

A day's work

Students discover busy is sometimes better

BY SUSAN OVERCASH
The Battalion

Erica Stidham, a senior math education major, said she averages 16 to 17 hours a semester, has taken as many as 18 and has done it while working several days a week and planning a wedding.

Stidham, now married and still involved in several organizations and volunteer programs, substitute teaches three days a week and said staying busy has helped her form character and share her life with more people.

She said that making an effort to use the whole day productively helps her organize and manage her time.

"I see a lot of late nights and early mornings," Stidham said. "I try not to waste time just watching TV or messing around, even though that's something I should probably do more of."

Boyer said his day planner has helped him organize his time.

"The planner is key," Boyer said. "I keep track very closely, and if I lose my planner, I lose half my life. I'm also big on meetings, and I use my planner to schedule meetings, classes and study time."

Stidham said she also manages her time by writing everything down, constantly making lists, in order to keep things organized.

Moore said time management is a concept many students do not use.

"People don't really use time management; when you're that busy, you have to organize yourself," Moore said. "And often, busy people don't have as much stress as less busy people, because they waste less time."

Moore said exercise, eating right and getting enough sleep are key elements in keeping stress at a minimum and finding the balance in managing her time.

Boyer said stress relief means spending time with friends.

"I get out on the weekends," Boyer said. "I usually hold my Fridays and Saturdays open and like to go out in big groups. The occasional beverage helps, too."

Moore said finding the right balance in a student's time depends on individual's personal behaviors and their personality types.

"You really have to be honest with yourself," Moore said. "It differs from person to person."

Morris said she achieves this balance by keeping weekends open for time to spend with her friends and personal time for herself.

"You have to be really dedicated and methodical; if I have an hour and a half between classes, I don't just check email," Morris said.

"But when I have free time, I'll go to the movies or out with friends or at the end of a hard week, I'll also treat myself to a new CD. That's my big deconstructor."

"At one point, I was in seven organizations, holding an office in three, and I was studying for the MCAT at the same time," Jenny Morris said.

Morris, a senior biology and Spanish major, is not a stereotypical student.

While many students spend their free time watching "Days of Our Lives" and eating Cheese Puffs, Morris spends her time bouncing from organization to academics to volunteering, all the while maintaining a 3.95 grade-point ratio.

"I made my first B last semester," Morris said. "But I was okay with it."

Morris is one in a growing population of students in Aggieland who are destroying the "slacker" label the college generation has been stuck with for years.

Instead, Morris and others are going out of their way to get and stay involved, sometimes over-involved, at the University and in the community, for a variety of reasons.

Danny Boyer, a senior mechanical engineering major, who is actively involved in five major organizations and holds chair positions in two of them, said he stays busy because he constantly is looking for a challenge.

"It's part self-satisfaction," Boyer said. "I like staying busy, and get a kick out of organizing events, for some sick and twisted reason. I also like contributing to events that make a positive contribution to other people."

Dr. Mary Ann Moore, a psychologist with Student Counseling Services, said many students become involved — and over-involved — in order to impress future employers.

"I think there's a general worry that students are not doing enough," Moore said. "There's an underlying fear about not getting a job when they get out that makes students over-commit themselves."

Boyer, a Student Engineer's Council co-chair in charge of organizing the Capitalizing on Engineering Opportunities Career Fair, said students get involved to increase their chances of getting jobs.

"Companies aren't just looking for a 4.0," Boyer said. "They are looking for someone with leadership qualities, a well-rounded student."

Some students add a large academic workload to their already busy schedule, or maintain a time-consuming job.



GABRIEL RUENES/THE BATTALION

"I don't get a lot of sleep," Stidham said. "I think it's part of who I am; I am a perfectionist, and that drives me to always need something to do."

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Completed applications must be received by the Student Activities office no later than 5 p.m. on Friday, October 1, 1999. They may be hand-carried to the Student Activities office, sent through Campus Mail (MS 1236), or sent through US mail. (See the application for addresses.) Questions may be addressed to Sandy Briers in Student Activities (845-1133).

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