

ARIZONA DAILY WILDCAT

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The University of Arizona, Tucson

ASUA fee may fund free-ride program

By **Natasha Bhuyan**
STAFF WRITER

A proposed activity fee isn't on the ballot yet, but one organization is already eyeing the money.

Cats RIDDE, a program that would offer free rides home to intoxicated students and their friends, has been struggling to acquire the funds it needs to pay for insurance and rental cars.

Jason Cobb, the president and co-founder of Cats RIDDE, said he hopes students vote for the \$15 to \$20 activity fee, which will be on a special ballot in April, because some of the money might fund his program.

If a \$15 per semester fee were passed, it would generate more than \$1 million.

"The national support for this program is awesome," said Cobb, a molecular and cellular biology senior. "We just really need the community to rally behind us."

Cats RIDDE, which stands for Cats Realizing the Importance of a Designated Driving Escort, would operate from 10 p.m. to 3 a.m. Thursday, Friday and Saturday. It is based on similar programs around the nation, such as Texas A&M's CARPOOL, Western Michigan University's DriveSafe and the University of Georgia's WatchDawgs.

"It's all about keeping the community safe," Cobb said. "You should never have to make the choice of

See RIDDE/13

ALL THAT JAZZ



Crystal Stark, a music and music education senior, pulled out all the stops last night at the AZ Jazz Two concert at Crowder Hall. Despite being sick with a cold, Stark performed two solo pieces.

EVAN CARAVELLI/Arizona Daily Wildcat

Athletes' grad rate higher than UA's overall

Scholarship athletes show promising graduation rates

By **Jeff Sklar**
SENIOR WRITER

Sixty-five percent of UA scholarship athletes who entered the university in 1997 graduated by last year, 18 percent more than the overall UA graduation rate.

The number is also 8 percent higher than athlete graduation rates in the previous year.

In 2002, scholarship athletes had a 60 percent graduation rate. Even that lay significantly above the overall UA graduation rate of 55 percent, which President Peter Likins has called an embarrassment.

"I think this 65 percent graduation rate is amazing, given that our student body (rate) as a whole is 55 percent," Likins said recently.

Later this semester, when the NCAA releases graduation rates from universities across the country, the UA will learn how its most recent class of graduating scholarship athletes stacks up.

If past trends hold steady, the jump in the graduation rate could push the UA from eighth in the Pacific 10 Conference, its ranking with the class of 2002, closer to the middle of the pack.

"We've been very fortunate," said athletic director Jim Livengood. "We haven't had very many people leave (early), that type of thing."

Sixty-five percent of Arizona State University scholarship athletes who entered in 1996 graduated by 2002, putting ASU fifth in the Pac-10. Stanford University had the highest rate that year, at 84 percent.

But UA athletics officials also argue that the 65

See ATHLETE/13

UA prof, alum delegates for Dem convention

By **Bob Purvis**
LEGISLATIVE CORRESPONDENT

PHOENIX — When Democratic delegates from across the country roll into Boston this summer for the national convention to select their party's presidential candidate, not all the red, white and blue on the floor will be purely patriotic.

For at least two of the delegates heading out of Tucson, the colors will reflect their close ties to the UA.

UA research professor and Rep. Ted Downing D-Tucson, and aerospace engineering student Erik Trevino, will go to Beantown to represent Tucson at the Democratic Party's most important gathering. Downing will be sent on behalf of presidential candidate John Kerry, while Trevino, who took the semester off to work for the Wesley Clark campaign, will represent Clark.

Delegates are chosen by party committees within each congressional district. Presidential candidates are allotted delegates according to the number of votes they received in the state's presidential primary by district.

See DELEGATES/10

'Passion' still creating controversy

By **Sarah Stanton**
STAFF WRITER

The controversy surrounding "The Passion of the Christ" has yet to die down, nearly two weeks after it was released.

More than 100 people gathered in the Integrated Learning Center last night to express their anger, frustration or awe with the most controversial film of the year, released Feb. 25.

The panel discussion offered an important opportunity for interfaith religious dialogue, said Mark Krell, moderator of the forum and assistant professor of Judaic studies.

"This film really presented us with an opportunity for dialogue. People need to talk about it," he said.

Robert Burns, the chairman of religious studies at the UA, said he felt the movie was positive because it promoted the reading of the Gospels.

"For Christians, I think it's brought many Christians back to reading

See PASSION/12



Rabbi Tom Louchheim of Congregation Or Chadash, right, gives his views of the movie "The Passion of the Christ" last night at a panel discussion in the Integrated Learning Center. Robert Burns, left, director of religious studies and a Catholic priest, was also one of the panel members.

DAVID HARDEN/Arizona Daily Wildcat

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Lute Wins would help NCAA seeding
sees Pac-10 tourney differently now

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**15 percent
increase in
rush pledges**

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