

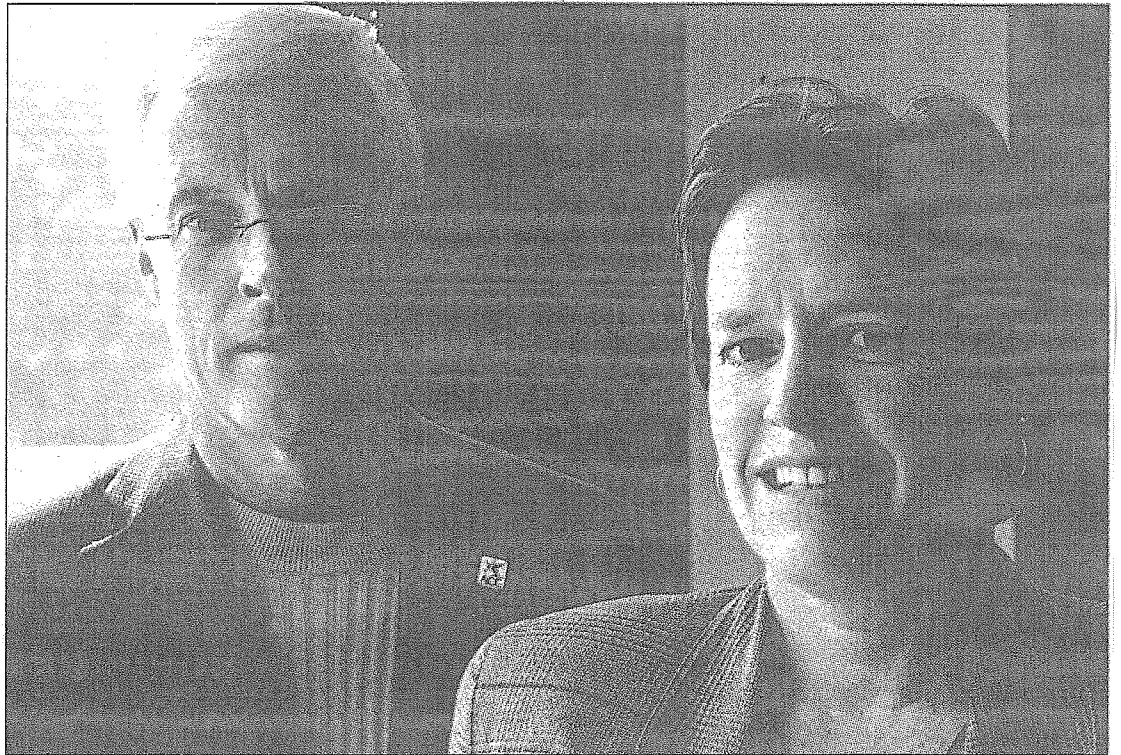
New group wants goals for Central Texas students

By Andy St. Jean
Daily Texan Staff

A new alliance of local Austin educational institutions, including UT, is working to help strengthen the academic outcomes of students throughout the Central Texas region.

The Education Equals Economics Alliance formed to establish a regional vision that Central Texas can follow to develop its students into a highly qualified workforce after graduation. The alliance is analyzing all the data that educational institutions gather and will attempt to present their findings in a way that can be used to better align resources and educational practices in the region.

"The goal is to have the whole education process work more effectively and produce students that will have successful careers and futures," said Ed Sharpe, chairman of the higher education committee for the Austin Area Research



Brian Hollingsworth | Daily Texan Staff

Austin Community College President Stephen B. Kinslow, left, is a member of E3 Alliance's steering committee, and Susan Dawson, right, was named executive director when the organization was founded in May 2006.

ALLIANCE continues on page 5A

ALLIANCE: Group aims to make more students ready for college

"The most important thing is cooperation. We want to make as many connections as possible in the spirit of collaboration."

Greg Vincent,
UT's vice president for diversity and community engagement

From page 1A

Organization and senior education fellow at the University.

The Austin Community College District, along with the research organization and UT, are the founding partners of the alliance, which is based at ACC's Highland Business Center and led by Executive Director Susan Dawson.

"Today we have lots of raw data," Dawson said. "It is very difficult to track information, because universities and school districts all track things differently. You can't tell what works well."

Texans have no idea how many students are ready for school, because there is no universal way to measure their readiness, Dawson said.

"Does it mean that a child who knows their colors and can say their ABCs is ready for school?" she said.

Some of the ways the alliance will strengthen student success include sharing the lessons and practices that work best for each institution, using money more wisely by pooling resources, and supporting efforts to improve preschool through 12th-grade curriculums to increase the number of college-ready graduates.

"The most important thing is cooperation," said Greg Vincent, vice president for diversity and community engagement at the University. "We want to make as many connections as possible in

the spirit of collaboration."

The alliance is a grass-roots effort and seeks input and participation from everyone in the Central Texas community.

"The odds are probably against us, but we believe our idea is sustainable," Sharpe said. "Every facet in the community needs to be involved. We believe firmly that every type of organization and individual has a part."

The alliance wants to work with the businesses, individuals and organizations that are already in place today.

"E3 is not intended to replace anything or anybody," Dawson said. "We want to work through other organizations."

The alliance's job won't conclude until they find an educational path for Central Texas that works for everyone in the region.

"We can't solve everything, but we can create the framework and the capacity of the system to improve," Dawson said. "In 10 years, we all hope to be out of a job and sitting on a beach somewhere."