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JOHN C. LIVAS • THE BATTALION

Former head basketball coach for University of Texas-at-El Paso Billy Gillispie (left) was welcomed Wednesday afternoon at a press

conference where he was presented with the traditional maroon A&M blazer by A&M Athletic Director Bill Byrne.

Gillispie named basketball coach

By Troy Miller
THE BATTALION

Texas A&M Athletic Director Bill Byrne suffered through a miserable 0-17 men's basketball conference season before former head coach Melvin Watkins resigned.

It didn't take Byrne long, however, to find a replacement as Byrne named Billy Gillispie the new head coach Wednesday, exactly two weeks after Watkins' resignation.

"We wanted someone with a strong Texas connection that could actively recruit the best and brightest Texas has to offer," Byrne said. "We also wanted someone with a winning attitude. When we started looking around the country and the state of Texas, we heard one person's name, and that's Coach Gillispie."

Gillispie comes from the University of Texas-El Paso where he just finished his second year as head coach. In his first season, the Miners suffered a 6-24 season, but in 2003-04 Gillispie led UTEP to a 24-8 record, a co-Western Athletic Conference championship and an NCAA Tournament appearance, where it lost to the University of Maryland 86-83 in the first round.

Gillispie's Texas ties run deeper than his ties to UTEP. He grew up in Grafard, Texas, a small town of just more than 400 people and graduated from Southwest Texas State University.

Gillispie began his coaching career at Southwest Texas State as a graduate assistant before moving on to eight years in the Texas high school ranks.

In 1993-94, Gillispie was taken on as an assistant coach at South Plains Junior College. A year later, he was at Baylor University as an assistant coach and recruiting coordinator.

Gillispie then moved on to the University of Tulsa where he became an assistant under head coach Bill Self. Gillispie spent five seasons with Self, three at Tulsa and two at the University of Illinois, and he credits Self with giving him the tools that have made him the coach that he is today.

"Bill Self has been the most influential coach in my life," Gillispie said.

Self, the current head coach at the University of Kansas, said Gillispie is hard working and a great hire for A&M.

"Billy did a great job for us at

See Coach on page 2A

Student affairs VP candidate visits Texas A&M campus

By Joaquin Salcedo
THE BATTALION

The second of four candidates vying for the position of vice president for student affairs at Texas A&M was introduced to students, faculty and staff at an open forum at Rudder Exhibit Hall Wednesday.

Joseph Paul, currently the vice president for student affairs at the University of Southern Mississippi, said he wants to join the A&M staff because it has the best student affairs program in the nation.

Paul expressed his attraction toward A&M as he commented on the Aggie attitude at football games and addressed a series of questions regarding issues such as residence life, Bonfire and student activities.

"In terms of my philosophy, my ideal form for an institution of higher learning is that it is a seamless learning community," Paul said. "Not this education or that education, but one holistic education. A lot of engagement with students marks my style."

To aid in the selection of a new vice president for student affairs, a nine-member search committee composed of faculty, students and alumni was appointed by A&M President

Robert M. Gates.

The terms for selecting the candidates, according to the division of student affairs, include having a doctoral degree (or extraordinary experience) in student affairs administration or other related field of study, understanding, appreciation for and commitment to providing consistent

access to the students and engaging students in multiple forums.

Craig Rotter, coordinator of leadership development for the Department of Residence Life, said Paul is going to reach out and understand the University.

"We need a vice president for student affairs who understands Aggie traditions and what Aggie values are all about," Rotter said.

The position has been vacant since May 2003 following the retirement of J. Malon Southerland who held the position for nine years.

Robert Strawser, chair of the vice president for student affairs search advisory committee, said three candidates were selected to interview for the position in the spring of last year. However, the committee did

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Laptop thefts surge across campus

By Brian D. Cain
THE BATTALION

Thirteen laptops have been stolen on the A&M campus since the beginning of the spring semester, totaling more than \$15,000 in value, said Sgt. Allan Baron of the University Police Department.

"Some stolen laptops were the personal property of the students, and some were University property," he said.

Baron said there is no pattern to the thefts. "It's completely random," he said. "Thefts have been scattered all over campus in dorms, offices, libraries and cafeterias."

Laptop computers, known for their small size and portability, are targeted by thieves for the same reasons. Because they are small, they can be easily stolen and concealed. The stolen items are then fenced at pawn shops and used computer stores, Baron said.

Laptops are also attractive targets because the legal consequences of a property crime

such as theft is less severe than a crime against a person, such as robbery, and can often be more lucrative, Baron said.

"The problem with laptops is, people often leave them unattended," Baron said.

Baron said most laptop owners don't realize the cost of a stolen computer until they become victims. In addition to losing their computer, they have also lost peripherals, such as modems and network cards, installed software and the cost of replacing all of this equipment.

UPD advises that all laptops should be within sight of the owner, and unattended laptops should be locked in a cabinet or closet if possible. If a laptop must be left in a car, owners should make sure to lock it in the trunk where the computer is out of sight of potential thieves.

However, these precautions won't always guarantee protection against theft, Baron said.

"The thing is, even if it is locked up, that

PROTECT YOUR LAPTOPS

The University Police Department urges students, faculty and staff to be cautious when taking a laptop around campus.

Helpful tips:

- Carry your laptop in a non-descript carrying case.
- Engrave laptops with your driver license number
- Back up information on disks and store the disks at home.

ANDREW BURELSON • THE BATTALION
SOURCE: UPD

doesn't mean it can't be stolen," Baron said.

Baron advised laptop owners to engrave a name and a driver license number on the

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Kibler takes position at Miss. State

By Melissa Sullivan
THE BATTALION

Bill Kibler, interim vice president for student affairs, has accepted the position of vice president for student affairs at Mississippi State University effective in June.

Kibler took over for J. Malon Southerland in June 2003 and has been with Texas A&M for more than 20 years.

"I have had lots of opportunities here," Kibler said. "And I have enjoyed the opportunity to do this and to be engaged in many things."



KIBLER

Kibler came to A&M in 1980 and has served in several professional positions, including president of the Association of Student Judicial Affairs, president of the Center for Academic Integrity and the national conference chair of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators.

Kibler said he applied for the position of vice president for student affairs at A&M last year but decided to take the job at MSU when he was not chosen as one of the four

finalists for the A&M job.

"It will be difficult to leave here; it's a great place," Kibler said. "I love the campus and students. I raised my family here and we have deep roots here."

Kibler said A&M and MSU have similar attributes, which include being land grant schools with strong backgrounds in agriculture and veterinary medicine.

Although MSU has a smaller population with only 17,000 students, it has a rich history of traditions, Kibler said.

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SBP candidates focus effort on campaigns for 2004 election

Herreth strives for unity, communication

By Rhiannon Meyers
THE BATTALION

Andy Herreth, a senior political science major, is running for student body president with a campaign slogan of "Standing with Students."

"Our slogan brings about ideas of unity, working together, communicating, staying there and representing students' views to the administration," Herreth said. "And that's exactly what I want to do next year."

Herreth said his campaign focuses on two main areas: saving students money and perpetuating Aggie traditions. Herreth said he would maintain Aggie

traditions by developing a plan to bring Bonfire back on campus in five years. Herreth said he does not like off-campus bonfires because they hurt the University.

"What we need to strive for is more on-campus unity, and not tearing the University apart," Herreth said. "There's a solution out there. We just need to work together to find it."

To save students money, Herreth said he would seek to lower ticket prices to A&M



HERRETH

football games.

"It seems ridiculous to me that at (University of Oklahoma), a top-ranked football team every year, their students pay \$15 to go to the game, and our students pay \$37.50 if they didn't have a sports pass," Herreth said.

Herreth said he is also working on a plan where the Student Government Association would run on endowments and not Student

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Hernandez aims to increase campus diversity

By James Twine
THE BATTALION

Royd Hernandez said that if elected student body president, he would create a diverse and unified student government and push to maintain academic excellence at Texas A&M.

"I want to make sure everyone is represented and I am going to work with the administration and student organizations to create more diversity," said Hernandez, a senior biomedical engineering

major. "I want to hear students voice their concerns about academics."

Hernandez said he would like to see Q-drop extensions and a grade forgiveness system offered to students.

"I think that just because you make a mistake on one grade in one semester, you should not be jeopardizing your future," he said.

Hernandez said he knows the administration agrees that A&M should be pushing for



HERNANDEZ

diversity, and said he will work with A&M President Robert M. Gates, the administration and the students to increase diversity.

Hernandez said he supports Vision 2020 and the recent tuition increases as long as they are advantageous for A&M and for the good of the students, but stresses the importance of knowing where the fee increases are going.

"We need to make sure we are fully aware of what increasing fees are being used for," he said.

Hernandez said Vision 2020

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STUDENT BODY ELECTIONS 2004

Third in a series of candidates running for student body president