

NEWS IN BRIEF

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# AGGIELIFE

THE BATTALION

Page 3A • Monday, February 10, 2003

## Fish out of water

Freshmen blame inflated high school grades, time management issues for poor study habits

By Shena Bausch  
THE BATTALION

A new class of freshmen walked onto college campuses this past semester, but a national study said they were anything but prepared for the task of studying.

CBS News reports that a survey designed by the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA said this year's college freshmen have the worst study habits in 15 years. Dr. Alexander Astin, director of the Higher Education Research Institute started the survey in 1966. Astin said high school teachers are being pressured to inflate grades, and students' study habits have gotten worse.

Astin said he thinks high school students pressure their teachers into helping them make higher grades to compete for college admission. Astin said the grades of graduating high school seniors become inflated every year, and 45 percent of this year's freshmen reported graduating high school with an "A" average.

Liz Hudson, academic adviser for General Academic Programs, said she sees new students struggling with new responsibilities every year, and she thinks this year's freshmen aren't any different than in years past.

"Students don't have that much homework in high school compared to college," Hudson said. "So freshmen don't expect as much outside work when they come here, but that's all professors expect of them. You can do both the outside reading and be prepared for the lectures, or be unprepared; it's something that freshmen have to get used to."

Jacob Jones, a freshman general studies major, said freshmen would be

better prepared for college if high school teachers were not so lenient.

"Once, I talked my teacher into giving me a higher grade in high school, but I am a pretty convincing guy," he said. "High school should have been harder and more strict on cheating, too because it was too easy."

Jones said that high school and former teachers may not have adequately prepared students for their first college experience, but he said there are other reasons freshmen don't have good study habits.

"We don't have our parents here, we're not disciplined enough, and we're only 18," he said. "Also, I think living off campus has a lot to do with my study habits, because it's too easy to miss class. I think living on campus would make attending class much more convenient. When you live away from campus, you have to find parking or catch a bus to get to class; it's just easier to sleep in."

Jones said it almost didn't matter how long he studied for his psychology final last semester.

"I mixed up the time for my final with the time for another section, and slept through my final," Jones said. "I was grateful to be able to bargain with my professor to let me take my final on another day. Maybe high school did teach me something."

Jones said he is studying a lot more this semester compared to last semester. "This semester, I'm already four chapters into a book," Jones said. "I also haven't been going over to friends' houses as often. I think parties were my biggest distractions last semester."

However, according to UCLA's survey the United States freshmen class is at an all-time low percentage of drinking, 46.5 percent this year, compared to

a high of 73.7 percent in 1982. The survey determined that 35.8 percent of freshmen said they don't attend a single party during the week.

Alissa Harrison, a freshman Spanish major, said she doesn't attend any parties on the weekdays.

"I'm not a procrastinator, so I study right away," Harrison said. "I probably study an average of three to four hours per night. Although on the weekends, I drop everything and go out to relax; I don't worry about studying then. I think studying like this has really helped me out."

Harrison said she never experienced teachers inflating grades for students at her high school, and she said she felt that her teachers did a good job preparing her for college. Harrison said she was better prepared for English than history and math.

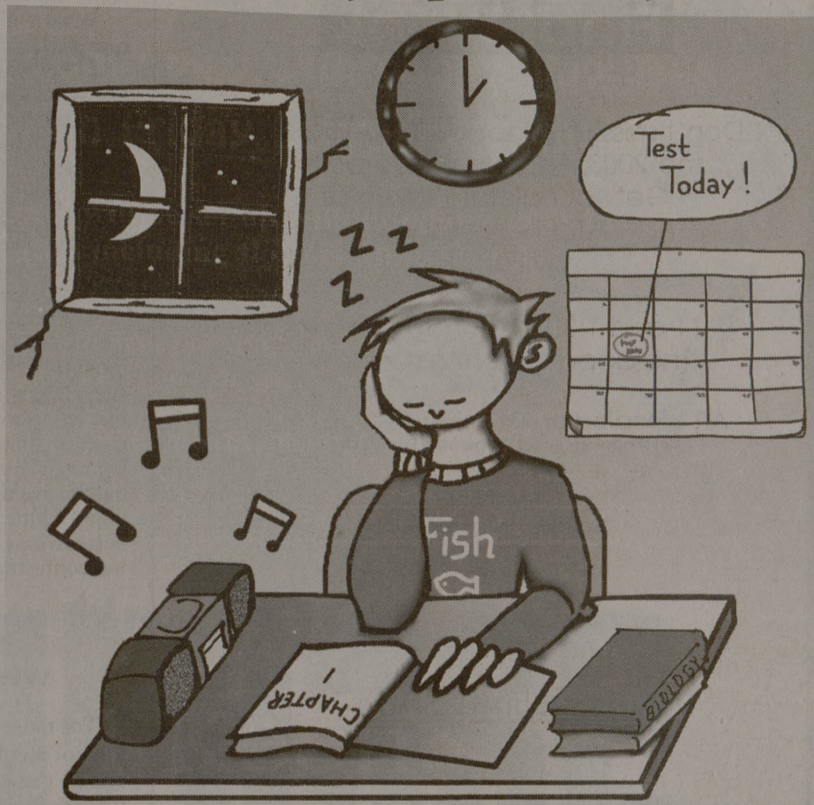
David Moyer, a freshman biomedical engineering major, said high school wasn't challenging.

"I think teachers should have taught on a more rigorous level, and that would have helped us adjust better our first semester of college," Moyer said. "In high school we were given notebook tests to check our organizational skills, and they counted as a test grade; anyone can keep all their papers in a notebook."

Moyer said he started studying a lot more this semester and has found a place to study that suits him.

"I probably study about three hours a day now, compared to last semester when I studied only seven to 10 hours a week," he said. "I found that the best place to study in the dorms is in the study carrels; there are three or so per floor."

Moyer also said that he attended four



RADHIKA THIRUNARAYANAN • THE BATTALION

supplemental instruction sessions last semester that helped him out, and he said he plans to attend them again this semester if they have any for his classes.

Assistant Director for the Center of Academic Enhancement Joel McGee said the center offers several services to students.

McGee said about 85 percent of the students that enrolled in CAEN 101, "Succeeding in College Courses," during the fall semester were freshmen.

McGee said 100 and 200 level

courses, which mainly have underclassmen enrolled in them, are the primary target for SI programs.

"We do tend to find that many of the students we work with are not as prepared for college classes as one would hope, but usually if students are willing to seek help, they can learn to be effective students," McGee said.

The Center for Academic Enhancement is located at 525 Blocker, and can be accessed at its Web site, www.tamu.edu/cae.

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