

AGGIELIFE

Aggie Melting Pot

International Students learn to adjust to a new life through University programs

BY BRIAN FLEMING
The Battalion

Perhaps Dallas should not seem like such a long drive from Texas A&M. After all, of the 43,000 students now at A&M, approximately 3000 come from further abroad.

From nearly all parts of the world, international students come to Aggieland not only having to adjust to everyday college life. International students must also live in a foreign culture with a foreign language.

Throughout the years, university faculty, programs and organizations have all taken steps to help international students adjust to the daily grind at A&M.

Gustavo deSousa, the President of the International Student Association (ISA) and an international student from Brazil, said ISA represents international students on campus by not only by helping them adjust academically and socially but also by promoting cultural awareness.

"By doing both of these, students adjust much better, and after all, cultural awareness is the key to global success," deSousa said.

DeSousa said students at A&M enjoy a variety of programs designed to help them adjust to different cultures.

"We plan a number of events here in-

cluding Planet Northgate, I-Week (International Week) and talent shows, which all allow students to represent their culture," deSousa said.

Another successful event is I-Camp, originating from the concept of Fish Camp.

"Six years ago this program was started to help introduce international students to the traditions of A&M," deSousa said.

Majed Azouqah, president of the Arab Student Association and a senior electrical engineering major, said I-Camp is a beneficial experience for international students.

"For me, I know I-Camp was an opening door for the many traditions here at A&M," Azouqah said.

For Azouqah, as well as others, getting to know the Aggie lifestyle helps with the transition of students from abroad.

"I know that for myself, I was curious more than anything," Azouqah said. "I came to really like many of the traditions. Plus, it really helped me to feel more at home."

DeSousa said more than anything, I-Camp helps people from different cultures get to know each other before classes start.

The International Programs Office helps many students ease the transition from their homes to the United States.

"They run many programs, such as the International Hotel, which offers temporary housing, transportation to many area malls and banks, as well as help with the adjustment process," deSousa said.

Suzanne Droleskey, executive director of international programs, said the International Programs Office works hard to help students with official matters including setting up bank accounts, transportation and housing.

Droleskey said the office also offers seminars on such issues as health insurance, taxation, immigration and cultural background for international students who may be unaware of complications that may occur during their new life in America.

DeSousa said one thing he has always found is that involvement usually helps students adjust.

"Being involved helps students to get to know each other and gives them a chance to feel a part of the University," deSousa said.

Getting involved is the key to success for many international students.

Vernon Shih, president of the Chinese Student Association and a junior biomedical science major, said his adjustment to college life at A&M was made easier through his involvement in multicultural programs.

"Organizations and activities helped me to get to know new friends and meet new people from different countries," Shih said.

"I think overall, being active helps all students adjust to a new environment."



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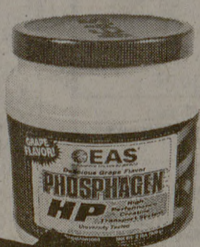
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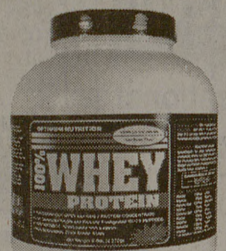
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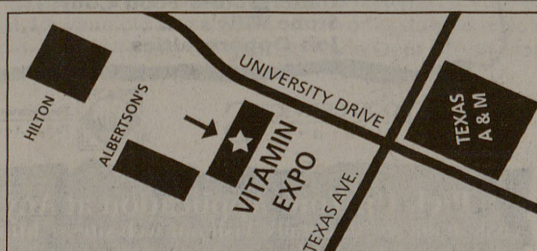
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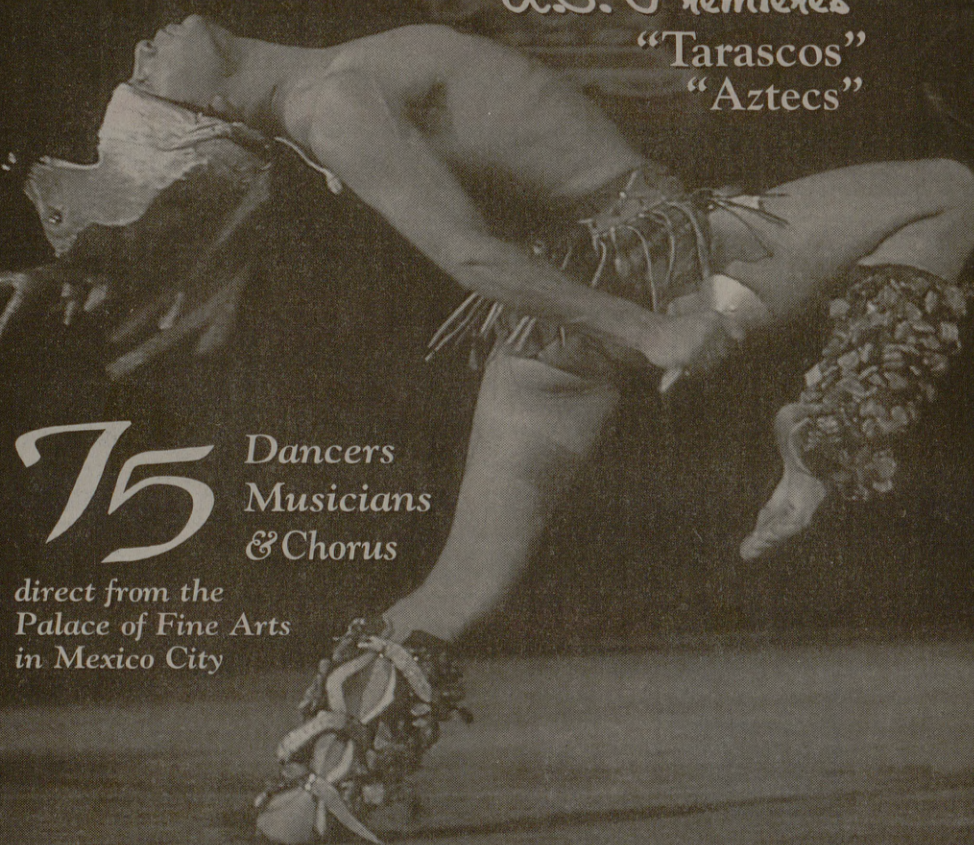
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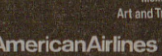
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