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State Senate to vote on ending Rising Junior Exam

KENDRA CAREY
Contributing Writer

Arkansas' Senate is scheduled to vote Monday to repeal the Rising Junior Exam and send it to Gov. Mike Beebe to become law. Associated Student Government recently endorsed repeal of the exam, required by law since 1995 but dismissed by many students and administrators as meaningless.

The bill, sponsored by Sen. Sue Madison, D-Fayetteville, and approved 24-1 on Feb. 24, amends the original Senate bill to add its House of Representatives sponsor, Rep. Betty Pickett, D-Conway. The House approved the measure on March 6 by an 84-1 vote.

"If everything happens as expected, then the last Rising Junior Exam has already been given," Sen. Madison said.

The score on the test meant nothing to students' progress, said Bernard Madison, former Dean of the Fulbright College.

"They only had to sit for the exam, and I know of no consequences to an institution for low scores," Madison said.

Lisa Summerford, assistant dean of the Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences, echoed Madison's view.

"It's the most ridiculous waste of resources," Summerford said. "Students don't take it seriously, and the results - I've never seen them. Nothing comes to the colleges. I don't know who gets any feedback."

Sophomores and juniors with 45 or more hours of credit are required to take the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency, the official name of the Rising Junior Exam. It tests students' skills in several modules including writing, mathematics, critical thinking and science reasoning and was mandated in Arkansas as part of a nationwide movement demanding accountability. The legislation required the state Department of Higher Education to report results of the exam annually to the legislature.

The lack of feedback enters into students' reaction to the test.

"Beyond the fact that no standardized test allows for the proper interpretation of individuals, this particular one is

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Legislature passes international education bill

WHITNEY HAYNES
Staff Writer

White gravy and fried green tomatoes can be more than just Southern delicacies.

A steaming slab of chicken fried steak and the crunch of ranch-dipped fried vegetables transform into important cultural tests when getting an international education in Arkansas.

"They're good, but I think I'll have a glass of water for dinner," said Luiz Koldo Oleaga, while eating lunch at a popular restaurant next to the state capitol. Oleaga is an exchange student from Madrid, Spain, studying business for a year at the UA.

Oleaga was one of two international students who traveled to Little Rock for the first time Wednesday, joining the staff of the UA Office of Study Abroad and representatives from other universities across the state to support a resolution encouraging the growth of international education in Arkansas.

The resolution, which passed overwhelmingly in both the state House and Senate, won't give more money to facilitate study abroad and international exchange.

However, "it sends a message to the state and to Congress," said DeDe Long, the director for the UA study abroad office, who first recognized the need for the resolution in Arkansas. "It shows that international education should be a priority for Arkansas universities."

The resolution is important for the UA because, with the legacy of Sen. J. William Fulbright, the school has a history of supporting international education, said Richard Hudson, UA vice-chancellor for governmental relations.

"We are one of the leading institutions in terms of international study," Hudson said.

International education, including both Arkansas students who go abroad and international students who come to Arkansas, will "ensure that future students and future leaders are prepared to meet the challenges of a global society," according to House Concurrent Resolution 1004,

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WE'RE IN! Hogs slip in to NCAA Tournament after strong showing in Atlanta

TRAVELER STAFF

Arkansas went into this week's Southeastern Conference Tournament in Atlanta knowing that it needed to at least make the championship game for any chance at an at-large berth in the NCAA Tournament.

Arkansas made it and the Razorbacks are dancing for the second year in-a-row.

The Razorbacks will face the USC Trojans Friday in the first round of the NCAA Tournament in Spokane, Wash.

Arkansas made it in as the No. 12 seed from the East Region after finishing the season 21-13.

The Razorbacks won games over South Carolina, Vanderbilt and Mississippi State in the SEC Tournament before falling the championship game 77-56 to Florida, Sunday. The loss to the Gators snapped a five-game winning streak for Arkansas.

The winner of the Arkansas-USC game will face the winner of Texas-New Mexico State in the second round of the tournament.

For more on Arkansas' run through the SEC Tournament, see the Sports section on Page 9.



GRACE RILEY Senior Staff Photographer

HOGS vs. USC March 16 on CBS

The Arkansas basketball team has as much of a reason to celebrate as ever. Despite a season of ups and downs and what many perceived to be an extreme long shot, the Hogs were selected to compete in the NCAA Tournament. They will begin play on Friday against USC in Spokane, Washington.

Maple Hill dorm to offer 'intellectual community feel'

PAMELA ACOSTA
Senior Staff Writer

Scheduled to open next fall, Maple Hill, a multi-use suite-style residence hall, will include two different programs to enhance academic and living experience for residents.

Both programs, First Year Experience and Sophomore Experience, are designed to meet the scholastic and social needs of residents through academic, professional and extracurricular opportunities, according to the UA Housing Web site.

In general, the Living/Learning Community will have a more academic focus and its programs will reflect that.

Some students want "more of an intellectual community feel," said Becky Howard, student development specialist for housing.

"They want to feel like they're living on a college campus," she said. And some students "feel like they're living in 'Animal House.'"

Holcombe has a capacity of 140 residents and the community aspect is easier to create with those numbers than with 700 residents, she said.

Tracy Fortenberry, a UA freshman, got accepted into the program and is excited to move in next fall, she said.

"Just the aspect of something completely new to the campus is exciting," she said. "I think it would be cool to help freshmen while it was still fresh in my mind."

The Living Learning Community is really focused on the First Year Experience and trying to get freshmen ready for college life, Fortenberry said.

Holcombe organizers tried to make residents be part of the community and "the lack of involvement was my own fault," but the required participation in Maple Hill will get her more involved in the community, Fortenberry said.

"I'll be forced to make those friendships and

it'll be part of my schedule," she said.

The program requires students living in Maple Hill to take part in specific events throughout the year. Freshman, for example, have to attend Razorback Outreach for Community and Knowledge camp, which is sponsored by the First Year Experience office. The three-day camp allows for incoming freshman to form a social network to ease the transition into college, according to the FYE Web site.

The application for sophomores also lists a number of expectations that those students must follow while living in Maple Hill.

For example, students must conduct themselves in the appropriate manner and contribute to the community, serve in the community accountability board, speak with the resident assistants on a regular basis, participate in two community service projects inside and outside Maple Hill hall and participate in the

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LUKE FREEMAN Staff Photographer

BUSH PROTEST IN BRAZIL



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EMILE PHANEUF Contributing Photographer

People protest President Bush March 8 in São Paulo, Brazil.

UA club restores wetlands

DUSTIN WARDLOW
Contributing Writer

A group of UA students is helping to change the perception that wetlands are regarded as wastelands. The Crop, Soil and Environmental Sciences Club has been working to restore wetlands at Bryce Davis Park in Fayetteville.

The goal of the project is to restore the wetland within the park to its natural state and increase public awareness about wetlands.

"Wetlands are misunderstood and not appreciated," said Chuck West, a UA professor and the CSES Club adviser. "This project helps the residents of the area realize the importance of their surrounding environment."

Every other weekend the club works to restore the wetlands by picking up trash, transplanting plants grown in greenhouses and field pots, restoring native grasses and wetland plant species and removing invasive species such as Japanese Honeysuckle.

About three-fourths of Arkansas wetlands have been destroyed in the last 50 years, vice-president Josh Meyer said. Wetlands are disappearing at a rate of 300,000 acres annually in the United States alone, according to the Missouri Botanical Garden's Web site.

"It is vital that we work to restore these wetlands to their natural state," Meyer said. He stressed the importance of restoring the wetlands, adding that these wetlands control flooding, slow down water flow to allow contaminants to filter out, permit the ground water to recharge and provide habitat for wildlife.

Because of their work, the club was awarded the 2006 Volunteer Group of the Year by the City of Fayetteville's Department of Parks and Recreation.

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