A&M student spends year studying in Scotland school

David Alsmeyer's graduation from A&M next May will be like that of most TAMU graduates.

He will wear a scholar's robe, give an inward sigh of relief when the commencement address is finished and receive a diploma representing studies completed.

In Alsmeyer's case, as in some others, the degree will include a few courses transferred from another institution.

Alsmeyer has credit from the University of St. Andrews in Scotland.

His experiences corresponded to the "junior year of study abroad" programs conducted at several U. S. colleges and universities.

Alsmeyer got more than top marks in courses at St. Andrews, however. The senior math major and honors program student struck up several friendships, visited London, Coventry and York in England and made a tour in France.

At the end of the school year in June, Alsmeyer and friend Jan Wight bicycled to Skye Island on Scotland's west coast, a cross-country trip of 600 miles.

"It's the cheapest and best way to travel," he recounted. "Hostels we stayed in were adequate if not particularly comfortable, but only $1.25 a night. A day's meals cost $1.50."

He made the eight-month trip on $2,500, including the cost of a 10-speed bike purchased in Scotland and round-trip air travel.

The A&M Consolidated High School graduate found less contact with professors and more out-of-class work for math and fine arts courses he took at the 550-year-old St. Andrews.

"Courses are structured differently than here," he added. "Most St. Andrews courses have large lectures that meet an hour a day five days a week. Once a week students split into small groups for individual help."

Students there are held accountable for more outside reading and study, explained Alsmeyer, who has a 3.3 overall grade point ratio. U. S. students in the "junior year" program were from all parts of the California system, William and Mary and a Philadelphia university.

"Be sure and get this in so my buddies can eat their hearts out," Alsmeyer grinned. "I lived in a new dorm, which housed students one to a room. It was a coed dorm. Each morning a cleaner made the bed and cleaned."

"I think I'll live at home this year," confided the eldest of three children of Mr. and Mrs. Henry L. Alsmeyer Jr., 1207 Joe Orr. "After St. Andrews, I don't think I could go back to Legett Hall."

David's dad is assistant director of TAMU libraries.

A tradition of the Scottish institution involves a sleeveless, scarlet scholastic gown with a red velvet collar.

During mild weather, it is worn so undergraduate class rank can be seen at a glance, Alsmeyer said. Freshmen wear it tight at the neck, sophs off the neck, juniors off one shoulder and seniors off both shoulders, "like a shawl and almost dragging the ground."

"This is said to indicate the increasing amount of knowledge upperclassmen carry on their shoulders," David explained. "Actually, it came about over a student riot a couple of hundred years back. It caused quite a bit of trouble and town officials required students to wear the gown so they could be recognized."

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