

Freshmen in for some changes during college career at A&M

By Hal Hammons
Staff Writer

When I was but a lad, fresh out of high school and about to begin my collegiate career at Texas A&M, my father told me the next four years were going to be the best of my life.

Good old Dad had been out of school for some time.

Granted, I have had a ball for the first three years, and I expect it to

Viewpoint

get better as I am now a senior (whoop!). But it is not all fun and games.

If you are an incoming freshman, this column is for you. It is my responsibility to help initiate you into the ways of college life, and I will attempt to do so.

You have made a significant step forward in the echelon of life. You see, there are three brands of people in our culture: Little People, College People and Real People. You are now the second of these instead of the first. Becoming one of the College People is the first step toward becoming one of the Real People. You have made that step.

Congratulations. Enjoy your stay while you are here. Unfortunately, I have some bad news — it's tough. Really tough.

Most of you probably are a lot like me. I didn't work very hard at all in high school. No, scratch that; I didn't work at all.

It is probably in my nature to accept a B that I don't have to study for instead of studying a couple of hours a night for an A. I never have taken school work very seriously, and high school didn't help any.

I suppose that I thought college would be the same, or at least similar. OK, maybe it would be a little harder, but I was only taking five classes (plus labs), and those only met two or three times a week. Plenty of time to goof off, plenty of time to catch up. Piece of cake.

Needless to say, I was disappointed. And I continue to be disappointed.

I still don't study as much as I probably should (certainly not as much as my parents think I should), but I'm getting by better than most.

Realizing the differences between college and high school is of tantamount importance if you are to survive the next four to nine years, depending on your dedication and/or intelligence. And the most important realization is that once you apply for college admission and are accepted, your high

you was the truth, but rather to think on your own and develop your own conclusions. And even with that encouragement, you, like me, will find yourself asking your English professor, "But what do you think it means?"

Perhaps the most important lesson in the long run is responsibility.

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school diploma might as well be thrown out the window. Nobody cares anymore.

It could very well be that your school's Joe Superjock, who made all-district three years in a row, could not make the 12th Man team here. The same concept applies for regular students.

Consider yourself lucky if you really learned anything worthwhile at all in high school. I learned how to write good essay answers because of my excellent high school English teachers. I learned basic algebraic and calculus concepts that helped get me through my required math courses. And I learned some science — maybe. That's about it.

One of the first things you will learn in college is the vast majority of your earlier teachers basically didn't know what they were talking about. But, hey, I could have guessed that as a 16-year-old junior.

You also will, in all likelihood, be introduced to a concept rather unknown in lower education: thinking. Students in college, for the most part, have to decide for themselves what material is important enough to merit extra study time.

As freshmen, you will be forced to learn how to answer the two ultimate questions in the universe: "Why?" and "So what?" Each involves thinking on your feet, a necessity of life and one that is virtually ignored below the college level.

Professors, at least the good ones in liberal arts courses, will encourage you to not repeat what they told

For most of you, this is the first time you will be away from home for any period of time. Your time is literally your own, and you may do with it as you like as long as you don't have to count on your parents to supply any bail money.

Eventually you will be struck by the Skip Class Bug. When it happens, don't worry. It has struck every college student who has ever had to wake up for an 8 a.m. class or attend one on Friday afternoon.

The trick is to determine for yourself the optimum number of days in each class to ditch. This can run anywhere from zero for most lab courses to 20 or 25 for a valedictorian in Rocks for Jocks (Geology 103).

My roommate my first two years here had it down to an art. While taking Economics 203 and 204, he attended class a grand total of 11 times. Including tests. Including finals. Including days when he was only there to pick up a syllabus. The way I calculate it, that's 11 days in class out of about 62 class meetings. He got a B and a C. Slimeball.

There are plenty of alternative ways to spend time and effort, even in College Station. Various social encounters can easily deplete your available study time.

That's not necessarily bad. Indeed, I would be something of a hypocrite if I told you otherwise. But I have my priorities set. I know how important school is to me. And you need to know as well, regardless of how important that may be.

If you decide that getting a date every Friday night, partying every

Saturday night and having a party over every Sunday morning, that's your decision. If you decide to study four hours per day, two per afternoon every day the next four years, that is your decision, too.

Another crucial decision you will make in the next few years is the reaction you will take in later years. Many of you have already made that choice and are forming curricula around it. But if you are one of these, don't assume that your decision is made forever.

Increased exposure to college-level courses have the effect of effecting drastic changes in the futures of young men and women across the nation. This trend has given rise to one of the most important of collegiate traditions: changing majors.

Why is major-changing an inseparable part of Joe College student's career? Nobody knows.

It probably is because it changes a person's perspective. Those life-long dreams of a career as a doctor or lawyer frequently fade into oblivion as a person starts finding out what it takes to pursue that career.

My brother, who last year rolled as a freshman at a major downtown Austin, has dreamed his whole life of becoming a veterinarian. College biology is a different scope of reality.

I had no idea at all of becoming a journalist when I first came to college. It was a biology major.

Two years later I was in a liberal arts school which offered a Bachelor of Science degree. I was required so I would not take any more Spanish. Journalism happened to fit the bill. Now determine one's career, you say?

But that's the way college affects you. No matter what you do, no matter what you take out of it, you will not be the same when you leave.

So live your college life to the will, and make your own decisions. After all, you have four more years until you become one of the People.

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Off-Campus Center informs students of rights as tenants

By Jill Radenbaugh
Reporter

New leases, new deposits and new landlords are just a few things new tenants will be facing this fall.

Kristin Sayre, coordinator of the Off-Campus Center, says students should be informed about their basic rights and responsibilities as a tenant. The Off-Campus Center strives to educate students in this area, Sayre says.

To provide students with current information, the staff consults regularly with student legal advisers, Sayre says. The Students' Legal Department, 359 Bizzell Hall, provides free legal service to all A&M students.

Leases seem to be the students' major concern at the beginning of a semester, she says.

A lease is a legally binding contract between the tenant and landlord which spells out the conditions under which housing is rented. If either party does not fulfill the lease obligations, the other can take legal action.

"It is important that students fully understand their rights and responsibilities as outlined in a lease agreement," Sayre says.

A lease also is a financially binding contract, meaning it should be read carefully before signing.

Notes that explain the Texas Apartment Association lease, which is commonly used in College Station, are available at the Off-Campus Center.

If tenants have further questions, they can take the lease to the Off-Campus Center or the student legal advisers before signing it, Sayre says.

"Be sure to keep a copy of the

lease after the contract is finalized," she says.

When a tenant has a written lease, verbal agreements between the tenant and landlord usually are impossible to enforce, she says. Therefore, any oral agreements which add to or change the lease should be written into the lease and initialed by both parties.

If a tenant decides to break a lease before it expires, it's considered a breach of contract and the landlord is entitled to damages.

"It is incorrect to think that a tenant forfeits only his security deposit if he breaks a lease," Sayre says.

A tenant can be sued for the remainder of the rent. If unable to pay the debt after a suit, for example, judgments can be filed against tenants for 10 years — or until they have adequate financial resources.

The judgement is renewable for another 10 years.

Judgments on tenants' records can prevent them from obtaining loans and credit, Sayre says.

Return of security deposits is one possible problem a renter may have, Sayre says. If the tenants have fulfilled the conditions of the lease, then the manager is required to refund the security deposit within 30 days after they vacate.

If after 30 days a tenant hasn't received a deposit, he should contact his manager and try to resolve the situation.

If the problem is still unresolved, Sayre recommends the student contact the student legal advisers.

If a tenant encounters problems with his landlord, he may file a complaint with the Off-Campus Center and the Bryan-College Station Apartment Association.



Apartment Price Averages — Electricity Not Included

Unfurnished	Range	Average	Furnished	Range	Average
Efficiency	\$165-300	\$233	Efficiency	\$195-365	\$280
One Bedroom	\$150-450	\$300	One Bedroom	\$175-450	\$303
Two Bedroom (1)★	\$175-510	\$343	Two Bedroom (1)★	\$213-465	\$339
Two Bedroom (2)★	\$197-600	\$399	Two Bedroom (2)★	\$275-610	\$443
Three Bedroom	\$310-660	\$485	Three Bedroom	\$453-595	\$524

★ (1) one bathroom, (2) two bathrooms; February 1987 Averages

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