



'Defeat ignorance, support diversity'

Hundreds of students, faculty and staff attend rally to promote diversity

By Anthony Woolstrum
THE BATTALION

"Aggies are diverse; we are diverse."

This statement and others were chanted Wednesday afternoon as hundreds of Texas A&M faculty, staff, students and members of the Bryan-College Station community gathered for a rally sponsored by the Faculty Committed

to an Inclusive Campus (FCIC) to promote diversity on campus.

"We have to make sure that we represent Texas A&M to the outside community the way we want to be represented," said James Anderson, vice president for diversity.

The FCIC was created in the wake of the YCT bake sale last November, said Rogelio Saenz, professor of sociology. The FCIC is dedicated to showing minorities in Texas that A&M is not against them.

Members of YCT said the bake sale was not supposed to be indifferent.

"I don't see the bake sale as portraying a negative image," said Mark McCaig, a senior marketing major and communications director for YCT.

After Anderson spoke, the crowd marched to the Academic Building and around campus chanting.

"I feel like this is just the first step and definitely not the last step," said Natasha Eubanks, a senior political science major and officer in Student Senate. "There is still a lot of work to be done."

Lary Oliver, associate dean of the College of Liberal Arts and one of the leading members of the FCIC,

said the community needs to work harder to increase diversity in every respect, but that if that is going to be achieved it needs to work together.

"Previous coverage of (the diversity rally) implied that there was a conflict between the administration and FCIC. That never was the case," Oliver said.

The office of the president, the office of the provost, the office of the assistant provost and various faculty and student organizations all supported the event, Oliver said.

The A&M Student Government Association pulled the plug on its support of the rally at its meeting last Wednesday because of the FCIC position supporting affirmative action.

Oliver said this rally was not about affirmative action but diversity as a whole.

Nonetheless, McCaig said he vehemently disagrees with the FCIC positions on affirmative action and quotas and thinks the University should base admissions on merit and not race.

Harry Berger, associate professor of music and performance studies, said different groups may have different ideas on how A&M can become more diverse, but to move forward A&M must make this movement more inclusive and more diverse.

Josh Peschel, president of the Graduate Student Council, compared the diversity rally to the honored tradition of Elephant Walk.

"Today we showed our support for D-walk, diversity walk, like we do for E-walk," Peschel said.



Above: Supporters of the "Compelling Interest: Diversity at Texas A&M" rally participate in the "Aggie March for Diversity" Wednesday afternoon just outside the Psychology building. The march, which started at Rudder Fountain, continued through campus around the Academic Building and back to the Rudder Fountain area. Left: Michael Jackson (left), class of 1988, and Thomas Spellman, class of 1986, hold hands in front of the Academic Building in support of the march Wednesday afternoon. The march through campus was organized by the members of the Faculty Committed to an Inclusive Campus and included a rally at Rudder Fountain. Photos by John C. Livas.

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Corps elects new commanders

By Natalie Younts
THE BATTALION

John Huffman and Kyle Tobin were chosen Tuesday to lead the Corps of Cadets during the 2004-05 school year.

Huffman will serve as Corps commander and Tobin will serve as deputy Corps commander.

The two were chosen by a board comprised of current cadet leaders and military officers. Corps Commandant Lt. Gen. John Van Alstyne received the recommendation from the board and made the final decision.

Huffman, a junior finance major, was born and raised in College Station and will become the highest-ranking cadet in the Corps. He said he will be the face of the Corps, the liaison between different levels of command and have the final say in most of



HUFFMAN



TOBIN

the policy decisions.

Tobin, a junior electrical engineering major from Richmond, Texas, will help Huffman lead the Corps and act as commander in his absence.

Both cadets said academics is their top priority for the upcoming year.

"We want to make sure the Corps freshmen and the rest of the cadets post averages that we would be proud of," Huffman said.

Tobin said the goal for freshmen grade

point averages next year will be 2.75.

"Scholastics is going to be the benchmark of our administration," Huffman said. "It's going to be the telling factor of whether or not we're doing our job effectively. After all, the cadets are here to be students first, and cadets second."

Huffman and Tobin said they will also focus on getting cadets to participate in a variety of student organizations and hold leadership positions.

"We would like them to get involved in organizations in which they can shine, in which they can show the traits and the characteristics that we're trying to instill in them in the Corps," Huffman said. "We'd like them to learn how to be a leader inside the Corps and then go and really show that to the rest of the University."

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KPRC investigates A&M regents' flights

By Rhiannon Meyers
THE BATTALION

Members of the Texas A&M System Board of Regents took 120 trips on the System-owned plane costing a total of \$250,000 since fall of 2001, according to a Feb. 10 KPRC-TV Channel 2 Houston report.

In an official statement released Feb. 11, System officials said the System and state aircraft is used within state law guidelines and is necessary for the regents, who are unpaid volunteers, to conduct state and University business.

The statement said no general revenue, student tuition or fee money is used for travel expenses.

"The fund used for travel is the Available University Fund (AUF), and that money comes

from investment earnings from land endowments that were set aside back in the 1800s," said System spokesman Bob Wright.

Wright said the cost per flight is figured out in an hourly rate.

"Our billing rate includes not only gasoline for the flights, but maintenance, salaries (of co-pilots and pilots), benefits, insurance, facilities and hangar rental, radar and some other aircraft expenses," Wright said. "These costs are prorated on an hourly basis."

KPRC reported only a few of the nine regents used the plane,

while others used commercial airlines, drove or did not charge the System for travel.

A&M Regent Susan Rudd Wynn, M.D., had the highest tab, according to the KPRC report. In a Feb. 3 letter to

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"As a legislator I would like to know the details, and I'm sure there's an explanation for it."

— Fred Brown
District 14 Texas state representative

Tuition deregulation prompts audit

By Jason Hanselka
THE BATTALION

The Legislative Budget Board for the state of Texas has called for an audit of expenditures made by the Texas A&M University System.

After the state Legislature ruled to deregulate tuition last year, substantial increases in tuition at A&M and the University of Texas prompted lawmakers to investigate spending at both universities.

Cathy Smock, chief auditor for the A&M System, said she does not believe the audit was prompted by the discovery of any wrongdoings at the institutions.

"They just want to see if there is anything they can do to help the institution manage its spending," she said.

Smock said a similar audit was done a few years ago at Texas Southern University when the task was delegated from the state

comptroller's office.

"It was helpful," Smock said. "It gave the university some good ideas."

Smock said many audits have been done on public school systems and very few on institutions of higher education.

The Texas A&M Board of Regents internally audits the A&M System and publishes a yearly report on its findings.

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Junior environmental design major Vanessa Ortega shows off her model bus Wednesday afternoon.

Students design safer, sustainable school buses

By Pammy Ramji
THE BATTALION

Virginia Traweck said she spent so much time in a school bus that she wishes she could curl up and go to sleep in one while on a trip.

So, she designed a school bus that includes 12 fold-down beds, a bathroom, padding for the bed in the storage on the bus and many other facilities.

Traweck's and other student's designs were on display Wednesday in the Langford Architecture

Building as part of the College of Architecture's presentation of the 28 Phase I Exploratory Research and Design Project for "A Safer, Sustainable, and User-Friendly School Bus."

Traweck, a junior architecture major, calls her bus "the Weekender" because the seats fold into beds, which can be used on road trips. This way school districts or students who go on overnight trips do not have to pay for hotels, she said.

"The idea happened by accident. I was on the debate team and spent a lot of time traveling on the bus and sleeping on the bus for the most part.

Many students didn't have the money (for a hotel) so they couldn't participate in activities," she said.

Traweck said it took her about 40 hours to complete her design.

George Mann, endowed professor of health facilities design at Texas A&M, said the project is being undertaken to provide an actual learning experience for students. They are undertaking an unfunded interdisciplinary discussion, inquiry

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