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JOSHUA HOBSON • THE BATTALION

Interim Vice President for Student Affairs, Bill Kibler (left), talks with A&M President Robert M. Gates (right), before speaking at an open forum discussing increasing spring tuition Monday night.

Gates: Tuition raise necessary

By Rebekah Kratochvil
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M President Robert M. Gates told students at a forum Monday that cuts in state funding and a need for more faculty have spurred the University's decision to increase tuition.

The Texas Legislature's decision to uncap the university authorized tuition paved the way for the \$4 per credit hour tuition increase this fall and the \$9 per credit hour increase approved for next semester, Gates said.

Other universities have approved greater tuition hikes,

Gates said, such as the University of Houston, which raised its tuition \$19 per credit hour.

"Student Government played a fairly significant role in keeping tuition and fees lower at Texas A&M for this academic year," he said.

Despite these efforts, Gates said there will be increases in tuition for the next several years and a computer usage fee increase next semester.

The decision to increase tuition was greatly influenced by a need to compensate for the \$1.4 million cut in funding from the state Legislature and the need for \$5.6 million to balance the budget, Gates said.

A&M has been losing 1.5 percent per year in general revenue for approximately the last decade, he said.

"Despite this, Texas A&M is still counted in the top 100 best bargains for colleges and universities in Kiplinger's Magazine," Gates said.

While other public universities such as Ohio State have a 13-to-1 student-faculty ratio, A&M has a 22-to-1 ratio, Gates said.

"The bottom line is that we need more faculty," he said.

Eliminating administrative staff while hiring more teaching faculty as a part of Vision 2020 will aim to help A&M achieve its

goal of an 18-to-1 student-faculty ratio, he said. Gates said the University plans to hire about 100 new faculty members each year for the next four years.

Sarah Berry, a sophomore computer engineering major, said she understands the need for the fee increases.

"I think that the administration has really tried to minimize the impact on our fees," she said. "Having been to this session, I can tell that the budget shortfalls that they're trying to make up for are more than just

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Koldus garage free parking eliminated

By Natalie Younts
THE BATTALION

Transportation Services is no longer offering free evening parking in the University Center Garage for blue permit holders, leaving students who have evening meetings in the Memorial Student Center area searching for other options.

The change has been unwelcome for many commuter students, who last year were allowed to park for free in the garage, located in Koldus, Monday through Thursday if they entered and exited between the hours of 5:30 p.m. and 11:30 p.m.

Off-Campus Aggies President Ashley Cassel said some members of her organization had planned to hold meetings in Koldus where their office is located, but will now meet in restaurants or apartment lobbies instead.

It is a big pain for off-campus students to have to pay to park there or park at Cain or the drill field and walk over," she said. "We're not real happy with (the change) as an organization."

Weis said it had been clearly communicated that validated parking in the garage was a temporary accommodation that would be discontinued when the new West Campus Garage and pedestrian passageway were complete.

"It is a big pain for off-campus students to have to pay to park in the garage or the drill field and walk over."

— Ashley Cassel
Off-Campus Aggies president

now available for commuters after 5:30 p.m. and we have provided better access to all students after 5:30 p.m.," Weis said.

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dation that would be discontinued when the new West Campus Garage and pedestrian passageway were complete.

Sally Wright, a sophomore political science major, said it is unfair that students attending

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Drill time



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Company B-1 freshman aerospace engineering major Christian Ortiz, a member of the Fish Drill Team, drills for the first time with a demilitarized 1903 Springfield rifle in front of the Sanders Corps of Cadets Center Monday afternoon. The drill team's national competition will be held at Tulane University in New Orleans this spring.

Hurricane-ravaged residents return to work, 1.5 million still without power

By Bill Baskerville
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RICHMOND, Va. — Four days after Hurricane Isabel barreled into the East Coast, thousands of people went back to work Monday without the benefit of home-cooked meals or hot showers, and encountered miles of blank traffic lights and downed power lines.

"No electricity, no water," said Jeanne Spahr, 39, of Dover, Pa., whose power went off Thursday as Isabel approached. "We've been pouring pond

water to flush the toilet. It's not smelling so good. I grew up using an outhouse and I don't want to go back to that."

Isabel's effects were still widely evident Monday: Nearly 1.5 million customers remained without electricity. Hot meals were in short supply. Elderly residents had to be shuttled by boat from their flooded homes. And hundreds of roads were shut because of toppled trees and power lines.

At least 34 deaths have been blamed on the storm, 19 of them in Virginia.

North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland

and Delaware were declared federal disaster areas, and President Bush traveled to Richmond to be briefed on the recovery efforts.

Many residents were irritated that electric companies and government officials were unable to restore power four days after the storm hit.

"I understand that people are frustrated — I'm frustrated," said Douglas M. Duncan, the Montgomery County, Md., executive. "We're working, of course, with the power company to get power

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Isabel sliced island

Residents of Hatteras said they're getting by with the help of relief workers after Isabel isolated them. The hurricane carved a new channel between their village and Frisco, N.C.



SOURCES: ESRI; Associated Press AP

Governor's office proposes West Texas compromise

By Natalie Gott
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AUSTIN — In an effort to end a GOP stalemate over congressional redistricting, Gov. Rick Perry's office has put together a West Texas compromise that top House officials support but that some Senate Republicans rejected.

One senator noted that the map showed only how seven West Texas districts would be drawn, but does not show how districts in central, east and parts of far South Texas would look.

"When they only draw seven out of 32 (districts) it's kind of hard to negotiate in good faith," said Sen. Kip Averitt, R-McGregor.

Sen. Teel Bivins, R-Amarillo, said he could not support a map that "needlessly dissects a community of interest in the Texas Panhandle." The proposal divides that region into two districts.

Rep. Phil King, a Republican from Weatherford who wrote the map the House approved last week, unveiled the governor's proposal Monday and said it was acceptable to him and Republican House Speaker Tom Craddick.

"It has been put together and shopped by the governor's office as they've attempted to try to help move along this process," King said. "I hope that the Senate will take a very hard look at this work that the governor's office has done."

The new proposal places Midland and Lubbock in two separate congressional districts, as Craddick wants. A map approved by a Senate committee last week that is set to be debated on

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Car bomb explodes near U.N. compound in Baghdad

By Steven R. Hurst
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, Iraq — A suicide bomber, his body wrapped in explosives and his car filled with 50 pounds of TNT, struck a police checkpoint outside U.N. headquarters in Baghdad on Monday, killing an Iraqi policeman who stopped him and wounding 19 people.

A U.S. military spokesman at the scene said the bomber, who also died in the 8:10 a.m. blast, was trying to get into the U.N. compound at the Canal Hotel, where a truck bomb a month ago killed 23 people including the top U.N. envoy to Iraq, Sergio Vieira de Mello. Monday's attack wounded two U.N. workers.

The attack, apparently timed to snarl attempts

by Washington to win U.N. legitimacy for the U.S. occupation of this Arab country, could diminish the world body's willingness to become more deeply involved in Iraq's reconstruction. The United Nations already sharply reduced its work here after the Aug. 19 bombing.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan warned that if the situation continues to deteriorate, U.N. operations in Iraq "will be handicapped considerably."

"I am shocked and distressed by this latest attack on our premises in Baghdad, Annan said at the United Nations.

"We are assessing the situation to determine what happened, who did it, and taking further measures to protect our installations," he said.

The blast, which could be heard over much of the Iraqi capital, took place a day before President Bush was to address the U.N. General Assembly. He was expected to offer an expanded

U.N. role in rebuilding Iraq, a condition set by many nations for contributing peacekeepers and money to the reconstruction effort.

Annan has said he wants assurances of security for U.N. personnel in Baghdad along with any expanded role.

The bomber in Monday's attack was blocked at a newly established police checkpoint on a street in back of the compound. As police inspected the bomber's car, he detonated the explosives.

Praising new security arrangements around the hotel, a U.S. military officer at the scene credited Iraqi police with preventing an even greater tragedy.

"I reiterate that he was not through the check-

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