

AggieLife

Fresh out of the water

Freshmen remember the highs and lows of their first year at Texas A&M

By Kelcey Rieger
THE BATTALION

Jeremy Brueggemann, a freshman nutrition major, found the transition from high school senior to college freshman has its ups and downs.

"If I had to choose between being a high school senior again or being a college freshman, I would have to go with being a high school senior."

Brueggemann said, "[In high school] I was able to be involved in more, and I knew a ton more people. So far, here I have been rejected from about five organizations, because there are so many people to choose from here. It's going to take awhile before I can fill the void left by my life at home."

The first year at Texas A&M is crucial to what students make of their remaining years at Texas A&M. Being a freshman at A&M means leaving home, meeting new people, dealing with school pressures and discovering the true Aggie spirit.

Brueggemann refused to let the first day of classes make him too nervous. With butterflies in his stomach and a smile on his face, he faced first day jitters.

"The first day of class was pretty crazy," Brueggemann said. "But I said 'Hi' to everyone I sat next to and just did my best to pay attention and take good notes so I could start my college career off right."

As freshmen find themselves farther into their first year at A&M, between football games, Midnight Yell practice and other Aggie traditions, they find their place in the Aggie family.

"I really felt like an Aggie after I attended my first Aggie football game," Brueggemann said. "It made me proud to be an Aggie standing by my fellow 12th Man. When I go to events with my dorm, such as Silvertaps, everything just really sets in that I'm an Aggie."

An important Aggie tradition that is missing from a freshman's experience this year is Bonfire. Alyssa Rivera, a freshman general studies major, expressed her disappointment about the absence of such a treasured Aggie tradition and the effects on the Class of 2005.

"I think not having a Bonfire this year really had a great effect on us," Rivera said. "Every freshman that I know, including myself, was really looking forward to being able to participate in it when we got accepted here. I really wanted to be involved in

something large and overwhelming. I want the opportunity to say I helped out with Aggie Bonfire. I feel I would have met more people because I would be working with them as a team, and I feel that is what A&M is really about."

Upon their arrival at Texas A&M, freshmen find that going to college actually means going to class and studying. One of the most dreaded classes freshmen face is chemistry. A unique experience in itself, just the word makes many students at Texas A&M cringe. Blake Maddoux, a freshman engineering major, was one of the brave freshmen who took the class.

"My very first chemistry exam was my first memorable experience at A&M," Maddoux said. "I don't think I studied enough and, well, I failed it. It was really an eye-opener. Since then I have learned how to study, but it took a really nasty first round of tests to force me to take the initiative."

Many freshmen live on campus in residence halls their first year, which is where they get their first taste of college life. Whether Northside, Southside or the Quad, all freshmen find themselves in the same situations. From roommates to dining hall delights, on-campus living is a one of a kind encounter.

"I've sampled the delicacies of Sbsa Dining Hall," Maddoux said. "I've learned what is edible and what to stay away from. I always avoid the fish slabs, the lemon rice and anything that is moving."

Amanda Higgenbotham, a freshman chemistry major, resides in Lechner Hall and enjoys residence life, but she has discovered that it has strange moments.

"There is never a dull moment in my dorm," Higgenbotham said. "There is the same couple that continues to be all over each other in the north foyer, who really need to get a room. There are also Lechner LAN parties where people hook up their computers and play video games into odd hours of the night."

Higgenbotham found herself in a bit of a backwards situation one night while driving her car around campus.

"It was one of the first times I had driven around campus at night, and I drove the wrong way down a one way street," Higgenbotham said. "Luckily, no one was around that area by the Northside Parking Garage, but I didn't realize I was going the wrong way until I

noticed the signs were backwards."

Amanda Garland, a freshman business administration major, found life outside of classes at A&M is an added bonus to her freshman experience.

"I found I have a lot more freedom in college," Garland said. "I can go out on Thursday nights, see all of my friends, and get away from all of my school work, without having to answer to my parents."

Garland said friendships have been an important part of her experience as a freshman.

"What has made the transition to college easier is that most of my good friends are here with me and that makes me feel pretty close to home," Garland said. "I also have friends that go to the University of Texas, and they come down to College Station sometimes. As a matter of fact, they came with me to the t.u. game, and I made them do all of the yells with us, which was an extremely memorable experience."

Brian Faughn, a freshman nuclear engineering

major and a member of the Corps of Cadets, said his most memorable experience was at the football game against the University of Texas.

"Marching the half-time drill [with the Aggie Band] was an awesome experience," Faughn said. "The crowd was huge and when we [the band] saved the horns off, I couldn't hear myself play because it was so loud from the crowd cheering and whooping. It was incredible."

Although faced with many adversities in his freshman year as a member of the Corps, Faughn found strength through his experiences.

"No matter what challenge I was faced with, mental or physical, in the end, I found I could accomplish so much more than I ever expected," Faughn said. "By relying on your friends, family and most importantly God, you can do anything. Balancing academics with being in the Corps has really been a challenge, but because I don't have to do it alone, I've been able to handle it."



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