

THE BATTALION

109 Years Serving Texas A&M University

Volume 109 • Issue 173 • 6 pages

www.thebatt.com

Tuesday, July 22, 2003

University cuts 35 staff positions

Campus-wide LAYOFFS
Due to budget restrictions



35 staff members laid off

Layoffs affected:

- Office of President
- Office of the Executive VP and Provost
- Division of Administration
- College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
- College of Architecture
- College of Education and Human Development
- College of Liberal Arts
- Dwight Look College of Engineering

By Megan Orton
THE BATTALION

Thirty-five faculty members were laid off Monday due to budget constraints, said Texas A&M President Robert M. Gates. In a statement July 8, Gates outlined plans to reduce campus activities and increase program efficiencies. Gates announced the elimination of 250 positions, 211 of which were currently unfilled due to the hiring freeze put into effect in January, leaving about 40 jobs needing to be cut. "I urge everyone fortunate enough not to be directly affected by the layoffs to extend every courtesy and every feasible form of assistance to those who through no fault of their own are losing their jobs as a result of our budget constraints and reorganization," Gates said in the statement.

The Dwight Look College of Engineering was one college that was dealt a heavy blow, losing six employees.

"Anytime you lose anyone like this it is a very bad feeling," said Dr. George Bennett, dean of the engineering college. "But we understand that the University needs to reinvest where it needs to grow. I really don't see that there was any way around it."

Bennett said he thinks everyone is doing the best they can given the situation.

The layoffs affect six colleges and the Office of the President, the Executive Vice President and Provost's office and the Division of Administration and the Division of Finance, Gates said.

Gates said he did not anticipate any additional campus-wide layoffs during the coming fiscal year.

His hope is that many of the individuals scheduled to be laid off will find suitable employment elsewhere on campus.

"With that distinct possibility in mind, and as previously announced, I am lifting the current hiring freeze effective August 1," Gates said.

Affected individuals will remain on payroll for 60 days, during which time they will be assisted in their search for future employment, Gates said.

A&M's Human Resource Department has established a temporary Career Transition Center to assist those affected, and an individual benefits counseling session will be provided for each laid-off employee.

See **Cuts** on page 2

RUBEN DELUNA • THE BATTALION
SOURCE: OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Light it up



SHARON AESCHBACH • THE BATTALION

Sophomore environmental design major **Jason Gilbert** draws drawing is the second stage of an ongoing project that will be a topography plan for his environmental design class. The presented with the initial model.

Dotson charged in roommate's murder

By Gretechen Parker
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHESTERTOWN, Md. — The former roommate of missing Baylor University basketball player Patrick Dennehy was charged Monday with murder, authorities said.

The warrant naming Carlton Dotson was issued by police in Waco, Texas, where Dennehy has been missing since mid-June, Chestertown Police Chief Walter Coryell said. No body has been found.

As he left the court commissioner's office Monday night, Dotson told a reporter: "I didn't confess to anything. Call the FBI." Shortly after his arrest, Dotson had referred all questions to his lawyer.

Dotson's attorney, Grady Irvin Jr., said in a telephone interview that he had last spoken with his client over the weekend. He would not say what they discussed.

"It is most unfortunate that police have come to the conclusion that there is a death," Irvin said. "I am uncertain as to how they came to that conclusion, that Patrick Dennehy is now dead."

Two officers escorted Dotson, in handcuffs, into the police station about 9:20 p.m. He emerged about 15 minutes later with Coryell, another officer and an FBI agent.

Dotson was fingerprinted

and processed at the police department, Coryell said. He was then taken to the Kent

County court commissioner's office for an initial hearing.

Coryell said Dotson was in Chestertown, about 55 miles from his hometown of Hurlock,

on Sunday when he called police from a grocery store.

"He said he needed help," Coryell said. "We took him to the hospital for an evaluation. During his stay there he contacted the FBI."

The police chief said Dotson stayed overnight at a Chestertown hospital, then left early Monday afternoon with FBI agents.

He was interviewed by the FBI and "as a result of that interview, this warrant has been issued," the chief said.

Irvin said he did not know what Dotson told authorities.

"I don't know if the arrest warrant is based on statements he (Dotson) made or information gathered through law enforcement agencies and their investigations," Irvin said. "I'm sure that when I read the warrant, I am 100 percent certain that there will be information not previously available to my

See **Dotson** on page 2

A&M weighs affirmative action policies

By Natalie Younts
THE BATTALION

Following the University of Michigan affirmative action rulings in June, the next move for Texas A&M is to hire the new vice president and associate provost for institutional diversity, said University President Robert M. Gates.

"We're in conversations with several of the candidates at this point and I would hope that we could wrap that up in the next few weeks," Gates said. He said A&M officials are looking to the College Board and Attorney General Greg Abbott for advice about affirmative action policies and procedures.

The University of Texas has already begun implementing new admission requirements designed after the ruling, which will be enforced for the 2004-2005 school year.

Frank Ashley, A&M director of admissions, said lawyers emphasized the importance of evaluating each application to see how a person may contribute to institutional diversity at a national College Board meeting in Chicago this month.

The lawyers also said each school needs to determine what its critical mass of minorities is for other minorities to feel comfortable, Ashley said.

"They gave the situation where a student may be the only minority living in a dorm or the only minority in class and they are scared to speak up, because they feel like if they say anything they're speaking for their whole race," Ashley said.

Although the Supreme Court did not address financial aid in the June rulings, it can be inferred

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Texas A&M officials are consulting with others before making a stance on affirmative action

- Deputy Chancellor Dr. Jerry Gaston met with other Texas chancellors in Austin
- Director of Admissions Dr. Frank Ashley met with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
- Officials have also consulted with Attorney General Greg Abbott and various college boards

RUBEN DELUNA • THE BATTALION
SOURCE: OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

that race can be considered in determining if a person gets financial aid, he said.

Ashley said people in Michigan are already trying to bring state mandates against affirmative action, and that it will probably happen in other states.

Ray Brown, the Texas Christian University director of admissions who attended the College Board meeting, said the meeting was successful.

"Everybody in the room was very pleased with the outcome, but we were made painfully aware that this is just signaling a new effort that's going to have to come about," he said.

Jerry Gaston, A&M deputy chancellor, met with other Texas chancellors to discuss the effect of the rulings, Gates said.

"We definitely need a few more ears to go and try to gather information," Ashley said.

Ashley will be attending another College Board meeting in Houston next month to further discuss the ruling, and will take other A&M representatives with him.

Spring tuition increases \$9 per hour

By Karen Yancey
THE BATTALION

University tuition will increase \$9 per credit hour starting January 2004, said Texas A&M President Robert M. Gates at one of three public hearings on tuition increases Monday.

Gates said with the investment in faculty, tuition will again increase in the fall of 2004, and it will be larger than the current one.

"I don't see a change in the track coming, the burden of education is shifting more and more from the state to the student," he said.

Gates said the University plans to hire 400 new tenured and tenure-track faculty over the next four years, because the University has the lowest percentage of classes with less than 20 students and the highest percentage of classes with more than 50 students in Texas.

Gates said the University wants to change the student-teacher ratio from 22-to-1 to a ratio of 16-to-1.

With the \$1.4 million reduction in general revenue from the state, A&M will start the fiscal year 2004 with a debt of \$38.7 million, Gates said.

Despite that, Gates said he did not want to make across-the-board cuts.

"That is a formula for mediocrity," he said. Gates said University administration received the largest cuts with himself receiving the largest cut in salary.

He also said the computer usage fee will not increase because of student input requesting it stay the same. He also said that the tuition increase is significantly smaller than that of other

See **Tuition** on page 2

Century Scholars help raise retention

By Justin Smith
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M was honored last week with a Retention Excellence Award at the National Conference on Student Retention.

The award was given July 14 in San Diego by Noel Levitz, a division of Sallie Mae, a consulting firm specializing in higher education student recruitment, financial aid, student retention and market research.

Shasta Porchia, interim

assistant director of the Department of Honors Programs and Academic Scholarships, said A&M was selected because of its Century Scholars Program.

"The Century Scholars Program aims at 41 under-represented high schools in Dallas, Fort Worth and Houston where we encourage students to come to A&M," she said. "We try to keep them here so they eventually can go back to their high schools and recruit more students from those schools."

The Century Scholars

Program, started in 1999, has a current retention rate of 95 percent and A&M has a retention rate of 88 percent, Porchia said.

There are currently 100 students in the Century Scholars Program and 43 will join in the fall, Porchia said.

To encourage students in the program to stay in school, they are given scholarships as well as the chance to participate in unique programs and events. "Last year we took many of our freshmen on a trip to London.

See **Retention** on page 2

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THE BATTALION
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Houston Chronicle
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