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Wright named sole candidate for Prairie View

By Rob Munson
THE BATTALION

Dr. George C. Wright came one step closer last week to becoming Prairie View A&M's next president. The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents named Wright as the lone finalist for the position in its meeting June 6.

The Board chose Wright out of 135 qualified applicants, said A&M University System Chancellor Howard Graves.

"Prairie View is a diamond in the rough that's just waiting to be polished by the right leader," Graves said. "I really think Dr. Wright has the wisdom

to choose the right thing to do and the courage to do it."

Wright earned a Ph.D. in history from Duke University, and said his studies in southern history and race relations helped him appreciate predominantly black universities like Prairie View.

Wright said he first heard about Prairie View while in graduate school at the University of Kentucky.

"Institutions like Prairie View are very important in American society and Texas society in educating black leaders in all walks of life," he said. "I want to make sure students are reminded of that history and the historical contributions Prairie View has made."



WRIGHT

Wright served as executive vice president at the University of Texas-Arlington since 2000 and has been the university's provost since 1995.

Prior to joining

UTA's administrative

staff, Wright was a vice provost and professor at Duke University, and a vice provost and professor at the University of Texas-Austin.

Wright said previous administrative and teaching positions have readied him to take over as Prairie View's president, and that his teaching experience will allow him to understand

faculty concerns.

A renovated student center, a new engineering building and a new Prairie View nursing program in Houston will open when classes resume this fall.

"Prairie View is fortunate," Wright said. "It is exciting to walk the campus and see the renovations and new buildings."

Wright said new programs and research centers attracted him to the university. "I'm glad to be going to a university where I can take part in the direction over the next 10 years," he said.

Graves said he and the Board of Regents looked for someone who could lead and inspire.

"Prairie View's success will be the success of the Texas A&M System and all of its members," Graves said.

Wright replaces Prairie View interim president Willie Timpton. Timpton took over after Charles Hines stepped down last year.

Graves said Timpton led Prairie View in the right direction and enhanced confidence among its alumni.

"Now Prairie View A&M needs continuity and a permanent leader," Graves said. "The (A&M) System is behind Dr. Wright 100 percent."

Wright's appointment as Prairie View A&M's president will not come until June 27.

A&M enrollment down for summer

By Melissa Sullivan
THE BATTALION

Summer enrollment numbers for summer session one at Texas A&M dropped four percent from last year, while Blinn College's enrollment is up 5.47 percent, officials said Tuesday.

A&M's unofficial enrollment stands at 16,505, which includes A&M's 10-week class sessions and both schools' distance education courses and Internet courses.

The figure was recorded June 5, the fourth day of classes, and is unofficial until certified on the 15th class day.

Blinn registered a total of 6,978 for all three campuses, located in Bryan, Brenham and Schulenburg. The Bryan campus reports an enrollment figure of 5,878, a record up from 5,513 last year, said Gena Parsons, spokeswoman for Blinn.

Parsons said Blinn's enrollment continues to grow, and students take classes at Blinn because it is affordable.

"Community colleges are more affordable and offer the same qualities as big institutions," she said. "With all the budget cuts, A&M is offering fewer classes while (Blinn) continues to increase (class) demand."

Parsons said Blinn's enrollment of high school students who take classes offering dual credit during the summer to get ahead increased 63 percent.

"They can kill two birds with one stone," she said.

Parsons said Blinn also offers prisoners at state prisons an opportunity to receive an education while in prison, but Parsons said these numbers are down 13 percent. Parsons said they take basic core curriculum classes.

"It helps so (the prisoners) don't fall back into a life a crime," Parsons said.

Texas A&M-Galveston reported 467 students enrolled this session, an increase of two students during the same period last year.

A&M / BLINN ENROLLMENT

Summer I

BLINN Bryan Campus	TEXAS A&M
5,878	16,505
Up 5.47 percent	Down 4 percent

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SOURCE: BLINN ADMISSIONS OFFICE, A&M RECORDS & ADMISSIONS

Laser Edge

Sokolov brings his research in optics to A&M students

By Megan Orton
THE BATTALION

Dr. Alexei Sokolov knew he was interested in laser physics when his father explained a laser to him at age 10.

"His explanation was mostly right," said Sokolov, an assistant professor of physics at Texas A&M. "He was not a physicist, but he had physics colleagues that had explained it to him."



Sokolov said a simple children's book about physics he read at a young age sparked his interest in optics.

"Physicists look at the world in a different way," he said. "They wonder why metal is shiny, how colors work when you paint, what happens when you combine colors, and why if you see gas spilled on water, there are all the colors in the film."

A Ukrainian citizen, Sokolov grew up in Russia until age 11 when he moved to Ukraine with his siblings and parents, both engineers.

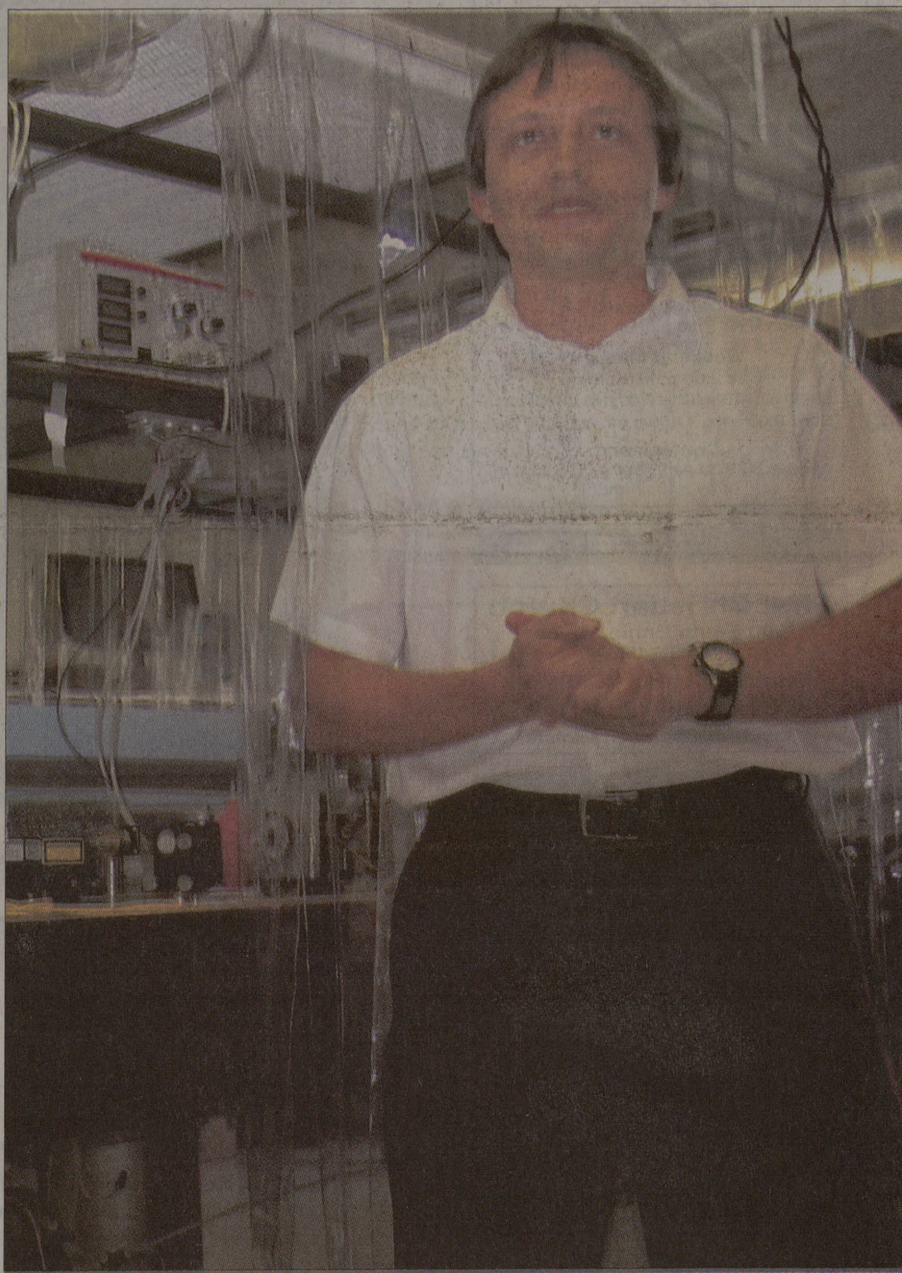
Sokolov received his Ph. D. from Stanford after completing his Master's degree at Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology and has been at A&M since 2001.

"It was very exciting to me to live in another country," he said. "To learn the way people live here, and show who I am and what Russians are."

While at Stanford, Sokolov won the Adolph Lomb medal, which is awarded annually to a researcher who has made a noteworthy contribution to optics before age 30.

Sokolov and his co-workers discovered a way to create a new, shorter pulse of light that had never been produced before. His research has been published in Physical Review Letters and other journals.

Sokolov said graduate school was also a



TERESA WEAVER • THE BATTALION

Assistant Professor Alexei Sokolov is one of the leading researchers in the field of laser physics. Sokolov works in the optics field, using complex lasers to create shorter beams of light.

See Sokolov on page 2

Bombing, rocket attack jeopardize peace plan

By Ravi Nessman
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JERUSALEM — The cycle of bloodletting escalated Wednesday as a Palestinian blew himself up on a Jerusalem bus and killed 16 other people, and Israel retaliated with rocket attacks that left nine dead in Gaza, including two Hamas militants.

President Bush called on all nations to cut off funds to terrorists like Hamas. A U.S.-backed peace plan was inatters only a week after Bush launched it, putting his prestige on the line at a dramatic Mideast summit with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas. Since then, 24 Palestinians and 21 Israelis have been killed.

The sudden surge of violence continued just after midnight, when Israeli helicopters fired missiles at a car in the Zeitoun neighborhood of Gaza City, witnesses said. Two people were killed, doctors said. Israeli military sources said the target was a cell militants who fired rockets at Israelis. Seven other Palestinians were killed in helicopter attacks Wednesday.

The suicide bombing in one of Jerusalem's most policed areas underscored the vulnerability of Israel and the ineffectiveness of Abbas' efforts to persuade militants to end terror attacks.

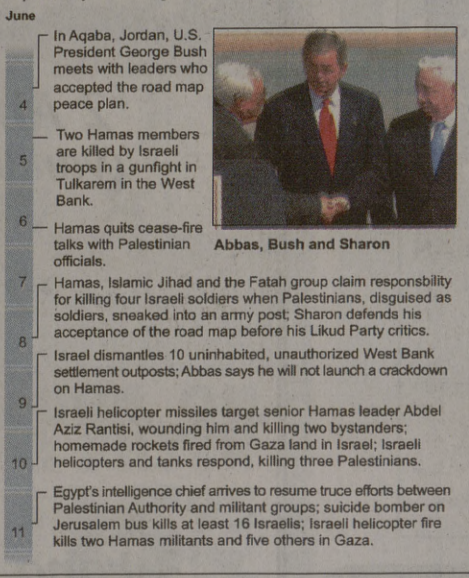
Even as U.S. officials called on all sides to stick to the "road map" peace plan, Sharon insisted he would not let up in his assault on militants. Israel will "continue to pursue until the end the terrorists and those that send them," he said.

The bus bombing was carried out by a man dressed as a religious Jew. Hamas claimed responsibility and rejected a call by Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat for a halt to the violence. Palestinians identified the bomber as Abdel Madi Shabneh, an 18-year-old high school student from the West Bank town of Hebron. Israeli soldiers began searching his house after sundown.

Arafat — putting himself in the

From hope to despair

At last week's Middle East summit, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas each accepted the U.S.-promoted "road map" to peace. Sharon recognized the Palestinians' right to a state; Abbas vowed to end militants' violence against Israelis. Hopes for progress have been impeded by the resurgence of deadly violence.



SOURCE: Associated Press

AP

Catholics settle sex abuse cases

By Rachel Zoll
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The \$25.7 million settlement the Archdiocese of Louisville has agreed to pay victims of clerical sex abuse ends one high-profile legal fight for the Roman Catholic Church. But the 243 people covered by that agreement represent just a fraction of outstanding claims nationwide, guaranteeing more financial pain ahead for U.S. dioceses.

In the last year, about 1,000 people have come forward with new allegations against dioceses across the country, according to Mark Chopko, general counsel for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

More than 500 abuse claims are pending in the Archdiocese of Boston alone. In California, where state lawmakers have abolished the time limit on abuse lawsuits for this year only, hundreds of new claims are expected.

"It's going to be substantial period of time — years — before this is over," said Steve Rubino, a longtime victims' attorney from New Jersey.

Even dioceses like Louisville, that have agreed to multimillion-dollar payouts,

may see more lawsuits.

The Kentucky settlement announced Tuesday was shared among people who all accused priests and employees of child sex abuse.

But the cases were not filed as a class-action suit, which would have set a time limit for plaintiffs to claim their share of a settlement. Abuse lawsuits are filed separately — and nothing bars more alleged victims from suing in Louisville even after agreements have been reached with others.

See Catholics on page 6

CATHOLIC CHURCH

Kentucky diocese settles abuse suits

The Archdiocese of Louisville will pay 243 people who accused priests and employees of child sexual abuse more than \$25 million. The archdiocese has liquid assets of \$46 million. Past settlements by the Catholic Church include:

Year	Diocese	Settlement
1998	Lafayette, La.	\$18 million
1998	Dallas	\$31 million
1999	Stockton, Calif.	\$13 million
2001	Los Angeles, Orange, Calif.	\$5.2 million
2002	Tucson, Ariz.	\$15 million
2002	Providence, R.I.	\$13.5 million
2002	Boston Archdiocese	\$10 million
2003	Manchester, N.H.	\$6.5 million
2003	Louisville Archdiocese	\$25.7 million

SOURCE: Associated Press

AP