

Tapes, attendants aid handicapped

Programs providing tape textbooks and live-in attendants for handicapped students at no cost are underway here this semester.

Jim Hayes, handicapped students' adviser, coordinates the program that loans textbooks recorded on audio cassette tapes to visually impaired students.

Hayes said the service, provided through the Student Life Office, has two sources for tapes, a New York company and recordings by students.

Recording for the Blind, Inc., rents materials recorded on 4-track cassettes that must be played back at half-speed. The university rents the tapes and the Texas State Library provides the special machines required for playback.

Some textbooks, however, are not available on prerecorded tapes.

"If a student comes in and needs the book," Hayes said, "we'll tape it for him."

The cassettes recorded here can be played on standard machines. Hayes' office also has a stock of standard cassette machines to lend.

Another advantage of the locally recorded cassettes is that students can have private copies of the tapes made for future reference.

Like the tape textbook program, Hayes said he expects the live-in attendant program to expand this fall.

"We can always use people," he said, but noted that recording textbooks is a "tedious job" while being a live-in attendant is an "extensive job" requiring "responsible people."

At present, three quadriplegics living in Brazos Hall have live-in attendants for roommates. Seven more students needing attendants will enroll this fall.

By way of compensation for attendants, Hayes said "we currently pay for the dorm room and a given amount each month." He pointed out that all the benefits of the job, however, are not monetary.

Attendants "have a chance really to affect someone's life, to create an opportunity for someone."