

Affirmative action halted at University Texas (Austin)

By Sandy Banisky (c) 1997, The Baltimore Sun

AUSTIN, Texas - Texas, heeding the decision of a federal court, has ended affirmative action in college admissions. But on the sprawling University of Texas campus, a place roused more often by football than by politics, the end has not come quietly.

Minority enrollment in professional schools has fallen. A law professor outraged the campus with his observation that minority students "are not academically competitive." A thousand noisy protesters occupied the law school. And students at a school generally described as apathetic found themselves swept into a campuswide debate on whether the importance of diversity in the classroom, on fairness in college admissions and on freedom of speech, particularly when the speech is unpopular.

It's all added up to disrupted classes and unwelcome national publicity, many students and faculty say. They fear the country now has the impression that minorities are not welcome here.

"It casts a bad light," said Edward Garrison, a law student who is the son of an Anglo father and Latino mother. "It makes people think there's racial hostility at the school, and I don't think there is."

"Try to hold classes in the midst of this," said Jennifer Mathis, a third-year law student, as hundreds of protesters shouted "We won't go back" from the law school lobby.

But some on campus believe the chanting and protesting helps by focusing attention on a tough problem: How to attract more black and Mexican-American students to UT. A federal appeals court ruled last year that ethnicity cannot be considered when offering admissions and financial aid.

"It's been great," student body president Marlen Whitley, who is black, said of the turmoil. "What we've got now is momentum for a lot of thinking, a lot of talking."

First, however, came a lot of anger.

Last week, law professor Lino Graglia told reporters - in language bereft of soothing nuance - that "blacks and Mexican Americans are not academically competitive with whites in selective institutions. They have a culture that seems not to encourage achievement."

Long an opponent of racial preferences, Graglia had voiced the same beliefs many times before. But on a campus now sensitive to racial issues, the comments caused an uproar.

Though most of his fellow law professors disagreed with Graglia's statements, they defended his right to make them. "He glories in overstatement," said law professor Sanford Levinson.

Students and lawmakers demanded Graglia's ouster - unlikely, as the professor is tenured. The Rev. Jesse Jackson, fresh from leading a protest against the end of affirmative action in California, came to UT to urge students to boycott Graglia's classes.

"The school should be ashamed,"

Jackson said to the largest political gathering on campus in years. "He represents a national disgrace."

After standing firm for a week, Graglia released a statement saying his comment was "carelessly put, and I regret it." Law School Dean M. Michael Sharlot said he'd found no evidence that Graglia has discriminated against students and said he would not take any disciplinary action.

"I certainly could have expressed them more discreetly," Graglia said of his comments. But he allowed that he was not disturbed by a drop in law school minority enrollment attributed to the end of racial preferences.

"Isn't it an enormous advantage if those people (minority students who were admitted without affirmative action) can say they got in the same as everybody else?" Graglia asked. "That's a remarkable gain."

Besides Texas, only California has banned using race and ethnic background in college admissions. But in California, the governor pushed for an end to affirmative action, a change that was approved by the voters.

The Texas ban, however, was imposed by the court.

The case was Hopwood v. Texas. The lead plaintiff was Cheryl Hopwood, a white woman who said the University of Texas School of Law rejected her because its admissions policy unfairly favored minorities.

In March 1996, a federal appeals court surprised college administrators around the country by ruling that a school's goal of

attracting more minority students to create a diverse student body does not justify racial preferences in college admissions.

The U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal, letting the appeals court ruling stand. But Mississippi and Louisiana, the other states in the same court circuit, haven't interpreted the case as strictly as Texas Attorney General Dan Morales did.

That was "very disappointing," particularly for the UT law school, Sharlot said, because it has graduated more black and Mexican-American lawyers combined than any other law school in the country.

"We were not just paying lip service to diversity," the dean said. "We have been unusually successful in attracting and graduating minority students."

But this year, many minority students didn't bother to apply. "If they didn't feel they were welcome, they saved their time and money for other applications."

Last fall, the first-year law school class included 31 black students and 42 Mexican Americans. This year, four blacks and 26 Mexican Americans started law school at UT.

"The fact that not only did we admit many fewer minorities this year but that many fewer applied is a punch in the stomach," said law professor Russell Weintraub.

Demographers project Anglos will be the majority in Texas in about 30 years, Weintraub said, which makes it even more important to educate more black and Latino professionals.

Auburn rules all-male fraternity must admit women

By Eric Bruner

Knight-Ridder Newspapers COLUMBUS, Ga. No women allowed, at least not yet.

Alpha Psi fraternity at Auburn University is ready to fight the university to remain all male.

The fraternity sued the school Monday, challenging Auburn's attempt to force the fraternity to accept women or lose its house and charter, a lawyer for the group said.

The spat between the all-male veterinary fraternity and Auburn officials began earlier this year when the university determined the group was "professional," and therefore subject to federal laws on gender equity. The university ruling was made even though Alpha Psi had been considered a "social" fraternity since it was established at Auburn in 1912.

"Since the university has recognized them for years as a social fraternity, can the university arbitrarily flip-flop and say they are a professional fraternity?" James B. Sprayberry, an attorney for the active members and alumni of Alpha Psi, said Monday.

The fraternity's standing as a social or professional group is the core of the dispute.

Social organizations like the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts are exempt from Title IX of the federal Higher Education Act of 1972, meaning they can operate with all boys or all girls. However, the law prevents discrimination among professional fraternities.

Auburn officials investigated Alpha Psi's status after an official inquiry by about 10 members of the fraternity's "sister" group.

"If they are in breach of their lease, what compensation is due the fraternity for their house?" Sprayberry said.

The Alpha Psi house is owned by fraternity alumni, but the property is leased from the university for a nominal fee. Until this fall, many members lived in the house. Now, the house is nearly vacant.

Among the nine Alpha Psi chapters nationwide, only the Theta chapter at Auburn is considered social and does not admit women. All of the fraternity's members must be men enrolled in veterinary medicine.

"After reviewing their own recruiting materials ... it was the president's decision that they were really a professional fraternity calling themselves a social fraternity," Debra Armstrong-Wright, Auburn's Title IX officer, said in a previous interview. She could not be reached for comment on Monday.

Todd Freeman, a former president of Alpha Psi, said Monday that the fraternity may lose its house and its blessing from the university, but members still don't plan to accept women or another fraternity's name just to stay on campus.

Classes at Auburn resume Tuesday. Also, the deadline for the fraternity's decision was Tuesday.

"In my opinion, it would turn us into a club. It just would not be a fraternity," said Freeman, 25, of Cadiz, Ky.

"There's so much brotherhood and closeness in the group, there's no way that could be achieved with females in the group," he said.

Members claim another professional veterinary fraternity, Omega Tau Sigma, is available at Auburn for women who wish to join.

"We didn't want to break apart this organization, we just wanted to be a part," said Monica McGee, a senior vet student from Selma, Ala.

Chelsea arrives at Stanford; students dole out advice for first daughter

By Maggie Welter CPS

STANFORD, Calif.--There's a popular metaphor used to describe freshmen at Stanford University: Students are like ducks. On the surface, they're cruising nicely, but underneath, they're paddling furiously.

This week Chelsea Clinton is spreading her wings and testing the elite waters of Stanford's campus in Pal Alto, Calif., 20 minutes south of San Francisco. And though she's no ordinary duckling, (traveling to college on Air Force One rather than in a U-Haul), Chelsea, the Clintons and Stanford officials are determined to see to it that she lives as one.

Since Bill Clinton took office in 1992, the press has largely regarded the first daughter as off-limits, for which Hillary Rodham Clinton has thanked them numerous times in public. But now that Chelsea, 17, is a poised and camera-perfect young lady, Mrs. Clinton is concerned that the hands-off attitude might not follow her daughter West. The First Lady used her weekly column to say that Chelsea is "entitled to space and privacy [and] should be left alone to mature as sanely as possible."

Mrs. Clinton had reason for concern. Reporters and photographers began roaming Stanford's sprawling campus about a week before Chelsea's arrival, trying to figure out how to cover the family's arrival despite stringent restrictions.

But Ramin Zahed, a media watcher with The Daily Variety in Los Angeles, predicts interest in the first daughter will fade in a few weeks. "Unless she starts having a love affair with a rock star,

becomes a nun or something extreme, I think the media are going to leave her alone after this initial coverage."

Likewise, Stanford students are expected to respect Chelsea's right to live as a normal college freshman. Stanford, also referred to as "The Harvard of the West" is a hot bed of exceptional students and is no stranger to celebrity students. In fact, Chelsea isn't even the only star of the Class of 2001. Olympic gold medalist Dominique Dawes also will sport the cardinal and white colors this fall. And Fred Savage, former star of "The Wonder Years" has been there for three years, though he is currently on leave making the sitcom "Working." Until golfing great Tiger Woods turned pro, he also was a Stanford student.

Stanford also boasts an impressive alumni list with names like Sigourney Weaver, ABC's Ted Koppel and Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor.

Graduate student Rebecca Leigh Palmer said students will take Chelsea's arrival to campus in stride. "It's possible for celebrities to get around with their own crowd and not be noticed, because the people are generally polite enough to respect privacy," Palmer said. "People are well-educated and aware of the fact that Chelsea's here to get an education," not for show.

But that doesn't mean she won't be shown a good time. "I could kiss Chelsea Clinton and make her a legitimate Stanford freshman," volunteered senior Darron Evans, referring to a popular tradition known as "Full Moon on the Quad." As the tradition goes, freshmen come out to the quad on the night of the first full moon, and with the kiss of a senior are unofficially ordained.

One student said Chelsea should prepare for more than lip-smacking. The male student, who wished to

guard his name from the Secret Service's hit list, advised Chelsea to "bring a lot of condoms. There's a lot of sex going on here." That's enough to give poor Bill Clinton a heart attack.

Others, not wanting to inflict such pain on the leader of the free world, offered a lighter dose of advice for the first daughter. "I would say enjoy your college years here; they go by so fast. Don't come in dead set on a career, explore all kinds of fields, and meet a lot of people," said Dean Hung, a graduate student.

"I could kiss Chelsea Clinton and make her a legitimate Stanford freshman"

Sophomore Jan Hong wouldn't mind being one of those people who Chelsea will meet. "Yeah, I'd like to meet her. I think it's great that she's coming here."

Still, the First Freshman might want to steer clear of graduate student Kristin Thesis-Alvarez. "I was joking with my family that I would like to TA one [of her classes] and flunk her."

One person Chelsea will definitely get to know well is Summer, her roommate in co-ed Wilber Hall. Summer, who has only been identified by first name, was thoroughly checked by the

Secret Service. Their dorm room that she and Chelsea will share is outfitted with bulletproof windows and a steel door.

Just down the hall, a young-looking team of Secret Service agents is living the dorm life. To blend in they will don college garb and get around on mountain bikes. But students needn't worry. A former agent said the service is there to insure Chelsea's safety, not to break up quarters games and turn down loud music.

"What the service wants to protect against is kidnapping so that the President doesn't have to make a decision between family and country," Larry Sheafe, a former Secret Service agent, told NBC. One thing the Secret Service can't prevent is the culture shock Chelsea might feel as she leaves the Beltway bubble. She'll likely see a lot more rollerbladers on Stanford's palm-tree studded campus, and she might want to leave her Starbucks coffee mug behind-- Californians have moved on to the next trend, Jamba Juice smoothies.

But Palmer, herself an East Coast native, warns Chelsea not to be overwhelmed by the shift of attitude. "I'm from Virginia, and I'm shocked at how materialistic Stanford and the Silicon Valley area are. You don't really appreciate the East until you get out here. I would tell her not to give in to materialism," Palmer said.

Palmer can rest assured. Chelsea probably won't have time to let materialism creep into her veins. She wants to go to medical school and become a pediatric cardiologist. A lofty goal, but not an easy one. "Chelsea can prepare to spend a lot of time studying and in the lab if she wants to get into med school," said Hung, a lab assistant, adding that the pre-med path, "is no walk in the park."

University of Michigan student dies; boyfriend shot by police

By College Press Service CPS

ANN ARBOR, Mich.--A man who police said refused to stop stabbing his girlfriend was fatally shot by University of Michigan officers Sept. 23.

The woman, a Michigan senior, later died in surgery.

The attack happened outside the couple's campus apartment shortly after midnight. Police who responded to the call said they ordered the suspect, Kevin V. Nelson, 26, to stop stabbing the woman, identified as 20-year-old Tamara Williams.

The officer fatally shot Nelson when he continued to stab Williams with a knife.

Nelson, who was not a student, was convicted of domestic assault against Williams in October 1995, according to University of Michigan's student affairs office.

Although he was not registered as living in campus housing, his driver's license listed his address as Williams' apartment, the university said.

Williams' 2-year-old daughter, who was not Nelson's child, was later found asleep in her room and has been placed in protective custody, according to news reports.

"Our heart also goes out to the grieving families," said Maureen Hartford, vice president for student affairs at Michigan. "To her mother, her family, and most importantly to her small daughter, we extend our deepest sympathy."

Williams was a student at Michigan's College of Literature, Science and the Arts.

Internet recipe nearly kills liqueur fan

UPI Science News

Doctors say a man picked up an Internet recipe for a fabled liqueur that has been banned since World War I and got more than a taste of early-century bohemian life.

He also got a trip to the emergency room and a brush with death.

In the New England Journal of Medicine, doctors report on treating a man who developed acute kidney failure after drinking oil of wormwood. The plant extract is a key ingredient in the blue-green liqueur absinthe.

The drink, a favorite of Van Gogh and other luminaries, was banned in France in 1915, and later throughout most of the world, because it causes insanity. But eight decades later, the recipe appears on a Web site entitled, "What is Absinthe?"

The doctors, from George Washington University Medical Center, in Washington, D.C., say the patient got the recipe, then purchased the wormwood ingredient through a Web site that sells aromatherapies.

Kidney specialist Dr. Paul Kimmel says the case shows that the Internet can be a medical minefield.