

Jobs help pay for tuition

By KAREN GILES
Reporter

Some of the best things in life are free, but unfortunately college isn't one of them.

The cost of a college education has never been inexpensive, but in the eighties it ranks as a major investment, especially if the student is self-supported.

"The whole emphasis today has shifted from student aid to personal finance," said Robert Leider, author of **Don't Miss Out: The Ambitious Student's Guide to Scholarships and Loans**. "Need is an unfortunate term. Many people think it means 'needy,' but it is a better term and many middle-class people are eligible."

Over the years, many students have supported themselves while in college. They try to get the most mileage out of their resources and try to improve their chances of getting any extra outside help they may need.

In the fall of 1954, Gerry McGowan enrolled at Texas A&M, joined the Corps of Cadets and began looking for a job because his parents were unable to support him.

McGowan began working his freshman year as a lab assistant in the physics department for 75 cents an hour, and he received 90 cents a day (\$27 a month) since he was in the Corps. That doesn't sound like much, but at the time his tuition payment, including room, board and laundry, was \$227 for the first semester and seven dollars less in the spring, since he'd already paid for his yearbook and student activity fee.

McGowan said the movie theater on campus, Guion Hall (where Rudder Tower now stands), charged 25 cents per show, and a longneck beer at Ed Hardliker's was also a quarter. Corps trips were pretty cheap when 10 guys would "pool" together for gasoline at 19 cents a gallon and one hotel room at \$14 a night. McGowan also worked for a photographer who took black and white pictures of each outfit on Corps trips, after the Mother's Day parade and Final Review for \$1. McGowan made 50 cents on every sale.

His senior year he graded papers for his mechanical engineering professor, Mr. Crawford, for 75 cents an hour. "It doesn't sound like much, but it got me through," McGowan said. "I know that if I were in college today, I'd have to hold more jobs to support myself. One thing was comforting though—Mr. Crawford told me that if I ever needed help, that his friend Mr. Loupot could arrange some sort of a loan for me. I never took him up on it, but I know a lot of the guys did. Mr. Crawford said that Loupot's philosophy was 'no one will ever drop out of this school because of money.'"

Unfortunately, since 1954, tuition for a semester, including room, board and laundry, has risen from \$227 to about \$1250, and longneck beers have shot up from 25 cents, to about one dollar.

Fueled by inflation and federal cutbacks, college costs for 1982-1983 have increased on the average, about 11 percent since 1981-1982, and a greater increase is likely in 1983-1984 for many colleges.

Despite these odds, there are many ambitious college students whose desire to earn a degree motivates them to work while getting an education.

After high school graduation, Andrew Ybarra, now a student at Southwest Texas State University,

tried living at home and working while attending a junior college. "I tried saving money while I was at home," Ybarra said. "I waited tables, worked at a one hour photo lab and I was even a dog catcher for a while, but I just couldn't seem to manage my money. I spent \$4,000 from the fall of '82 to the summer of '83. I decided I had to get away, so I began saving my money in November, and by January I had saved \$1,000 to begin the spring session."

Ybarra is majoring in criminal justice and working for Humpty Dumpty Deliveries Inc. He delivers balloons, and sings a song to his victim. "I try my hardest to embarrass the person more than I am," Ybarra said. He said this is hard to do since most people pay him extra to wear one of the costumes, which include Big Bird, a gorilla, a clown and Tarzan. He said he's pretty unconvincing as Tarzan, but when he's in a crowded restaurant he likes to use lines like, "You're the first woman I've ever seen without a lot of body hair." He says he juggles balls, "which are safer than chain saws and flashier than knives," and is always looking around for odd jobs to do. Ybarra is receiving financial aid from the university, and says this covers most of his bills, but little is left for recreation.

Many Texas A&M students are independently financing their own educations.

Kathi Vecchio, head resident advisor of Krueger Hall, and Ken Russell, head resident of Dunn Hall, are planning to be married in December. They both earn \$400 a month, including a free room in the dorm, but next spring they will both be Russells and Ken will already be a daddy, "dorm daddy" that is. "That's what the girls call the husband of the head R.A.," Russell said. The couple will live in the head resident's apartment in Clements dorm, and while Kathi resumes her job as head resident, Ken is hoping for an assistantship in finance research or a teaching assistant job, while he works on his master's degree.

Ashley Girling is putting himself through school by selling insurance door to door, but says this isn't enough to cover every bill, so he spends his summers working as a "roustabout" (a gopher and maintenance aid) on an oil production field. Girling said this job has helped him learn more about his major, petroleum engineering, while he makes a pretty good living.

On a lighter side, Jerry Ponzio, manager of Teasers, a night club in College Station, likes to brag about a contestant named Angie who consistently entered the legs contest at his club on Tuesday nights and rarely lost. "After she picked up the \$200 purse here, she'd go to the Roxz on Wednesday and win their legs contest," Ponzio said. "Thursday she'd win at the Dallas club and Saturday she'd be back here for the wet t-shirt contest, which she'd also win. Angie made almost \$1,000 a week and would only show up in time for the contest, then leave right after it was over." Ponzio said Angie hasn't been back, since she graduated from Texas A&M last spring.

Two other ambitious students, Bob Rhoads and Ralph Troup, are working at a construction site this summer, laying plywood. Rhoads said they are paid about \$100 each per building, and are averaging one building a day. They're also doing odd jobs for another contractor on the side for \$6 an hour. They're sav-

ing their money to pay for their schooling, and Troup will continue with his previous job in the fall at the Petal Patch.

"People complain that they can't find a job, but they're out there," Troup said. "It may not be what you want to do, but sometimes if you just take what you can get, it may be a connection for a better job later." Troup said he's also receiving a long-term loan that is helping him out. He said he's grateful that he has the loan, but he doesn't like to think about having a debt hang over his head.

"I don't think many students at A&M realize that they really do have to pay back a loan, and I don't think many students are aware of the opportunities that are available to them at the financial aid department," Troup said.

This past year 2,400 Texas A&M students have filed for financial aid. "The vast majority of the students don't come until they really feel the need," Lynda Gilbert, financial aid advisor said. "Approximately one-third of these students are independent, and almost all of these independent students are on a long-term loan, since they have no way of paying it back while they're still enrolled."


Gilbert said approximately one-half of the students at Texas A&M are receiving some form of financial aid, including scholarships and employment, and that about 6,000 students have found employment through the financial aid department this past year.

"The most common way to reduce the cost of college is through financial aid which can be obtained in the form of scholarships and loans," according to Karen Hegener, author of **After Scholarships, What?**. Hegener said there are seventeen ways to reduce college costs, which can be used in conjunction with many of the other programs. These include: merit-based, need-based and athletic scholarships, short and long-term loans, part-time campus jobs, work-study programs, early and deferred entrance, part-time and three-year degrees, summer session credit, the external degree and co-op programs, off-campus residence, the guaranteed tuition plan and the ROTC.

Cliff Chatham, a member of the Texas A&M track team, received financial aid through a partial scholarship. Chatham said this covered his tuition and books (which are "borrowed" from Loupot's bookstore) and left him with about \$700 for rent. Chatham said he also received money after he had completed his four years of eligibility on the team, from an extended athletic scholarship. "This helps athletes who haven't finished college within four years and still need financial aid," Chatham said.

While working only a few hours a week at United Bank, Kyle Rattan is drawing \$2,500 per year from the Guaranteed Student Loan (GSL), and an additional \$500 a semester from a presidential scholarship. Rattan said he couldn't go to school without these aids, and says the best part is that he doesn't have to begin paying for the GSL until six months after he leaves school. He must complete payment within 10 years.

To qualify for federal programs such as the GSL, a family with an income of \$30,000 or more must take a test that determines their need. Colleges, on the other hand, have no standard definition of middle income.



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