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"Forty-two spaces are a lot to replace when it's faculty and staff and when they have the least of all [parking spaces]," said Bell.

One solution raised was to create a temporary lot somewhere in the vicinity of Hauser or RJR.

"We're gonna try to cut and trim some spaces in the RJR lot to help...we're gonna try to make room over there if it permits us," said Bell.

For a short term, this lot will be closed to make way for the new entrance into campus which runs straight through from Stadium drive to Martin Luther King Jr. drive.

Once the new main entrance way is completed, drivers will be able to enter the campus but according to Quintal, if a driver wants to exit the campus this same way, he or she better think again.

"We will not be able to come out [exit]...we will certainly be able to use it as an entrance...but this is a very busy intersection and for us to be able to come out, there's some

changes in traffic patterns that will need to occur to MLK before they (City Officials) will allow us to do it."

Chief Bell added that he thought it would be hard to control because people are naturally going to want to exit the way they entered the campus, but he and Quintal are working on a solution to this issue.

How long the exit will be useless is unknown, but the process to get it active could endure for years.

So why the construction, why now?

The idea has been in the making for a while. Reconstructing of the campus has been in the planning process for about four years according to Quintal.

"Probably it happened...back around '99 when the Office of the President did an assessment of the facilities, completed by Eva Kline and Associates. The office of the president hired this consultant to do an assessment, both quality and quantity, of our physical space on campus and the recommendation of that study was a 10-year capital plan. That was then divided into two phases — phase one and phase



A car turns in the opposite direction after discovering that Vargrave has been cut off to traffic.

Photo by Janell Lewis

two ... And that was then included in the bond referendum that was approved by the voters, phase one was, in 2000 and that's when the project was funded."

Not only is the main site of campus blocking off passage ways and getting a full make over, but right across the street, one of the main roads for those resident students and even faculty and administration is being blocked off.

Vargrave Street has been blocked off for several weeks since the beginning of the 2003 fall semester. This has also created an inconvenience as it is causing many students, visitors, and the administration connected with the Rams Commons, Wilson Hall, and the Anderson Center to find alternate routes to their destination.

Students and faculty have been dodging the cones blocking the crossing of the bridge at the

end of Vargrave close to the Anderson Center, but Chief Bell said that is not a good idea. He said, although nothing seems to be going on, the bridge is definitely closed for a good reason.

"Vargrave has several problems with it," said Bell, "the biggest issue with Vargrave is that the bridge is not safe ... it needs repair."

The work to the Vargrave bridge falls under the hands of the city and, therefore, Chief Bell has no control over that area.

"I don't know how long it's going to take," he added. "I was hoping that it would be repaired by December. I just believe bridge work is tedious work ... I think it's going to be at least until the end of the year, before it's repaired, I can't say for sure."

While the main campus may not look the best now, but in the end it should be something that every ram is proud of.

"When you guys come back [in January 2003 and again in August 2004] all that area will be completed, though, and that'll be gorgeous ... but we'll be starting some other construction then!"

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lawmakers assert that Democrats are quickly making up ground that they lost to Republicans.

"I believe that the image has been damaged," said Laredo Sen. Judith Zaffirini, one of the 11 Texas Senate Democrats who fled to Albuquerque, N.M., in protest of a congressional redistricting plan.

"I believe that this will backlash on George Bush during his re-election campaign. He cannot talk about reaching out to minorities and at the same time stand back and do nothing as his underlings are discriminating against minorities through redistricting."

Not so, counter Republicans, who say that any ill-will over redistricting will be short-lived and lost on voters more preoccupied with schools and the economy than with who represents them in Congress.

Although the two sides dispute the meaning of the constitutional amendment election and who's doing better in reaching out to Latinos, there is little question that Hispanics will be a crucial constituency in the 2004 presidential election and beyond.

One million more Hispanics voted in the 2000 presidential elections than in the 1996 contest nationwide, and they are now considered the nation's largest ethnic minority group at nearly 40 million strong.

In Texas, Hispanics have seen their share of the electorate rise from 10 percent in 1994 to 18 percent in

2002, according to the William C. Velasquez Institute. That might explain the feverish appeals that both parties are making, such as the bilingual debate held among Democratic candidates recently in New Mexico, and Republican outreach efforts in Texas and around the United States.

But given Latinos' historic preference for Democrats, many influential Republicans say it won't be good enough to maintain the status quo.

In a December 2001 analysis of the Latino vote from 2000, Republican National Committee pollster Matthew Dowd said Republicans would have to maintain their "upward trend" with Hispanic voters in order to remain competitive.

"Otherwise, Latino population growth will simply be a recipe for Democratic gains," he wrote.

In the last presidential race, Bush got an estimated 35 percent of the Latino vote, more than any Republican since President Reagan's landslide victory in 1984.

Some critics say it will be tough to pull that off again. A summer survey conducted for the New Democratic Network showed Bush had suffered a 10-point drop in popularity among Latinos.

"The goodwill that President Bush went to such lengths to build with Hispanics seems to be eroding," Sergio Bendixen, who conducted the poll, said when the results were released.

"Latinos really feel that someone who presented himself as their friend has now let them down."

On the other hand, a poll by Latino Opinions conducted in August found Bush in a statistical dead heat with Howard Dean, then the leading candidate for the presidential nomination; Sen. Hilary Rodham Clinton, D-N.Y., won a hypothetical matchup 47 percent to 31 percent.

That was before Gen. Wesley Clark joined the field and shook up the Democratic race.

To the extent that Democrats might be poised to strengthen their hold on Latino voters in Texas, Fort Worth Republican political consultant Bryan Eppstein points to past examples of opportunities lost.

He noted, for example, that multimillionaire Hispanic Tony Sanchez, a Democrat, lost the 2002 gubernatorial race to Republican Gov. Rick Perry despite spending a record \$67 million. Perry got about a third of the Hispanic vote in that race, according to a Zogby exit poll.

Other past candidates, such as Dan Morales, the former attorney general waiting to go to federal prison on official corruption charges, and Lena Guerrero, who lost a railroad commission bid after lying on her resume, have dealt a blow to Democratic Hispanic outreach efforts, Eppstein said.

"The highest ranking Hispanic officeholders who have aspired to ascend into statewide leadership in Texas have all had dubious demises, and that has set back Hispanic political opportunity more than any one thing," Eppstein said.

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they weren't used to seeing African Americans, but I had no problem as far as calling names, said Stanley.

Senior molecular biology major Porsha Garner carried the same sentiments.

"I never experienced any type of racial tensions," Garner said. They (research professors) tried to understand and help us as much as they could."

Garner, like Stanley, said she could't verify Adam's situation, or falsify it.

"I can't speak for anyone else, or say what's true or what's not, but I know me, Camille and the other girl didn't experience anything like that."

Dr. Kim Tan is the MIRT program director at WSSU.

He says that there has never been a case like Adams' before.

"In the eight years that we've been involved with this program, we've never had this problem," said Tan.

Tan, who joined the research students in the first three weeks of their trip, had to write an incident report for the university. He says that the professor that Adams worked under also

wrote a report describing the incidents. The university cannot allow The News Argus access to these documents concerning the case due to legalities.

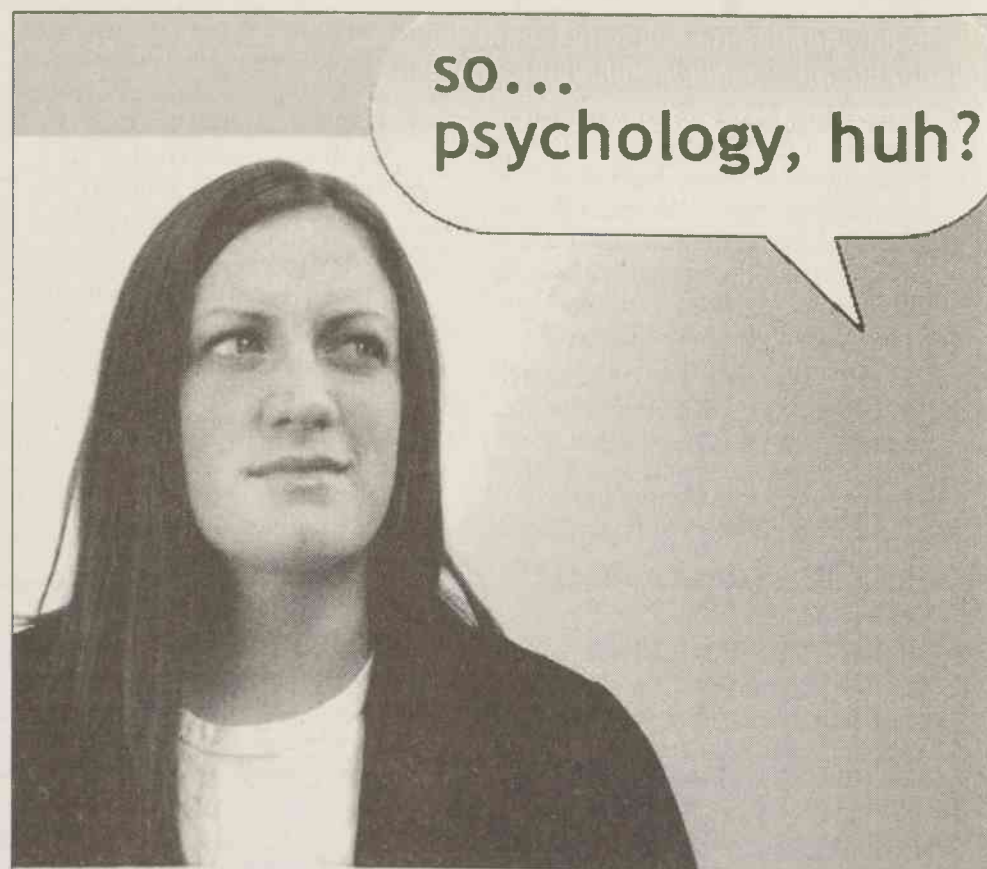
Tan says the MIRT program, which operates under the National Institute of Health, or NIH, is a very competitive program that teams up with top notch schools in different countries. He says the incidents of one student is not a reflection of the prestigious program.

"If a student did not take full advantage because of misunderstanding, it is

our student's loss, not the program's loss."

"I can't speak for anyone else, or say what's true or what's not, but I know me, Camille and the other girl didn't experience anything like that."

— Portia Garner
MIRT research student



Way to go buddy.
You finally worked up the nerve to talk to that girl from Psych 101, but you still sounded like a doofus with nothing intelligent to say. That's where we come in.



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