

WEATHER



TODAY
High 49, Low 27
TOMORROW
High 61, Low 38

WHAT'S INSIDE

SPORTS

Women's basketball travels to Texas A&M.
Page 3

OPINION

The business of elections
Page 4

ENTERTAINMENT

A good reason to get HBO.
Page 5

TODAY'S QUOTE

"Therefore you have seconds to decide what you can do to save your life because sometimes waiting for help isn't an option."

— Lee Arning
Page 1

SMUDAILYCAMPUS.COM

Last week's poll:

Is it too early for Christmas music and decorations?

62% Yes
38% No
Out of 176 votes

Check out this week's poll at smudailycampus.com

TOP STORIES TODAY

1 **DEMOCRATS: OBAMA NEEDS HANDS-ON ECONOMIC APPROACH**

WASHINGTON — Democrats are growing impatient with President-elect Barack Obama's refusal to inject himself in the major economic crises confronting the country. Obama has sidestepped some policy questions by saying there is only one president at a time

2 **INDIA NAMES PAKISTANI MASTERMINDS, DATE PLOT TO 07**

NEW DELHI — A Pakistani militant group apparently used an Indian operative as far back as 2007 to scout targets for the elaborate plot against India's financial capital, authorities said Thursday, a blow to Indian officials who have blamed the deadly attacks entirely on Pakistani extremists.

3 **CARMAKERS' BAILOUT PLEAS HIT SENATE SKEPTICISM**

WASHINGTON — Desperate U.S. automakers ran into fresh obstacles from skeptical lawmakers Thursday as they appealed with rising urgency — and a new dose of humility — for a \$34 billion bailout. Without help, said one senator, "we're looking at a death sentence."

RECYCLE ME



Diploma Deficit

By John Coleman
Associate News Editor
jpcolema@smu.edu

On a crisp morning in May, senior Bryan Melton will be walking across the stage smiling and shaking hands with various professors and deans, Flash photography will be nearly blinding him from his family. Reaching the end of the stage during the spring graduation commencement for him will signify the attainment of the goal he has been striving for over the last four years.

Little did he know that he would be walking away empty handed. Melton recalls pulling all-night-

ers before tests, hours of group work and days spent in engineering labs all leading to one moment, one piece of paper.

"All of the hard work, four years of putting in all my effort were all driving toward the pinnacle moment where you get to hold up your diploma," Melton said. "The ceremony almost isn't complete unless you have that diploma."

Melton and other seniors graduating in May will not be receiving diplomas at the commencement ceremony. Due to a change in the academic calendar, there is not sufficient time for the various schools to clear students for graduation. They

instead will be receiving a blank diploma placeholder and will later receive the actual diploma in the mail.

"It's like middle school all over again, just getting an empty shell that is meaningless," Melton said.

According to Associate Provost Thomas Tunks, the decision to withhold diplomas was made by the Provost's office. The decision came under consideration when the academic calendar was changed, and the time between finals and commencement was too short to clear students for graduation Tunks said.

Tunks said that it is not at all un-

SEE "DIPLOMA" ON PAGE 6



Photo by Casey Lee, *The Daily Campus*
Sample graduation materials rest in a display case in Hughes-Trigg.

Christmas time is here, happiness and cheer



Photo by Casey Lee, *The Daily Campus*
A Christmas tree stands in front of Dallas Hall in preparation for Celebration of Lights, which will take place this Sunday at 7 p.m. The event involves caroling, a reading of The Christmas Story by SMU's President Turner and the lighting of the tree.

SMU implements new emergency awareness campaign

By Whitney Branson
Contributing Writer
wbranson@smu.edu

In the case of an emergency, SMU will be ready to take action. SMU has created a new program in order to prepare students for any emergencies that may arise. SMU AWARE devised a three-step program for students called "KNOW WHAT TO DO."

The program was created for the sole mission of wanting people to know what to do in case of emergency.

"We want people to know the simple things that they can do to protect and save their lives if any emergency happens on campus," Lee Arning, Director of Emergency Preparedness, said.

The program was initially created as a part of the National Preparedness Month and breaks emergencies into three categories: Evacuation, Lockdown and Shelter in Place.

Emergencies have occurred at several universities over the past year, which brings up the need for the program. There have been three university shootings, hurricanes and tornadoes that have hit universities.

"When you KNOW WHAT TO DO, you've learned core skills that could

literally save your life whether you experience a severe weather event, a hazardous chemical release, a fire, or a shooter on campus," Arning said.

SMU is located in the "tornado alley," which is a reason for this program. In just April and May, there were 750 tornados in the United States. Most of these occurred in tornado-prone areas such as Texas. With "KNOW WHAT TO DO," students will now be prepared in case of a tornado.

The program is also critical for SMU in case a shooter comes on campus. One of the steps of the three-step program is teaching individuals what to do in case this situation arises.

"When a shooting occurs, police must gather and then get into special protective gear before they can enter. But we all know that shootings take place in a matter of seconds," Arning said. "Therefore you have seconds to decide what you can do to save your life because sometimes waiting for help isn't an option."

SMU is the only known university that has created such a program according to Kristie Vento, principal of inChorus Marketing and Promotion.

"I don't believe there are any other universities that have implemented

such a program, which makes SMU very forward-thinking in this effort," Kristie Vento said.

There are various colleges that have printouts to prepare students, but SMU is one of the only schools that have used the events and one-on-one interactions with students.

"SMU regularly conducts evacuation and shelter-in-place exercises for all of our buildings, where some schools only do exercises for their residence halls," Arning said. "Our exercises are another opportunity to inculcate the "KNOW WHAT TO DO" messages."

The next event for "KNOW WHAT TO DO" will take place in the spring. The program will highlight Shelter-In-Place because it will be right around the severe weather season. However, there will be ongoing evacuation and shelter-in-place exercises throughout the semester.

Students have had firsthand experience with the precautions, due to drills while living in the dorms.

"It reassuring to know that there is a plan of action in case our lives are in danger," junior Erin McKie said.

To learn more about SMU's preparedness plan, visit smu.edu/emergency.

Soldiers fight for education

By Rita Zech
Contributing Writer
rzech@smu.edu

Petty Officer 3rd Class John Venzon of the United States Navy returned home two years ago after serving four years at sea. Now he would like to go to college.

Venzon said it would be helpful for returning vets if colleges would offer more services and courses to give veterans an easier transition when they return home. Venzon also said the Veteran's Administration has people they can go to for information about how to utilize their benefits, but more is needed outside the VA.

"There's only one course you have to take before you get out that explains all your benefits, and this needs to be extended to the college level," he said.

Even more new veterans are expected to return to college then ever before, and the new G.I. Bill, called the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act, will allow them the assistance they need to obtain a college education and establish the foundation for life beyond the military.

The Department of Veterans Affairs reported the new G.I. Bill covers public education for most veterans who served after 9/11 and minimizes the burden of the cost of private tuition. Members of the National Guard and the Reserves are also included under this new bill. Stipends for housing and books will also be available.

Senator John McCain and President Bush did not support this new bill because of fear that it would make service members choose college over re-enlistment.

The bill went on to pass and was signed into law on June 30, 2008. Thousands of vets are expected to take advantage of the new bill, which becomes effective Aug. 1, 2009.

The Department of Veterans Affairs reported that more

SEE "VETERANS" ON PAGE 6

How to survive final exams

By Deanna Vella
Contributing Writer
dvella@smu.edu

Don't panic. Yes, finals are a big deal because they are a big chunk of the final grade. And yes, finals can take three hours to complete, not to mention the amount of time it takes to prepare for them. And yes, finals can be cumulative. But students can survive them.

The Altshuler Learning Enhancement Center has provided students with "finals packets" in an effort to help them succeed. The LEC designed these packets so students can have a more organized way of tackling the last exams of the semester.

Patricia Feldman, the associate director of the LEC, has one word of advice for students.

"Plan," she said, "and plan on paper. This will stop the fear and get the momentum started."

Finals can be a scary thing for most freshmen because these exams are new them, but with the proper planning and efficient studying, anyone can be on their way to achieving "A's" on all of exams.

The LEC suggests writing the dates and times of all your exams on a calendar. It will help students visualize their test dates. Next, buy all necessary supplies needed to take the final and prepare for it including pens, pencils, erasers, calculators, highlighters and index cards. Students need to prepare themselves before indulging into the tedious task of studying.

Students should prepare themselves to study before the day before their exam. They should use as much time as they can to study for their exams.

"Plan ahead and don't wait till the last minute," said Ben Koopferstock, academic resident assistant in Boaz. "If you wait until the last day to study for your final you won't do as well."

Once a student is prepared, they can begin studying for their tests.

According the LEC finals packet, studying does not mean rereading materials from class. Rereading is not studying; it's rereading. The LEC suggests making summary sheets for tests and lecture notes: Boil ten pages of notes down to one and write the key topic at the top of the page. Students can also create mind maps (like spider webs or tree branches) rather than formal outlines. Or try making diagrams or flow charts to show a process or sequence of events. The possibilities are endless. Find the method that works best for you.

If a student is an auditory learner, however, and finds these methods don't work for him or her, the LEC finals packet suggests that the student try reading notes aloud or discussing notes in study groups. The more a student hears the information, the longer that student will remember it.

Staying healthy is imperative for high test performance according to Jamila Benkato, the academic resident assistant in Smith and Perkins.

"Sleep," said Benkato. "You are more productive if you study a few less hours and get more sleep than you are if you study a few more hours with less sleep."

Scientifically speaking, a person's brain processes information while sleeping, so pulling all nighters before a test will not benefit a student. The LEC suggests students get about eight hours of sleep before their exam. That's enough sleep to get a student well rested and ready to take the test.

Benkato also said that eating healthy is another great way to stay alert for finals.

"Don't just eat junk food and coffee to stay away," Benkato said. "Eat an actual balanced meal with protein."

For student help, the LEC is open during finals week for extra tutoring needs and for just a quiet place to study. Call the LEC for tutoring hours at 214-784-3648.

SAFETY TIPS

EVACUATION

- Leave the Building. Don't use elevators.
- Assist the Disabled.
- Take valuables and cell phones with you.
- Proceed to assembly area outside.

LOCKDOWN

- Hide under furniture; turn out lights, close blinds, and barricade or lock doors.
- Spread out on the floor, stay away from windows
- Warn others: Call 911
- Wait for ALL CLEAR by police

SHELTER IN PLACE

- Seek refuge inside a building and remain there.
- Turn off ventilation systems.
- Keep tuned to media, if possible.
- Wait for ALL CLEAR from campus officials.