

# THE DAILY TEXAN

Serving the University of Texas Since 1900

Top Stories 4/26/06

## Student EMS service in the works, awaiting SG approval

By Mark Yeh

[Correction Appended]

Whether someone on campus has cardiac arrest or a hangnail in need of a bandage, some students hope a student-run emergency medical service program will soon be there to help.

Two UT freshmen and an alumna are working with Student Government, UT administrators and Austin-Travis County Emergency Medical Services to create the Longhorn Student Emergency Medical Services program, which will be operated by trained students. The program was proposed at Tuesday's SG meeting.

"The service they're going to provide for the University is going to be amazing," said SG Vice President Marcus Cenicerros.

Cenicerros, a government junior, said the service could help both students and faculty members. Vice President for Student Affairs Juan Gonzalez, who will decide the fate of the program, expressed interest in it and said he has created a committee to investigate the feasibility of the service.

Recommendations by the committee, which includes administrators from University Health Services, the UT Police Department and the Division of Housing and Food Services, may be released in two or three weeks, said nursing freshman Brandon Glenn, who is working on the project. The estimated budget for the service, which includes two modified Ford Explorers used to respond to calls, is \$152,000, he said.

Cenicerros said cost and liability issues are likely to be topics of discussion in deciding the future of the program. SG plans to create an agency to help fund the program and inform the student body about it, he said.

The service intends to respond to medical calls on campus 24 hours a day and nearly 365 days a year, excluding the days when dormitories are closed, Glenn said. In addition to major emergencies, such as cardiac arrest and trauma from car accidents, it will respond to minor incidents, such as upset stomachs and alcohol-related illnesses that aren't too serious. Currently, Austin-Travis County Emergency Medical Services answers all such incidents and Austin Fire Department is dispatched to all but minor emergencies.

If it becomes a reality, Glenn will be director of Longhorn Student EMS and said the program will be the first responders on campus. However, regular emergency units will still service the University area, he said. Glenn said the UT service will operate under the same protocol as Austin-Travis County EMS. Glenn estimates there will be about 40 certified students working.

Any student can become certified after attending a two-to-three-week class and passing a national certification test, he said. Students in the program can choose to be certified at two levels - one for basic medical treatment, the other to work in an ambulance. The classes are not UT classes and do not count for credit, Glenn said. Students who choose not to get certified can still stay involved by working first aid during special events, such as football games, he said. Longhorn Student EMS, if approved, will eventually become a student organization,

but it is already having its first meetings. This Thursday, the group will meet in the Governor's Room of the Texas Union at 6 p.m.

No issues came to a vote Tuesday because SG didn't make quorum. SG will have an emergency meeting at 10 a.m. Saturday in the Student Services Building, Cenicerros said.