

AGGIELIFE

Live and learn: The freshman code

By Rachel Hollon
THE BATTALION

Every year, a new crop of students enters Texas A&M. They are virtually free of parental control for the first time, free to choose whether to go to class or sleep in and free to make important decisions: they are the freshman class.

Freshman year can be full of pitfalls for freshmen who do not learn from the mistakes of those who went before them.

The trials, experiences and lessons of freshman year are important parts of college life. Feeling invincible, enjoying newfound freedom and skipping classes are just some of the overwhelming sensations of entering college.

However, there are many pitfalls that unsuspecting freshmen fall into.

Buck Barner, a senior nuclear engineering major, fell into the trap of freshman mistakes. Barner had all early classes his freshman year in college.

"It's no wonder why most 8 a.m. classes are open to the young freshmen. The upperclassmen have been there and know better," Barner said. They know the pain of going to bed at 3 a.m. and waking up at 7:30 to get to their 8 a.m. class."

After two weeks of dragging himself out of bed, Barner began skipping class.

Foregoing class except for the review and test days seemed like a good plan while he was curled up in his sheets. However, when Barner received a 'C' for his 8 a.m. class, he realized he had sacrificed his grade for sleep.

Now, Barner said, he makes it to his early classes and has avoided the inevitable wrath of scholastic probation.

Barner's advice for the freshman class is that, while it is OK to take a day or two off every once in awhile, freshmen should go to class more times than they skip to avoid a 2.0 grade-point ratio or lower.

Bret Beavers, a senior biomedical sciences major, found that sometimes freshman year can be lonely.

Beavers said he regrets not joining any of A&M's hundreds of organizations his freshman year because he missed the opportunity to meet

people.

Beavers said he found it hard to meet new people when he came to A&M.

"I come from a small town so I didn't know a lot of people when I moved to College Station," he said. "I didn't live in the dorms either so that made it even harder to meet people. I mainly just hung out with a couple of my friends from high school."

He attributes his well-rounded personality and happiness to organizations he later joined.

"I'm happier and less stressed now. I've learned to have a much better balance between school and fun," Beavers said.

Beavers' advice for incoming freshmen is that it is a lot easier to join organizations to get to know people, but keep your priorities in order.

Now when he goes out, Beaver said he always runs into someone he knows.

Brandon Foster, a junior marketing major, found that living in the residence halls isn't always a dream come true. He went potluck to find a roommate his freshman year.

Foster said he had an idea of what his college roommate would be like-- like many people, he had a vision that his roommate would turn into his best friend.

Instead, Foster and his roommate had personality differences that made living together difficult.

"It got to the point to where we got into a fist fight over a movie," he said.

Foster said that although he learned a lot from the experience, he wouldn't recommend it.

Daniel Antonio, a senior industrial engineering major, found out the hard way that long-distance relationships sometimes hinder the first year of college.

Antonio began dating a girl at the end of his senior year of high school. They were attending different colleges, so they decided not to put too much pressure on the relationship.

they could.

The first semester proved to be difficult. They both shut themselves off from getting to know new people, and still talked to each other almost every night.

"Neither of us joined any clubs or really went out to parties," Antonio said.

After a wonderful Christmas break with each other, they both headed off for their respective schools.

Antonio said he stayed in his room and continued to shut himself away from a full college experience, while his girlfriend became more active in school and started making friends.

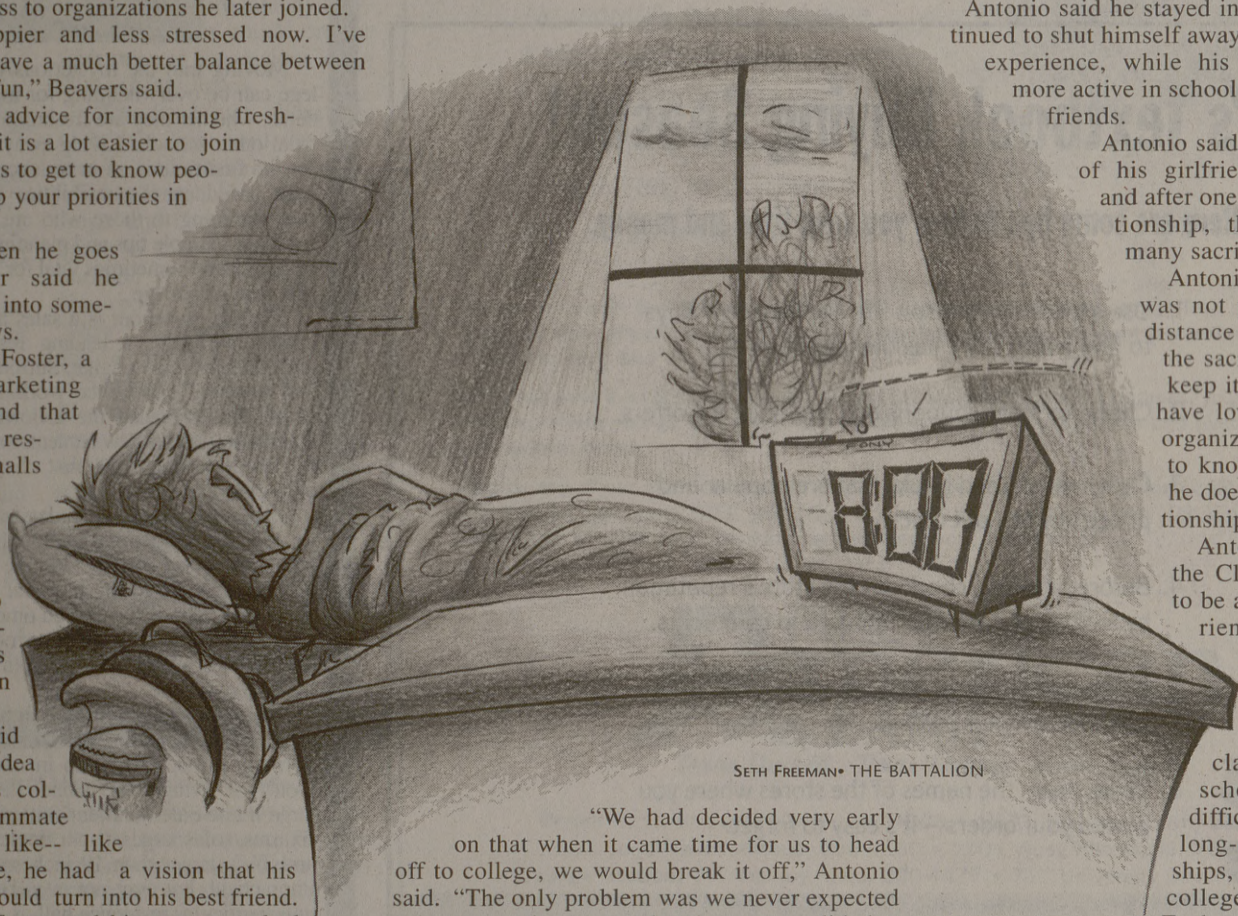
Antonio said he became jealous of his girlfriend's new lifestyle and after one argument, the relationship, that had taken so many sacrifices was over.

Antonio said his mistake was not pursuing the long-distance relationship, but the sacrificing he made to keep it. He said he would have loved to have joined organizations and gotten to know new people, but he doesn't regret the relationship.

Antonio's advice for the Class of 2007 is not to be afraid of new experiences, especially during your freshman year.

Whether it is sleeping through classes, being on scholastic probation, difficult roommates or long-distance relationships, the first year of college is never easy. Each student has his own

perspective on college, and if there is one thing to be learned from others' mistakes it is how to avoid them and get the most out of the first year of college.



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"We had decided very early on that when it came time for us to head off to college, we would break it off," Antonio said. "The only problem was we never expected to grow as close to each other as we did that summer."

When it came time to go to school, they did not want to break up, and tried to rectify the situation by agreeing to see each other as often as

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