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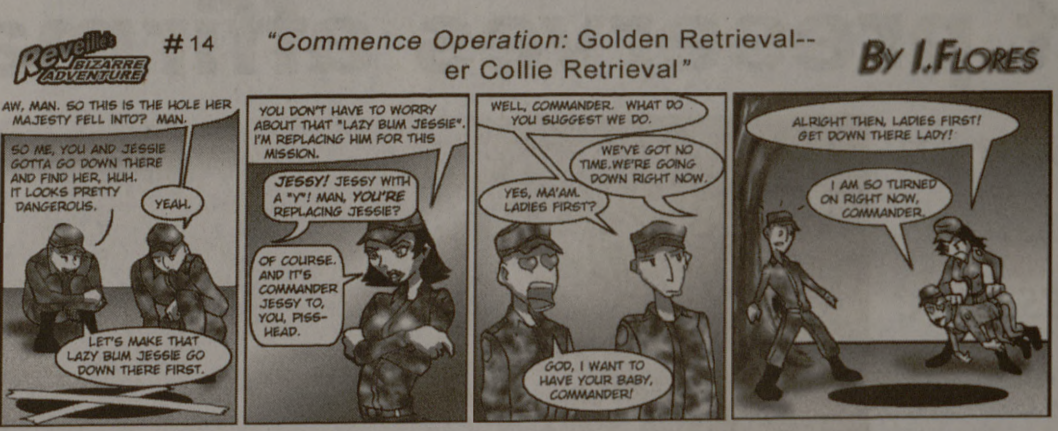
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Full Moon



Insurance

Continued from page 1

something, but we haven't figured out all the details yet. We're getting into the time where we are trying to build a budget, so we're going to try and get that decision made in the very near future."

Perry said more will be known today after the University releases its budget guidelines. However, Perry was confident that a solution could be found.

"I'm certain we'll come up with something to approach the graduate issue — I'm certain of that," he said. "It's for part-time employees who are faculty and staff that we're still looking at."

Steve Hassel, the System's

director of benefit programs, said two factors contributed to the increased costs.

"It's a significant change for our System," Hassel said. "Health care costs are going up, but they're not going up as dramatically as last year. For the part-timers and graduate students, increases are driven more by the reduction in employer funding than it is by increasing health care costs."

Hassel said the Legislature left a door open for universities to help out graduate assistants, but other part-time workers might not be so lucky.

"Of course, that's all dependent on funding, which is a big 'if' right now for all of us," he said.

Some students say the increases mean the Legislature

is sending a negative message about graduate education.

"The Texas Legislature has sent a message by passing this legislation that they are not concerned with the well-being of anyone seeking advanced study in Texas," said Josh Peschel, president of the Graduate Student Council. "They have placed an additional financial barrier on graduate education in this state."

However, Peschel is confident A&M will help graduate students cover the increases.

"A&M fully realizes the essential role that graduate students play within the University, and I am absolutely confident that they will do everything in their power to maintain our high quality of graduate education," Peschel said.

Writing

Continued from page 1

Russell, will also join the team.

A Web-based teaching and learning tool called "Calibrated Peer Review" will be used to institute writing skills into science and engineering programs to graduate well-rounded students.

CPR was first developed for the chemistry department at UCLA and was implemented in A&M's chemistry department in the fall of 2002 by professor M. Larry Peck, Hobson said.

CPR teaches students how to evaluate writing on a certain topic such as math or the sciences. Then, students look at and compare poorly- and well-written pieces on the subject, and eventually post their own assignments. After evaluating others' writings and their own, these students' critiques are taken into consideration and a final copy is turned in to the professor. All of the interaction is anonymous and takes place online.

These CPRs will take place in a regular classroom environment as an added part of the curriculum.

"When students write about what they are learning, they learn the material better," Hobson said.

Three faculty members from the physics, math

and biology departments will attend an instructor retreat July 31 through Aug. 2, where they will learn how to write CPR assignments.

The program will target first-year calculus classes, a fundamental biology class, biology 214, college physics for engineers and pre-service teachers, Hobson said.

The program also will improve grading processes, Patterson said.

He said some students feel they are limited when taking a multiple-choice exam and wish to have the opportunity to show what they know. This program will give students a chance to answer in short answer or essay format.

WALS will run for four years beginning this fall, and nine new faculty members will be chosen each summer to participate in the project.

Faculty members will have a structured way to evaluate if the program is helping the students learn, Hobson said.

At the end of the four years, a symposium based around the results of the WALS project will take place.

One goal of Vision 2020, Patterson said, is to increase the skills with which A&M graduates communicate with the world and with others.

"We hope to teach students that not everything in the world can be solved by choosing among five choices," Patterson said.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Hong Kong cleared of SARS, WHO says

HONG KONG (AP) — The World Health Organization removed Hong Kong from its list of SARS-infected areas Monday, but warned the territory to keep up its guard against future outbreaks that might put it back on the list.

WHO officials urged Hong Kong to avoid a repeat of what

happened in Toronto, where a new outbreak was discovered after Canada's largest city was taken off the WHO's list. Two people died of SARS on Sunday in Toronto.

Hong Kong Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa said the territory was "of course happy" about the WHO announcement, but he expressed sadness over nearly 300 deaths from the disease and cautioned, "this could

come again."

Hong Kong's removal from the list was expected. Sunday was the 20th day since the last confirmed SARS patient was put in isolation in Hong Kong, the condition set for the territory to be taken off the list.

Only Beijing, Taiwan and Toronto remain on the list following the ebbing worldwide of the SARS crisis since its peak in March and April.

Court

Continued from page 1

"This court has long recognized that 'education is the foundation of good citizenship,'" O'Connor wrote, quoting from another landmark ruling, the Brown v. Board of Education decision that integrated public schools.

"For this reason, the diffusion of knowledge and opportunity through public institutions of higher education must be accessible to all individuals regardless of race or ethnicity," O'Connor wrote.

At the same time, the court struck down a more rigid, point-based admissions policy of the University of Michigan under graduates. That vote was 6-3 with three of the court's more liberal justices dissenting.

The difference was a matter of degree. The Constitution permits schools to consider an applicant's race as one among many factors when weighing which students will win a place at a top-notch school, O'Connor wrote in the more significant law school ruling. What a school cannot do, she and other justices said, is install inflexible or automatic racial preferences.

The law school and its backers argued that a "critical mass" of minority students is essential to break down racial stereotypes and benefits the entire student body. Minorities must be present in more than token numbers to ensure all students can interact the university has said.

But no student's transcript will note that he or she "Works and Plays Well With Others," Justice Antonin Scalia retorted, in mocking reference to language more often associated with grade school report cards.

The importance of "cross-racial understanding," or of simply getting along with other people, is a lesson of life learned by "people three feet shorter and 20 years younger than the full-grown adults at the University of Michigan Law School, in institutions ranging from Boy Scout troops to public school kindergartens," Scalia wrote in dissent.

Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist and Justices Anthony M. Kennedy and Clarence Thomas also dissented in the law school case.

Thomas, the court's only black justice, accused the law school of maintaining "an exclusionary admissions system that it knows produces racially disproportionate results."

"Racial discrimination is not a permissible solution to the self-inflicted wounds of this elitist admissions policy," he wrote.

Michigan says it accepts only academically qualified students no matter their race.

In the companion case O'Connor joined Rehnquist, Scalia, Kennedy, Thomas and Stephen Breyer to strike down the undergraduate school's 150-point grading system. The school automatically gave minorities a 20-point bonus more than for some measures of academic excellence, writing ability or leadership skills. Outstanding athletes also got 20 points, as did impoverished applicants.

Stevens, Souter and Ginsburg dissented.

The cases put the Bush Administration in an awkward spot. The White House had sided with white applicants rejected at the Michigan schools, but had not called for an outright end to affirmative action.

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THE BATTALION

True Brown
Editor in Chief

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