

# AGGIELIFE

THE BATTALION

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## CALLING ALL FISH

New Student Conferences prepare incoming freshmen for A&M experience

By Micah Grau  
THE BATTALION

They are everywhere. In restaurants around town, invading the dorms, overflowing the campus and on the sidewalks all around Texas A&M. Who are these invaders? Not the pesky june bugs that appear everywhere, but the newest class of Texas Aggies on campus for their New Student Conference (NSC).

Many students can remember back to their own NSC and reminisce about times of meeting fellow freshmen Aggies, meeting with professors from their chosen major and getting a feel for the campus. In the many years the conference has been hosted, incoming freshmen have been able to visit the campus with their families and prepare for the upcoming semester.

Sarah Schuler, executive director of the Aggie Orientation Leader Program, said the purpose of the NSC is to provide new students and their families with the information they need to successfully start a career at A&M.

What exactly can an incoming freshman expect to happen during the course of NSC, and how has it changed over the years? Besides numerous opportunities for fellow freshmen to interact and form lasting friendships, freshmen can expect a rigorous schedule of activities and meetings throughout each of the three days that the conference takes place. To set the tone of what college will be like, freshmen wake up early to head directly into testing areas to take placement and TASP tests.

Cynthia Hernandez, director of the conferences, said that the testing is necessary to help students gauge their abilities and also to tell student advisers which classes the student should be taking their first semester at A&M.

Incoming freshman Lisa Garcia said testing was not that much fun, but she imagined class exams will be basically the same set up. Garcia said they made sure the rest of the afternoon and evening are fun for them to

make up for the morning testing.

Although some freshmen might be hesitant about stating their fears, for many, anxiety ranges from the immense size of the university to establishing a home away from home.

Incoming freshman Adam Baisley recalls that he was one such person afraid of the size of the university.

"After coming from a small high school, I didn't want to just become some number or statistic," Baisley said. "I was afraid that I wouldn't be able to get the attention with professors that I had grown accustomed to in grade school."

Allison Jacobson, also an incoming freshman, said the greatest fear she had about coming to a large university was not her grades or academics, but what her roommate would be like.

"I am a pretty shy person, and I just didn't want to have some roommate that would make my college career miserable," Jacobson said. "I was so relieved to meet with her and her family since we had our conference at the same time. It ended up that we both had a lot in common."

James Massey, now a junior mechanical engineering major, remembers his NSC from two years ago.

"It was really boring, but now that I think about it, it was a good overall experience," Massey said. "Having the opportunity to find out where classes would be held, meet other Aggies and register helped ease some of my tensions about Texas A&M."

Most freshmen will agree that registering with the help of advisers at NSC is a lot easier and gives them a peace of mind.

Justin Henderson, an incoming freshman, said he had heard horror stories about registering from his older siblings, but once he had it taken care of, he felt much better knowing that his schedule was already set and he did not have to worry about it anymore.

With daily schedules filled for incoming stu-



BY JOSHUA HOBSON • THE BATTALION

Enjoying a break from his New Student Conference is incoming freshman Adam Warnix, second from left, with his parents and Ryan Schmidt, sophomore mechanical engineering major.

dents, what do their families do during this time?

Hernandez said numerous seminars and sessions are held for parents of incoming freshmen to better acquaint them with the University. Although many parents of new students attended A&M, much has changed since they were here. Events including a parent breakfast social and seminars covering everything from housing questions to financial concerns are just a few of the events offered to parents.

Margie Henderson said having numerous opportunities for parents to meet with University leaders was wonderful.

"All of my questions were answered which is a

good reflection of the University," Henderson said.

Behind many of the activities such as mixers, games and socials, there is the Aggie Orientation Leader Program. These students volunteer countless hours in order to make sure that families and incoming freshmen have a wonderful experience at their NSC.

Schuler says it is important for incoming freshmen to interact with Orientation Leaders because they are able to meet current students and talk with them about any concerns they might have about college life. She also said an orientation leader can speak from experience, which helps new freshmen relate to them.

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