

THE BATTALION

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Gates, Weis confront issues at Senate meeting

Lawsuits inhibit future Bonfire talk

By Sarah Walch
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M President Robert M. Gates has been instructed to do nothing about an on-campus Aggie Bonfire, even starting over with a much smaller "Ol' Army scrapfire," while the lawsuit against the University concerning Bonfire is still pending, he said during an hour-long question-and-answer session in the Student Senate Wednesday night.

After asking now Interim Chancellor A. Benton Cocanougher and R.C. Slocum to explore alternatives for Bonfire this spring, Gates said two representatives from the state attorney's general office and two University System lawyers showed

up on his doorstep the next morning. They informed him that considering Aggie Bonfire alternatives might weigh negatively in the case.

"Where we are is where we will be until the litigation is settled," Gates said.

The appeals process could take years if it is not settled in a few months out of court, he said.

Filed in 2001 by Bonfire victims and their families, the lawsuit accused University officials of violating federal law because of the dangerous environment in which Bonfire fell in 1999.

The plaintiffs' claims were dismissed last summer when a U.S.

See Bonfire on page 2

STUDENT SENATE ITEMS

The following are several proposals discussed at Wednesday's Student Senate meeting.

Open Governance: students can speak at the next Senate meeting

Elected Battalion editor in chief referendum removed from ballot

No Transportation Services changes this year, forum Oct. 9

Budget: SGA Diversity to receive \$8,500



RUBEN DELUNA • THE BATTALION
SOURCE • TEXAS A&M STUDENT SENATE

TS plans forum for parking questions

By Sarah Walch
THE BATTALION

Transportation Services Director Rodney Weis said at the Student Senate meeting Wednesday night that a task force made up of students, faculty and TS staff has been appointed to look into the Southside Garage change that would take away permit holders' reserved spaces.

Weis and Sen. Logan Renfrow, a junior management major, have organized a forum set for Oct. 9, when students can question Weis directly. The forum has been tentatively scheduled for 8 p.m. in the Commons Dining Center.

"A full discussion of the facts will help us remove the emotions involved in the issue," Weis said.

Weis said the fate of 24-hour reserved spots is a parking issue that affects every-

one campuswide. "There are over 8,000 reserved spaces on campus," he said. "It makes it very, very difficult and costly to administer."

Those spots could easily accommodate more vehicles, Weis said. "We have enough spots to accommodate every person on campus right now but not under the current operating system," he said.

Although a TS e-mail sent out to Southside permit holders Sept. 9 informing students they could vote on the change to take effect in either Fall 2003 or 2004, Weis said there will be no changes in TS policy this school year.

"It was a misunderstanding," he said. Weis said he wants to try to get the opinions of all students.

See TS on page 6

Teed off



MELISSA GENTRY • THE BATTALION

Jake Norton, a junior general studies major, takes advantage of the nice weather by playing a round of golf Thursday afternoon at the University Golf Course. Clear and sunny skies are expected throughout the weekend.

Qatar campus opens, 29 take on A&M degree

By Jacquelyn Spruce
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M began a new adventure as the doors of the Qatar campus opened on Sept. 7, said Jim Holste, associate dean of the campus who is currently in Qatar.

"This is the most interesting and exciting project I have experienced during the 28 years I have been with Texas A&M," he said. "This project also provides a venue for Texas A&M to demonstrate the quality and breadth of our abilities."

The campus in Qatar offers classes in four engineering fields including petroleum, chemical, electrical and mechanical engineering.

"Engineering is a very important discipline here," Holste said, "because more than 70 percent of the national income currently is derived from oil and gas production — primarily natural gas."

Interim Dean and CEO Charles Bowman said the 29 students enrolled — including 25 Qataris and four from other countries — have an identical curriculum to the engineering students in College Station. Holste said in order to receive a degree from A&M, the students must

meet all requirements of Texas law. "They are even taking a Texas history class," Bowman said.

Since all classes are taught in English, students are expected to have prior knowledge of the language.

"(English) is rapidly becoming the business language of the world," Holste said. "We do have an interesting challenge here because our students have been taught the U.K. version of English, and there are more differences in spelling and style than you might first expect."

Bowman said research, as well as teaching, will play an important role at the new campus.

In the next three years, graduate degree programs will be offered, and two new research centers will be built.

Although the Qatar campus is still under construction, A&M Executive Vice President and Provost David B. Prior said the engineering building will be complete in 18-24 months.

"As of now, the Cornell Medical School is sharing arrangements," he said. "The Arts and Sciences building will be the intermediate step."

See Qatar on page 6

12th Man Team offers incentives

By Eric Ambrosio
THE BATTALION

The 12th Man Team Awards Program will give rewards to students this year in an effort to raise attendance at sporting events other than football games.

Starting this semester, students can win T-shirts, hats and jerseys by attending Aggie sporting events. The 12th Man Team representatives will be at the entrance of every sporting event, besides football games, handing out cards that can be stamped for rewards.

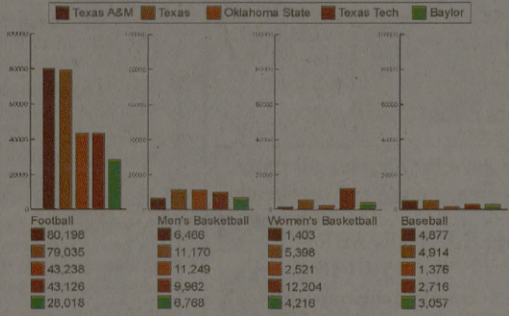
After 12 stamps, students will receive an Aggie T-shirt; after 24 stamps, a hat or visor, and after 36 stamps, an official Texas A&M jersey.

The cards can be stamped at any volleyball, soccer, cross country, swimming or basketball event. Once students have collected 12 stamps they will receive an electronic card that can be swiped to keep track of their attendance. Thereafter, students will be eligible for special awards such as recognition at sporting events or a trip to an away game with the team.

"We hope that people have fun at our athletic events," said Jeff Schmahl, senior associate director for external operations at A&M. "If you want to help us to build champions, you can help by attending and

Big 12 Sports Attendance

Texas A&M fans' attendance at football games is higher than many other Big 12 schools, but the number of Aggies at other sporting events is relatively low.



ANDREW BURELSON • THE BATTALION
SOURCE: TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

supporting our event."

No prizes have been given out yet, but at least 15 T-shirts are expected to be handed out at Friday's volleyball game. The jerseys given out this year will be baseball jerseys, but next year the program will give away official Nike football jerseys, Schmahl said.

The Aggies' attendance at men's basketball games last year was the worst in the Big 12, though A&M did not come in last in overall standings. Almost 600,000 fans attended Aggie football games last year, while a little less than 300,000 fans attended other sporting events.

"We're hoping that attendance at all athletic events improves," said Chris Park, 12th Man Team Rewards Program representative. "Our goal is for all sports to benefit from the 12th Man Team Awards Program."

Schmahl said the organization aims to build on the 12th Man spirit.

House, Senate prepare for conference duel

By Kelley Shannon
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AUSTIN — The Legislature's two chambers were on a collision course Thursday as wrangling over congressional redistricting

moved toward a joint House-Senate panel charged with sorting out map-drawing disputes.

Republicans now must solve conflicts of their own after months of fighting with Democrats.

With Democrats back from their boycott, the GOP-con-

trolled Senate approved its redistricting plan Wednesday. The House passed its own plan last week shortly after the start of a third special session.

Differences between the two maps will be worked on by a

See House on page 2

Prof to receive research award

By Jenna Jones
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M political science professor Dr. Kenneth Meier will receive the Distinguished Research Award next month for his 30 years of research in public administration.

The award, given by the American Society for Public Administration and the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration, will be presented to Meier in Pittsburgh, Pa., on Oct. 16 at the NASPAA Annual Conference.

"Dr. Meier is one of the top scholars in the nation in the study of public bureaucracies and school administration in general, but also specifically in the study of education policy," said Kim Hill, a political science professor.

The ASPA/NASPAA Distinguished Research award is given for career achievement rather than a single work.

"The award is not as neat as the Texas A&M Association of Former Students award I received since it was rewarded right here at the University," Meier said. "This is more of a career achievement award, which always comes as a surprise."

Meier said he has spent a lot of time researching bureaucracy versus citizen

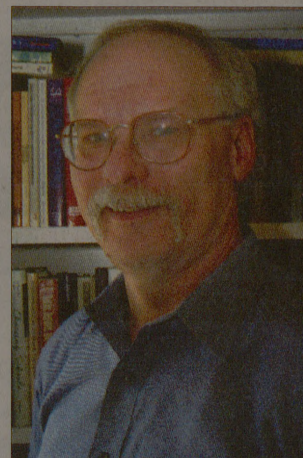
control, which focuses on how citizens can get more out of the government, such as improvements in schools and health care. His research also seeks to improve government programs to work better and be more responsive to the public.

"Dr. Meier's research is path-breaking, and he has a high concern for problems and opportunities posed by the ethnic diversity in school-age population," Hill said. "He is especially interested in how we can improve education in portions of the population that traditionally have poor education outcomes."

Meier began teaching at A&M in 1998. He is the Charles Puryear Professor of Liberal Arts and holds the Sara H. Lindsey Chair in Government in the George Bush School of Government and Public Service. He also directs the Carlos Cantu Hispanic Education and Opportunity Endowment and the Texas Education Excellence Project.

Meier said his dedication to research began 30 years ago when he received his Ph.D. from Syracuse University.

His work has won recognition through the Clarence Kulp Award (1990), the Gustavus Myers Award (1991, 1993), the Herbert Kaufman Award (1992, 2001), the Herbert Simon Award (1999), and awards from the Academy



JOSHUA HOBSON • THE BATTALION

Dr. Kenneth J. Meier, in his office at the Allen building, searches among hundreds of books Thursday afternoon.

of Management (2000), Public Administration Review (2001), the American Society for Public Administration (2002) and the Association of Former Students (2003).

Meier's example has influenced the careers of many people, including B. Dan Wood, a political science professor.

"Dr. Meier has been helpful to my career and I am very appreciative of that," Wood said. "He has helped numerous others as well."

Meier said he is passionate about the research he has done over the past 30 years and hopes to continue for the next 30 if possible.