

IEWS



Frederica Shih — THE BATTALION

ACTIVISM



Tim Lai — THE BATTALION

Council for Minority Student Affairs vice president **Gabriela Castillo** (right) and other student advocates in the march across campus to show their support of DREAMers.

## Student advocates march across campus in support of the Texas DREAM Act

By Katy Stapp

Chanting “Sí Se Puede” — “Yes We Can” — and with “Undocumented” printed across their black T-shirts, close to 70 students and supporters marched Wednesday morning across campus to draw attention to a brewing legislative battle over fees for undocumented student.

Local DREAM Act advocates marched at 10:30 a.m. from Rudder Plaza to Simpson Drill Field to show their determination to keep the act a part of Texas’ law. The DREAM Act allows undocumented students to pay in-state tuition rates if they graduated from a Texas high school or received a GED in Texas, and if they sign an affidavit indicating they seek legal residency. The act was adopted in 2001, but the Texas legislature has the act’s advocates readying to fend off attempts at a repeal.

The marchers held signs stamped with, “We have earned it” and, “Education, not deportation.” The march, hosted by the Council for Minority Student Affairs, concluded at Simpson Drill Field with a press conference.

Gabriela Castillo, vice president of

CMSA and political science junior, said the march was the first of its kind and intended to bring awareness to the community about participants’ determination to fight the repeal of the DREAM Act.

“We wanted to reach out to the community and let them know that we are aware of these proposed legislations, willing to fight them, and willing to go far out of our comfort zone to do so,” Castillo said. “We want them to know that we are keeping a watchful eye on Texas legislation.”

The efforts to repeal the DREAM Act center around House Bill 360, filed in November by Republican Rep. Mark Keough, which would deal a blow to the DREAM Act by requiring applicants for in-state tuition to be citizens at the time of application.

Roxann Lerma, CMSA public relations representative and biochemistry senior, said the march was scheduled at an ideal time to combat efforts to repeal the DREAM Act.

“We knew these bills were about to start rolling,” Lerma said. “We wanted to make our statement at the right time.”

Castillo said the march also intended to advocate for DAPA, or Deferred

Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents, which was recently ruled unconstitutional by U.S. District Court Judge Andrew Hanen.

DAPA is a form of immigrant relief that essentially extends DACA, or Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, to include eligible parents of United States citizens. To qualify, the individual must have been physically present in the U.S. since Jan. 1, 2010 and have a child who was born on or before Nov. 20, 2014.

Castillo said the march was successful and received a lot of attention.

“People saw us and were cheering us on. Some even joined in to march with us,” Castillo said. “It was refreshing and powerful.”

Lerma said one of her hopes for this event, which was named the National Day of Action, is that it will encourage other universities to advocate for those who enter the U.S. illegally.

“What we want is for other universities to start marching like this as well,” Lerma said. “Universities like the University of Texas and the University of Texas Pan-American — we want them to join us in the fight.”

## REACTOR CONTINUED

reactor inside was used to teach students about operational materials and safety techniques.

“The nuclear reactor is a five watt reactor that has about enough power to power a light bulb, but nevertheless it is a nuclear reactor,” said Tell Butler, manager of engineering facilities.

Butler said the university will take every precaution to safeguard the reactor. A special utility system will be put in place to ensure the reactor has the same level of stability and power that it had when the building was fully operational. Access to the reactor area will be restricted to the nuclear reactor supervisor, a federal nuclear commission agency and a group of consultants hired to look after the area. The reactor area will also be under video surveillance in addition to being guarded by police at night.

The reactor is the only piece of equipment to remain in Zachry as construction crews ready for the eventual renovation. All other pieces of equipment have been removed from the building and taken to new locations, Butler said.

“To move that equipment appropriately, we brought in the manufacturers of that equipment and they actually disassembled it, packed it for moving and when we put it in the new locations they came in and reassembled it,” Butler said.

All of the pieces of equipment moved out of Zachry will remain in their new locations, Butler said, and new equipment will be brought in for the Engineering Education Complex when it is completed. Much of the equipment that has been removed from Zachry is mainly used by graduate students, but the Engineering Education Complex will focus on undergraduate education. The new equipment that will be brought in will be smaller scale, simulation-based equipment Butler said.

Butler said the process of emptying Zachry for construction has been ongoing for nearly a year but was completed in the first week of February. Zachry’s renovation into the Engineering Education Complex will begin during spring break with the abatement of any hazardous materials, such as asbestos.

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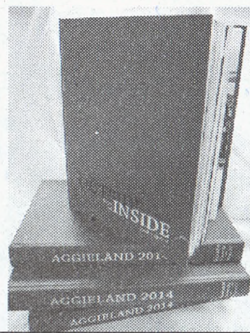


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## Yell Leader revote to be announced at E. King Gil statue

By John Rangel

The results of A&M's Yell Leader revote will be announced at 6 p.m. Thursday next to the new E. King Gil statue, barring any rule violation allegations.

The revote comes after this year's Senior Yell Leaders nullified the Student Government Association's Yell Leader election process. Faculty and staff were able to access the ballot, but Ryan Trantham, special election commissioner and MSC president, said non-student ballots are not tallied.

Trantham said while the online ballot is open to faculty and staff, the computer system only tallies student ballots after a validation system compares cast ballots with a list of current students.

“Faculty and staff can go in and fill out a ballot, but that ballot won't be validated,” Trantham said.

David Sweeney, director of A&M's Information Technology department, said it is typical for faculty and staff to

be able to access the online ballot for student elections. Sweeney said the system ensures only student ballots are counted once the voting closes. Enabling ballot access to anyone with a Net ID and a UIN makes the system easier and cleaner from a programming standpoint, Sweeney said.

Trantham said he was optimistic the revote would be successful, but is prepared to postpone the election announcements if violation allegations are brought forth.

“If for whatever reason there are allegations of rules violations that do get submitted before the deadline of [Thursday] at noon, myself and my student appeals panel will have to review all of those different allegations and then any appeals that would come from our rulings prior to announcing any results,” Trantham said.

The deadline to submit allegations to the special election commissioner is noon Thursday.