Baylor University senior Pat Hynan of Waco works on a project in the school's engineering lab. U.S. News and World Report magazine named Baylor's engineering school the 14th-best non-doctoral engineering program in the nation.

**BU engineering school ranked 14th**

By JULIE J. EVERITT
Tribune-Herald staff writer

Tucked away on the edge of campus, Baylor University's School of Engineering has tended to linger in the shadows of more prominent academic programs at the college.

Until now.

In the Sept. 16 issue of *U.S. News & World Report*, Baylor's engineering school, accredited less than 10 years ago, was ranked 14th among 130 colleges offering a non-doctoral engineering program.

However, the ranking comes as a surprise to some.

"I wasn't aware that Baylor had an engineering program," said Baylor freshman Katherine Herlihy. "I'm in the music building 24 (hours a day), seven (days a week), so I had no idea."

The national ranking may help change that.

"I am absolutely thrilled (about the ranking), especially with the newness of the school," said Stan Madden, Baylor's vice president for marketing. "I knew from the way they approached the program at the beginning that it would be good."

The engineering curriculum began in 1980. In 1988, the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology first accredited the program, which moved that year into the newly built Rogers Engineering & Computer Science Building. Last year, Baylor's engineering department joined the computer science department to form the School of Engineering and Computer Science.

"The thrust of Baylor's program in engineering is at the undergraduate..."
BAYLOR
Engineering school ranked 14th in U.S.

level, and we're quite pleased with that," said James Warren, chairman and professor in the department.

Bob Morris, a U.S. News and World Report associate, said engineering schools were ranked by college deans across the country, with 1 percent of deans responding this year's survey. The schools were divided into two categories: schools that offer doctoral programs and those that do not. Baylor does not.

Since Baylor's engineering program began, more than 260 engineering students have graduated. An average of 30 students complete their engineering degrees each year.

While larger schools with doctoral programs may specialize in many areas of engineering, Baylor's engineering school offers a single degree with a specialty in one of three areas: electrical, mechanical or computer engineering.

Warren attributed part of the school's success to the department's emphasis on the basic elements of engineering.

"I'd like to think we do a real good job teaching the fundamentals," Warren said. "If we become large enough to have need for a master's degree, then we'll do that."

The students' proficiency in those fundamentals is evidenced in the school's recent passing rates for the state professional exam.

Each engineer must pass two state exams — one after four years of school and the other following four years of work — before he or she becomes registered and licensed with the state.

During the spring of 1995, Baylor engineering students yielded a 100-percent passing rate, which was the top scoring rate in Texas. In the past five years, Baylor students have maintained their lead ranking with a 98-percent passing rate average, well above the state average of 71 percent.

That may have helped the school achieve the U.S. News & World Report ranking, Warren said.

But Warren also cited other aspects of the school that make it unique.

"Other schools are more driven by research," he said, explaining that Baylor's engineering school places a strong emphasis on undergraduate teaching by professors rather than by graduate students or teaching assistants.

Focus on design

Another unusual element of Baylor's program is a focus on design throughout the curriculum, Warren said.

"If you are an engineer, you design," he said. "That's what you do."

All students are required to take a senior design capstone class, which tests the fundamentals learned during their course of study.

For the students, smaller class sizes and teaching by professors are appealing.

"With the same people in every class, it makes it easier to work without having to get to know new students every time," said Baylor senior Jason Petermeier of Allen, who came to the university specifically for the engineering program.

Pat Hynan of Waco, also a senior, agreed. "You always have the same professors who have the same expectations, which makes it easier to learn than it would be with larger faculty or graduate students teaching," Hynan said.

Baylor officials agreed that the U.S. News & World Report ranking will help put the engineering school in the spotlight.

"Prospective engineering students may look at the school (with this ranking) when they otherwise wouldn't," Madden said. "This is a good example of building a school right...one engineer at a time."