

THE BATTALION

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Student Senate approves SGA Diversity budget

By Sarah Walch
THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M Student Senate found itself in the middle of a pull between student opinion and the Executive Council of the Student Government Association Wednesday when one interested individual found he was denied access to budget information recently obtained by senators.

Mark McCaig, Young Conservatives of Texas communications director and a junior marketing major, said he found it unconscionable that the Senate would not disclose financial information to students outside SGA, especially during Senate Listens Week, when senators are trying to get more in touch with their constituents' wants.

"The student body has a right to know where the money is being spent," McCaig said when address-

ing the senators on the floor. "This reeks of cronyism and corruption, and smacks of Tammany Hall. I implore you to do everything within your power to make this information public."

Senate leaders filed an appeal last week to obtain a copy of the SGA's line-item budget plan.

When senators received the budget information Oct. 3, an attached memorandum by SGA's Vice President for Finance Jackson Hildebrand requested that the Senate leaders distribute the information only to other senators.

Hildebrand said SGA is not allowed to release its financial information without the proper approval. To obtain that information, individuals must contact the University's legal counsel, he said.

"Line-item budgets have never been released before," Hildebrand said. "Nobody has before requested (that information)."

He said he is working within the limits of his job.

"It is by no means a process of hiding numbers. I understand it is the Senate's job to respond to their constituents, but having self-generated funds (within SGA) makes those funds irrelevant," Hildebrand said.

The Senate must approve the SGA budget annually.

Hildebrand said while senators may have already obtained permission to view the specific financial information that they are responsible for passing, non-senators will have to go through a process to find out about the committees' spending.

"I am ready and willing to work with anyone who deems it necessary to obtain the numbers," Hildebrand said.

SGA receives 35 percent of its funding from Student Service Fees, he said.

"Students deserve access to (how that money is spent) by all means," Hildebrand said.

Since the other 65 percent is self-generated, he said, it is up to the discretion of the committees to reveal those line items.

"That's not where student service fees are going," he said. "That's not student money being spent."

The SGA Diversity committee's line-item budget was distributed to the senators in a handout from the meeting, after the allocation of \$8,500 to the committee within the 2003-2004 budget plan elicited some controversy during its first reading in the Senate Sept. 24 meeting.

Early in Wednesday's meeting Vice President for Diversity Pablo Rodriguez outlined the committees' hierarchy, mission and programs for the senators.

See Senate on page 5

Workshop to boost potential admissions

By Nicole M. Jones
THE BATTALION

High school students and their parents will be on campus this Saturday to learn how to increase the students' chances of being admitted to Texas A&M.

The Prospective Student Center has initiated "The Top 10 Ways to Increase Your Chances of Getting Admitted," a workshop aiming to give high school students tips on how to be admitted to A&M, said Kelly Colbert, an admissions counselor in the center.

This is a general program created for anyone interested in attending A&M, Colbert said. The workshop was scheduled for this weekend to take advantage of prospective students and alumni being on campus for the A&M vs. Baylor football game.

"The purpose of this workshop is to increase knowledge of the admissions process among applicants," said Cynthia Gay, associate director of admissions. "We don't want the process

to be mysterious."

Gay said increasing knowledge of the admissions process will increase the caliber of applicants, improving the student population at A&M.

More than 50 students, along with their parents, are expected to attend the seminar, which has been publicized on the A&M Web site, the jumbotron at Kyle Field and through local media outlets. Information was also sent to high school counselors through a listserve facilitated by the admissions office.

Colbert said most of the students are Texas residents who are juniors and seniors in high school.

"We are currently doing these 'top 10 ways' workshops throughout the state of Texas," Gay said.

Some of the top 10 ways to increase possibilities of admission include visiting the A&M Web site, scoring well on standardized tests, beating deadlines and filling out the admission application in its entirety.

The workshop will take place from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

TOP 10 WAYS

TO INCREASE YOUR CHANCES OF GETTING ADMITTED

Admissions information day for prospective students of Texas A&M is Saturday, Oct. 11 from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

- | | | | |
|----|--|---|--|
| 10 | Look at A&M Web site and A&M publications | 5 | Visit the admissions staff |
| 9 | Take appropriate class work | 4 | Submit your credentials prior to deadline |
| 8 | Take the ACT and SAT | 3 | Complete the application thoroughly |
| 7 | Be involved in extra-curricular activities | 2 | Be an academic admit: 1300 SAT, 30 ACT and top half of the class |
| 6 | Visit the campus | 1 | Graduate in top 10 percent |

SOURCE: TEXAS A&M OFFICE OF ADMISSIONS

RUBEN DELUNA • THE BATTALION

Vision Plan promotes campus unity

By Carrie Pierce
THE BATTALION

The Residence Hall Association's Vision Plan is part of RHA President Chris Mahaffey's plan to make the group a top leadership organization on campus.

For the RHA to live up to its full potential and make the greatest impact on the on-campus community, Mahaffey said he spent a month of his summer drawing up a Vision Plan.

"I want the RHA to be the premier leadership organization and be just as good as other

large organizations," Mahaffey said. "I am looking forward to the end of the year to see if we accomplished our goals."

The goal of the plan is to develop an outline so that everyone in RHA can be focused on one series of goals and see them to the end, Mahaffey said.

In his plan, Mahaffey outlines barriers to growth he saw in previous years in RHA, such as lack of involvement, professionalism and preparedness. RHA has been in a slow process of regrouping in the last few years, and Mahaffey said he hopes his Vision Plan will help with that alteration.

The number one barrier he has observed is

a lack of community in some residence halls.

"It takes a lot of building to build any community, and RHA cannot do it alone. People in the dorms must get involved and help out," Mahaffey said.

Adam Longarzo, a sophomore business major, said he does not participate in hall activities because he thinks nothing his hall does is exciting.

"I would get involved if there were more interesting events, and if the hall was more specific about what the events were,"

See RHA on page 2

Voting district map set after months of bitter negotiation

By April Castro
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AUSTIN — The Texas Legislature may have a congressional redistricting map to vote on before lawmakers skip town for the Texas-Oklahoma football game.

Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst said Wednesday that a tentative agreement had been reached after months of bitter negotiations on a map designed to put more Republicans in the Texas congressional delegation. A final map

would be unveiled Thursday morning, Dewhurst said.

The announcement appeared to end weeks of squabbling between Republicans over the shape of West Texas congressional districts. The party battle followed months of fighting between Republicans and Democrats, who forced the calling of three special sessions.

House Speaker Tom Craddick, a Republican, has been adamant about

See Agreement on page 2

Suicide bombing kills 9 at Baghdad police station

By Hamza Hendawi
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, Iraq — A suicide car bomber crashed a white Oldsmobile into a police station in Iraq's largest Shiite Muslim enclave Thursday, killing himself, nine others and wounding as many as 45. Earlier, gunmen — one dressed as a Shiite cleric — shot and killed a Spanish military attaché.

The violence, six months to the day after Baghdad fell to American forces, underscored the predicament of a capital whose deliverance from Saddam Hussein's tyranny has been repeatedly undermined by terrorism, attacks on U.S. forces and sectarian unrest.

The ancient city's landscape is now lined with massive concrete blast barriers and coils of barbed wire outside hotels, government departments and along stretches of road near U.S. military bases.

As in previous attacks, there was no claim of responsibility for the 8:30 a.m. bombing in Sadr City, a Baghdad

district with an estimated 2 million Shiites.

"It was a huge blast and everything became dark from the debris and sand. I was thrown to the ground," said Mohammed Adnan, who sells watermelons opposite the police station.

Vegetable seller Fakhriya Jarallah said two of her sons were repairing the outside wall of the compound.

"I ran across the road like a madwoman to find out what happened to my sons. But thanks to God they are both safe," she said.

Policemen and some in the crowd that gathered outside the police station after the explosion offered an assortment of possible culprits that ranged from non-Iraqi Arab militants to Saddam loyalists and Shiite radicals angry about a cleric's arrest.

The killing of the Spanish military attaché happened across town in the upscale Mansour area about 30 minutes before the car bombing.

Downpour



RANDAL FORD • THE BATTALION

Freshman political science major Greg Kwedar walks through the rain on Thursday afternoon beneath a giant umbrella. His walk took him near the Blocker building, which was flooded after heavy rains throughout the morning.

Continue for missing boy

P) — Authorities continuing Wednesday for a undocumented immigrant who was taken by smuggler angry that his father didn't have a permit for their trip from El Paso. The boy, 16, was found at 7:50 a.m. Tuesday in a blue tractor-trailer. A Mangle, spokesman for Texas Department of Public Safety, said police reported and his father were arrested by an immigrant, who stopped in a truck and out they could get into a scuffle with a driver away with the said. The boy was wearing a blue t-shirt and baggy jeans. He has black hair and brown eyes, is 5-foot-8 and weighs 130 pounds. For more information, call Dallas police at 972-671-1111.

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