

# THE DAILY TEXAN

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## UT and A&M face similar issues

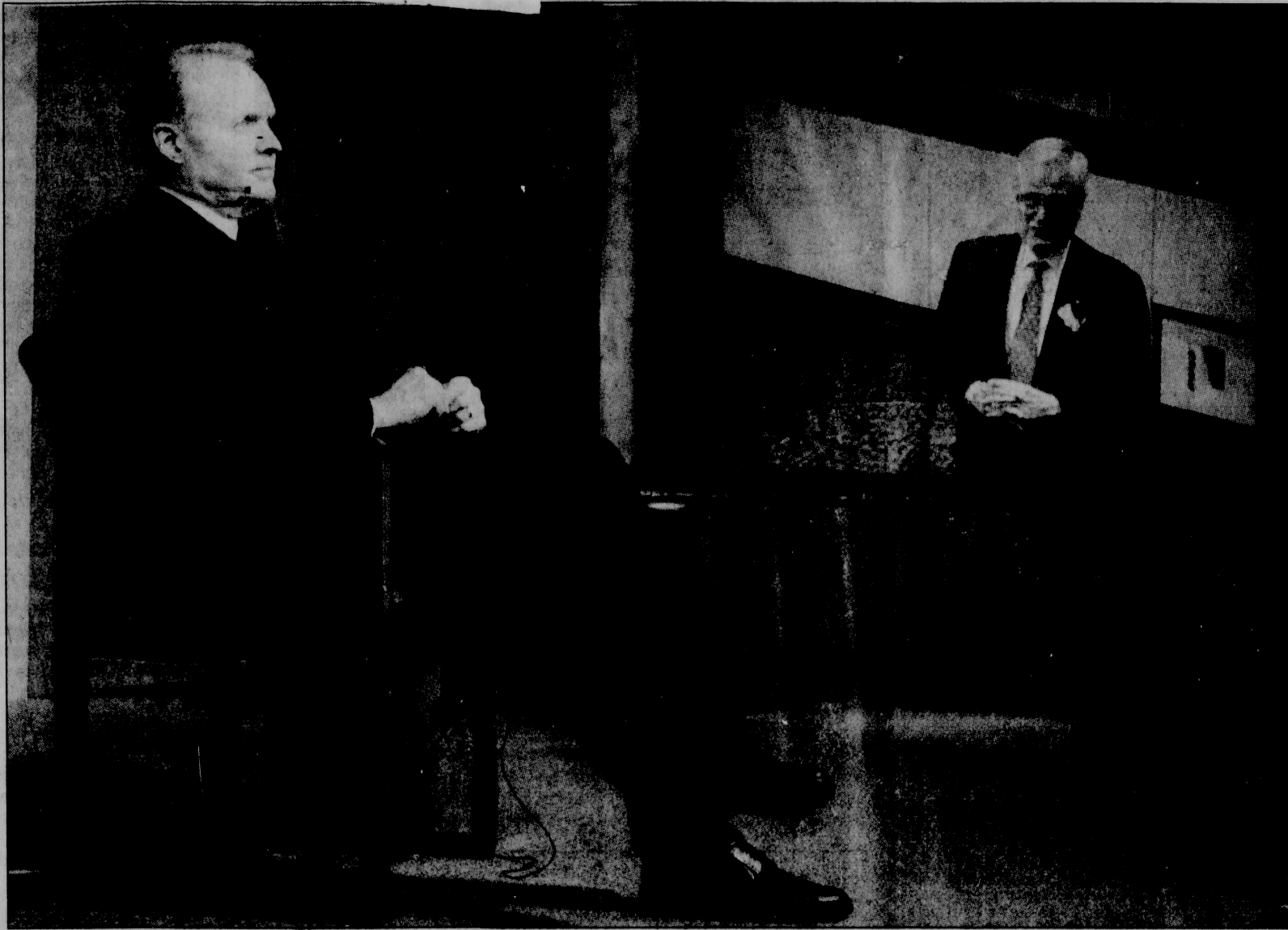


Photo courtesy Texas A&M media relations

UT President Larry Faulkner and Texas A&M President Ray Bowen hold a teleconference with the press Friday in College Station and Austin. Bowen

and Faulkner "switched places" Friday, visiting each others' respective campuses.

### Opportunity gives presidents chance to discuss problems

By Verena Isensee  
Daily Texan Staff

UT President Faulkner switched jobs with Texas A&M President Ray Bowen on Friday and found out the two schools are dealing with similar issues, specifically free speech. The two presidents took part in the event to show that while there is competition between the two schools, both are confronted with similar challenges. Over lunch in Rudder Tower, Faulkner shared his thoughts with A&M student leaders on key issues facing the two flagship universities. During the meeting, Faulkner enumerated some of the issues that "students have been squawking about," including the hotly debated infrastructure fee and the free-speech problem on campus, which the Laycock Committee on assem-

and expression is addressing. "We have had several controversial events over the last several years and groups that have tried to shout down speakers," Faulkner said. "There was also the stormy visit of Justice for All." Faulkner's statement of the scope of the Laycock Committee is inconsistent with the scope that Doug Laycock, the chairman of the committee, has stated — that the committee will not study past campus events in which First Amendment rights might have been obscured. "The Task Force on Assembly and Expression is not investigating individual incidents," Laycock said. "Our charge is to propose an improved set of rules going forward, not to resolve disputes about who did what to whom in the past." Some past events where First Amendment rights might have been muddled include the de facto dismissal of two Texans for Israel students from a Palestine Solidarity Committee meeting, the heckling of speakers Ward Connerly and David Horowitz by audience members, and English professor Alan

Gribben's 1990 departure from the University after reportedly feeling ostracized by his department for objecting to changes in the syllabus of Rhetoric and Composition 306. John Ruskiewicz, the director of the Division of Rhetoric and Composition who also objected to the proposed changes of RHE 306 curriculum, also said it sounded as if President Faulkner has widened the

task force of the committee. "It sounds like [Faulkner] has extended the charge, but that is in his purview to do," Ruskiewicz said. "Personally, I wish they would look into the Connerly and Kissinger incidents. It was damaging enough to the reputation of the school." The Laycock Committee, com-

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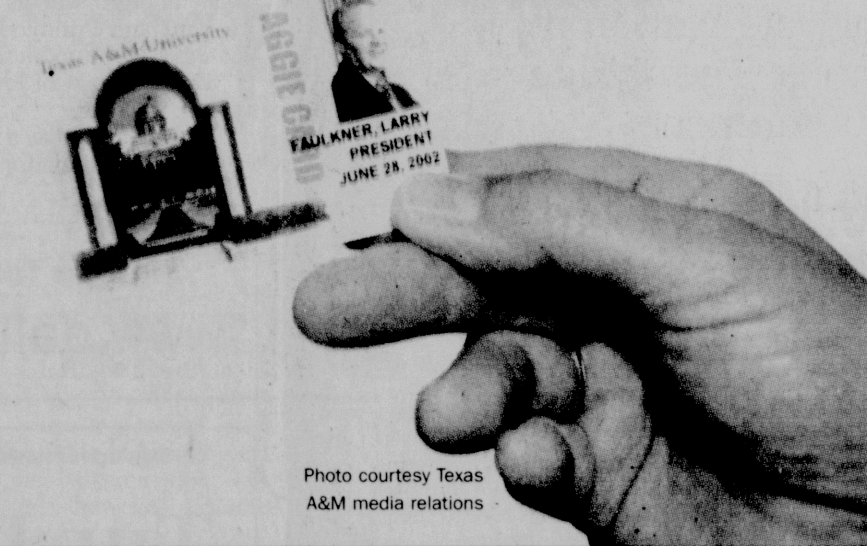


Photo courtesy Texas A&M media relations

## Opposition to project heard by city council

By Peter Walker  
Daily Texan Staff

Nearly 500 people attended the city council meeting Thursday to debate Stratus Properties' plan to build over 1 million square feet of office and retail space in Southwest Austin. The city clerk's office estimated that nearly 800 signatures were collected on two agenda items. Given the high number of duplicates, the clerk's office estimates nearly 500 people attended the meeting, which lasted until 3 a.m. The city council has postponed voting on the Stratus Properties development until July 11.

"We had an amazing citizen turnout," said Colin Clark, communications director for the Save Our Springs Alliance.

The SOS Alliance, which is leading the battle against Stratus Properties, filed a lawsuit against the company last week over enforcement of the SOS ordinance.

The ordinance, approved by voters in 1992 to protect water quality, restricts the amount of building and pavement, also known as impervious cover, that can cover land in the Barton Springs watershed in Southwest Austin.

Clark said the large citizen turnout was promising. "We hope it sends a message to the city council that the citizens aren't satisfied with their repeated deal-making," he said.

Different organizations also argued for each other's interests, Clark said. "It's different and important that you had environmentalists arguing for neighborhood planning and neighbors arguing for the enforcement of the SOS ordinance," Clark said.

Councilmember Will Wynn saw the turnout differently, saying most people came to the meeting with purely environmental motivations.

"A lot of people in this community expect us to protect the environment and the springs," he said. "I believe people came out to ask us to protect the environment."

Wynn added that he trusts the opinions of the city staff scientists and biologists who "feel good" about the proposed deal and its minimal impact on the environment.

"I'm encouraged by it, but this is still a very complex deal," Wynn said.

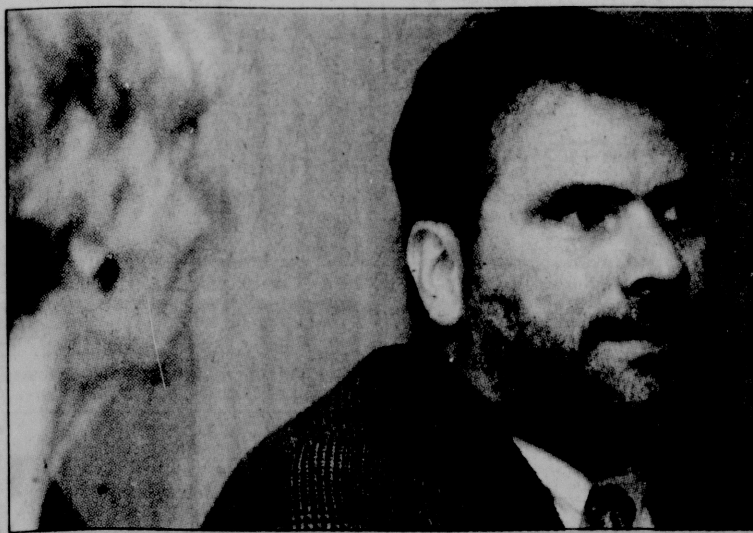
Clark disagreed with the assertion by the city staff and Stratus' lawyers that the development of non-adjacent tracts of land would reduce the impact on the environment. He also said

"There's nothing worse than going to a public meeting and no one's there. Here's an issue obviously a lot of people care about."

Will Wynn,  
city councilmember

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## ACLU members challenge Texas' stance on gay rights



Gerry McCarthy/Daily Texan Staff

ACLU board members John Rundin, right, and Ruth Epstein discuss gay rights Friday at a public forum. Rundin, a classics professor at UT-San Antonio, said Texas sodomy laws are discriminatory and should be repealed.

By Katherine Sayre  
Daily Texan Staff

University of Texas at San Antonio professor John Rundin, at a Friday ACLU meeting concerning issues of sex education, sodomy laws and partner benefits, said Texas still falls behind much of the nation in the area of gay rights.

Texas sodomy law prohibits "deviant sexual behavior" and is one of five states in which the law applies only to same-sex partners, Rundin said at the Marimont Cafeteria in Austin. Sodomy was decriminalized for opposite-sex partners in 1974.

This law is discriminatory because it only applies to same-sex partners, Rundin said.

"A lot of the people who fight to keep the sodomy law often have a

vague idea of what it is to be a gay or a lesbian," he said.

Currently, Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Arkansas and Missouri are the only states that have laws specifically banning sodomy between same-sex partners.

Jonathan Roos, vice chairman of the College Republicans, said that although he is morally against homosexuality, Texas sodomy law is still unconstitutional because it is an invasion of privacy.

"If it was repealed for heterosexuals, then it should be repealed for homosexuals, too," he said.

Rundin also commented on the inclusion of gay issues in health education classes in public schools. Sex education in Texas does not address the issues that gay youth deal with, he said.

"This abstinence-only education basically eliminates gays and

lesbians from the mix," he said. "By speaking about sex only in marriage, gays are excluded because they don't have that option."

Meghan Baker, a board member of the Lesbian, Bisexual and Gay Students' Alliance, said sex education should include a more open attitude.

"I come from College Station, and they didn't address sex at all," said Baker, a Plan II senior. "Sex in general is not discussed enough."

The LBGSA holds a forum each semester in which peer advisors from the health center talk about safe sex, she said.

Roos said homosexuality is a psychological problem that should be discussed with youth at an early age. He also said gender identity problems can lead to homosexuality and should be

identified early so psychological problem can be fixed.

"These are our kids and our friends and members of our society," he said. "They need to be treated as human beings rather than being ignored or pushed aside."

A person is gay because of his or her environment rather than having a specific gene in his or her DNA, Baker said.

"It's more a function of all your experiences," she said. "Some people are introverted and others are extroverted. Some people are gay or bisexual."

The categories of homosexual and heterosexual are societal constructions that were created in the last century, Rundin said. The scientific research of locating a genet-

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Are those old ladies more fun than us, Rae?

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Gimme Hive  
Swedish punk rock band The Hives talk to us about what it feels like to be part of a new rock 'n' roll movement.

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## Activist groups to be evicted from cultural center

Skot Udelino, a volunteer for the Inside Books Project, shelves books Sunday. The Inside Books Project, which provides books for prisoners, will move to a new location on 13th Street and I-35 next month.



Jennifer Soltz /  
Daily Texan Staff

By Patrick Timmons  
Daily Texan Staff

Several local activist organizations will be evicted from the Mexican-American Cultural Center at the end of July following the termination of the center's contract with the city.

Among the displaced tenants is The Inside Books Project, a non-profit organization that sends free books to Texas inmates, which will move to the Progressive Arts Collective located at Heritage House on Interstate 35 and East 13th Street.

"We're really doing the work the government ought to be doing," said David Martinez, who helped found the IBP in 1997 after volunteering at a similar organization in San Francisco, Calif.

The city of Austin will clear the site to make way for a multimillion dollar home for a new Mexican-American exhibition center.

Those involved with the site at 600 River Street recognize the foundation of the exhibition center has a tumultuous 20-year his-

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