University, Gates said.

"We are going to turn this around," Gates said, "and the Legislature has given us the wherewithal to begin."

Gates said it is the University's plan to hire 100 new tenured faculty during fiscal year 2004 and will continue to add new faculty during the next four years.

The negative side to the budget is that the University has an estimated state revenue of \$208.5 million for fiscal year 2004, which will be used mostly to pay salaries and benefits. That figure is \$1.3 million lower than what was available during fiscal year 2003, Gates said.

Even with the approval of the enhancement fee last year, A&M still has \$20 million in fiscal requirements above and beyond the revenue provided by the state.

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Bush Drive E. closed for expansion

By Rob Munson
THE BATTALION

The City of College Station has closed one lane of George Bush Drive East from Texas Avenue to Dominik Drive as construction begins to widen the heavily traveled road.

The \$2.3 million project, scheduled to be completed by February 2004, will transform George Bush Drive East from two lanes to four lanes. Lanes for biking and walking are also included in plans.

Glenn Brown, College

Station's assistant city manager, said that the \$2.3 million includes construction and land acquisitions.

Nineteen parcels of land were acquired from College Station residents along the road, but no land was condemned and no legal proceeding came out of the long, strenuous process, he said.

Brown said George Bush Drive East serves dual functions because it starts in an east-west direction from Texas Avenue and then turns north-south before reaching Dominik Drive.

"The project will improve George Bush Drive East," he said. "The traffic will flow better so motorists can get to points east and west and north and south."

Brown said the need for a four-lane street stems from the traffic bottleneck created by taking two lanes away from George Bush Drive when drivers cross Texas Avenue.

No current plans exist to widen the road to four lanes from Dominik Drive to Harvey Road.

Brown said the east-bound lane off Texas Avenue is open now, but will likely be closed for construction when west-bound lanes are completed.

Eddie Sherman, a senior nuclear engineering major, said the timing of the project will present problems for him and other drivers.

"George Bush Drive East is the beginning of a shortcut I use to get around all the traffic lights on Harvey Road," Sherman said. "I think it will only compound the traffic problems College Station has in the fall."

Sherman said that while he believes many drivers will find themselves at odds with construction during the summer and fall, widening George Bush

Faculty examine health care cuts

By Amanda Land
THE BATTALION

Douglas Slack, a professor from the Department of Agriculture and Life Sciences, presented a state senate proposal to the Faculty Senate Monday that will reduce health benefits of part-time state employees.

Slack said that the proposal recommends that the state contributes no more than 50 percent of part-time employees' insurance costs.

This would increase graduate student monthly health insurance costs by more than \$600, he said.

Slack encouraged faculty to find a solution to help ease the expense for graduate students.

The Senate also approved a five-year joint bachelors and masters degree in health education, certificates in supply chain management offered to Mays Business School MBA, international business, MSA and MS students and certificate programs in sustainable urbanism and tree removal.

Additionally, the Senate approved that courses taken through the study abroad program will satisfy the core curriculum, international and cultural diversity requirement.

Hurtado vies for VP of diversity spot

By Justin Smith
THE BATTALION

With a more diverse faculty, there will be a trickle-down effect and a change in curriculum and enrollment, said Dr. Sylvia Hurtado, the second of three candidates slated to make an appearance on the Texas A&M campus in hopes of netting the newly formed position of vice president of diversity and associate provost for institutional diversity.

Hurtado gave a presentation Monday on how A&M can propel itself into being a leader of research universities.

Hurtado said she feels that the quickest way to diversify a

school is to begin with the faculty.

She said bringing a diverse faculty to a university, along with reaching out to the community and nurturing relationships, can help diversity grow and produce a well-balanced crop of students, bringing prestige to the school.

Hurtado, who currently serves as the division chair and director of the Center for the Study of Higher and Post Secondary Education at the University of Michigan, outlined the continual process that

a school could take to broaden its diversity horizons.

"My goal is to work myself out of a job because that would mean we are living in a society where there is understanding and respect," she said.

She said that a school should first look at campus traditions, history and enrollment when deciding what to do when diversifying. She said attempts should be made to build and improve on a school's past without treading on tradition.

Hurtado said that diversifying the faculty is one key factor, but not the only step.

"You want to continually

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SHARON AESCHBACH • THE BATTALION

Construction crews work on widening the former two-lane George Bush Drive East on Monday.

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