

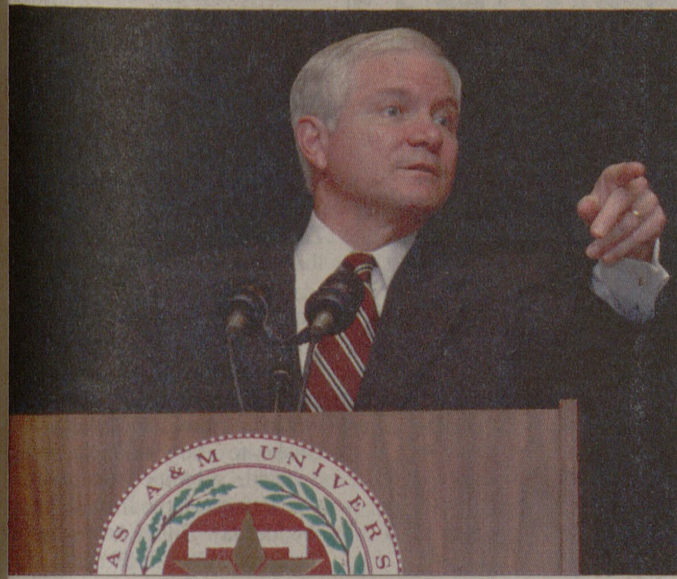
# THE BATTALION

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JP BEATO III • THE BATTALION

University President Robert M. Gates answers questions after his open forum about proposals for admissions requirements for Texas A&M Wednesday evening.

## Gates: Race will not be a factor

By Eric Ambroso  
THE BATTALION

Race will not be one of the factors considered in admitting students to Texas A&M, said University President Robert M. Gates at an open forum Wednesday. Instead, Gates discussed programs that will be used to attract minority students to A&M.

"Students at Texas A&M should be admitted as individuals, on personal merit — and on no other basis," Gates said.

The announcement came after the University of Texas at Austin submitted to its Board of Regents a plan to include race as a factor in its admissions policy. In June, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that it is constitutional for universities to use affirmative action in admissions policies.

A&M will undertake new efforts to encourage minority students to enroll and feel welcome on campus, Gates said.

There will be more visits by counselors and current students to socioeconomically targeted high schools, more applications workshops at target schools and more trips to campus for students from under-represented high schools. A program has also been developed, called "Parents Program," to encourage minority students to enroll by responding to questions and concerns of their families.

"I think he had some valid points and some pretty good proposed changes," said Tiffany Johnson, a sophomore mechanical engineering major. "I like the ideas he had for recruiting minorities, and I think they might actually be effective."

Currently, only 44 percent of black, 48 percent of Hispanic and 33 percent of Asian-American students admitted to the University

actually enroll, Gates said. This contrasts with 62 percent of white students who are admitted and then enroll.

"We must persuade more minority students who we admit and who we want to come here to actually do so — to see Texas A&M as their university of choice," Gates said. "Some argue that promoting diversity itself is a mistake. I believe they are mistaken."

To persuade minorities to enroll, the Office of Admissions and Records will increase direct contact and personal communication with minority students admitted, Gates said. Admitted students will be contacted by minority and non-minority faculty as well as minority and non-minority former and current students.

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## Regents to discuss creating Gates chair

By Sonia Moghe  
THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M Board of Regents will meet Thursday and Friday to discuss whether to approve the formation of the Robert M. Gates Chair in Intelligence and National Security for the George Bush School of Government and Public Service.

Candidates for the chair are expected to be experts in the fields of national security and intelligence, much like University President Robert M. Gates, who is a former director of the CIA and interim dean of the Bush School.

Money for the creation of the chair was provided by the estate of Eugenia Stewart, who donated \$210,000, said Arnold Vedlitz, executive associate dean of the Bush School, according to the Bryan-College Station Eagle.

The Bush School is also seeking to create a joint research division with the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI). The TTI is currently involved in a project to determine infrastructure spending with Houston area officials.

The board will also discuss the need for a budget increase for improvements to A&M's Easterwood Airport. A growth in travel to the Bryan-College Station area during University events has contributed to the need for more parking spaces, said John Happ, director of aviation for the airport, as reported in the Eagle.

Admissions standards for incoming freshmen of the 2005-06 academic year that were discussed Wednesday at the open forum with Gates will also be proposed to the regents.

"We will ask to raise the standard for automatic academic admission from the top half of the high school to the top quarter," Gates said at the forum. "We proposed that a student must have at least a 600 in each of the two components of the SAT."

Also to be discussed are improvements to the fire safety capabilities of the west side of Kyle Field, which met fire safety standards when built, but needs to be updated. The estimated cost of the project is not currently available.

### ON THE AGENDA

The Texas A&M Board of Regents is meeting in the MSC Thursday and Friday to discuss the following:

- ▶ A budget increase for improvements to Easterwood Airport
- ▶ New undergraduate admissions standards for potential A&M students for the 2005 - 2006 year
- ▶ Five safety improvements that need to be made to the west side of Kyle Field

RUBEN DELUNA • THE BATTALION  
SOURCE: BOARD OF REGENTS

## Rainbow bright



JOSHUA L. HOBSON • THE BATTALION

Two-year-old Erin Minnich of College Station takes a break from her Play-Doh to create a picture of her mother at the Children's Museum of the Brazos Valley Wednesday afternoon. The

museum will be hosting holiday arts and crafts, such as tree ornaments, wreaths and cookies. The museum is open Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

## A&M professor recovering from accident

By Erin Price  
THE BATTALION



OCHOA

Texas A&M mechanical engineering professor Ochoa remains hospitalized after being hit by a drunken driver Nov. 22 in Dayton, Ohio.

Henry Genezko, Ochoa's boyfriend, said she had just completed a 20-mile run and was driving in her BMW when a drunken driver in an SUV hit her broadside. Ochoa had been training for the Walt Disney World marathon to be held next month in Orlando, Fla. She was only blocks away from her home when

the accident occurred.

Ochoa was taken to the hospital and sustained numerous injuries including a collapsed lung, injuries to her internal organs and a gash in her head, Genezko said.

"She had to be stabilized with medicines to keep her from injuring herself further," Genezko said. "Her heart stopped for a while on Sunday morning."

Ochoa underwent three surgeries, the last on Thanksgiving day, Genezko said. She

was unconscious from Nov. 23 to Nov. 27. She was moved out of the intensive care unit on Dec. 2 and has begun talking, he said.

Walter Bradley, Texas A&M professor emeritus of mechanical engineering, said Ochoa has been on sabbatical leave in Ohio working at the Wright Patterson Air Force Base Research Laboratory. Ochoa is well-liked by her students and colleagues, he said.

"I am personally very upset to learn of this tragic accident," Bradley said. "I hope and pray that she is able to make a full recovery because she is a very special person and a valuable asset to Texas A&M."

## Candidates filing for 2004 elections

By Kelley Shannon  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

date," Frost said.

A federal trial begins next week over a Democratic challenge to the Republican redistricting plan. Texas Republicans, seeking to overcome the Democrats' 17-15 advantage in the state's congressional delegation, pushed for new districts that could give the GOP as many as seven additional seats.

AUSTIN — Candidates for president, Congress, the Texas Legislature and other offices began filing papers for the 2004 primary election Wednesday, even as a dispute simmered over which congressional districts will be used.

Democratic U.S. Rep. Martin Frost of Arlington filed to run in the district he has represented for 25 years. Frost said he was confident a federal court will uphold existing congressional boundaries and toss out a GOP redistricting plan approved this fall.

The Republican map, which Democrats claim violates minority voting rights, decimated Frost's heavily minority district.

"I will run for re-election even if the proposed plan is upheld and would make a decision at that time as to where I would be a candi-

Democratic state lawmakers tried to thwart the GOP plan and staged two out-of-state boycotts to block it, but Republicans dominate the Legislature and ultimately prevailed.

All candidates running in the March 9 primary have until Jan. 2 to file their election paperwork with their respective parties. Those running for Congress will have an additional period, from Jan. 11-16, to file under the new congressional map if it gets federal court approval and is used for

See Election on page 2A

## Texans hope to win millions

By April Castro  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AUSTIN — Texans lined up early Wednesday for their first chance at the Mega Millions multistate lottery game and a shot at the \$44 million jackpot.

Texas lottery officials said tickets began selling at 6 a.m. CST at more than 16,000 retailers statewide.

Reagan E. Greer, executive director of the lottery commission, called it an exciting day for players and retailers and said the game

"will allow us to increase our contribution to the Foundation School Fund for public education in Texas."

Tickets were selling sporadically at the Piggy Bank convenience store in Canutillo, about one mile from the New Mexico state line just north of El Paso, as players tried to figure out how the game works.

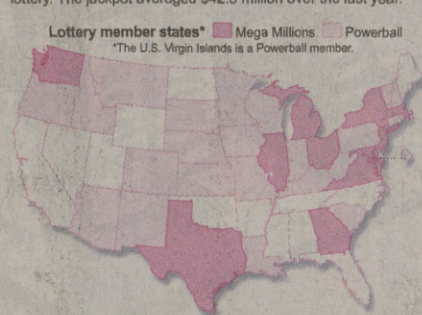
Richard Holland, of Canutillo, was among the first at the Piggy Bank to buy a Mega Millions ticket. "The reason I like Mega

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### MEGA MILLIONS LOTTERY

#### Texas joins in for chance to win big

Texans just got a little richer on Wednesday — or at least a chance to — when they became the 11th state to join the Mega Millions lottery. The jackpot averaged \$42.3 million over the last year.



SOURCE: Associated Press