

AGGIELIFE

THE BATTALION

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They work hard for the money

By Jose Cruz
THE BATTALION

When Stephanie Williamson, a sophomore general studies major, comes home from work, the last thing she wants to see is a messy apartment.

"It's frustrating to come home from working all day and see the apartment in a mess and my roommates just sitting around," Williamson said. "I have two roommates who don't work, so they have much more free time than me."

Students such as Williamson find they have less time for themselves when working to pay their way through college. Williamson said her hectic work schedule keeps her busy and limits the amount of time she has to relax.

There are many reasons students such as Williamson work while attending college. Some students' parents don't make enough money to finance a college education. Other parents find it difficult paying for more than one child in college at the same time. Still other college students say they are simply looking to be independent from their parents.

The cost of attending a major university is increasing. According to the Texas A&M Financial Services, the estimated cost of attending A&M for new students including tuition and fees, books, supplies, transportation, room and board, incidental and living expenses for a standard nine-month school year is \$13,745. The cost for out-of-state students will rise to \$20,353 next year.

Financial Services offers loans, grants and work-study programs for students who qualify for assistance. According to Financial Services, to find out if students qualify for assistance they must fill out a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form. FAFSA is a federal program aimed at helping students in economic need.

Students such as Jamie Ellis, a junior nutrition science major and A&M student worker, said working 35 hours a week doesn't leave her time to be involved in any University extracurricular activities.

"I've wanted to be more involved but honestly, I just want to get home after working," she said. "For my resume, I will focus more on work experience as

opposed to activities. I consider work an extracurricular activity."

Williamson said she makes sacrifices because she has to work.

"I don't get to eat out as much. It's hard to eat out when you have to worry about paying your next tuition installment," Williamson said. "Also, I usually miss the football games because I have to work on the weekends."

Many students find that working provides a structure for them to plan around and make more efficient use of their time.

"I had so much free time that I didn't use it wisely. After getting a job, it allowed me to budget my time better and my grades actually improved," Ellis said.

There are other benefits to working while going to school. Williamson described how working makes a person more well-rounded.

"I think I would still have a job even if my parents paid for everything. I learned how to plan better," she said. "It keeps me balanced and helps me manage my money and time."

Working students have learned through firsthand experience and offer tips for incoming freshmen facing the prospect of working while attending college.

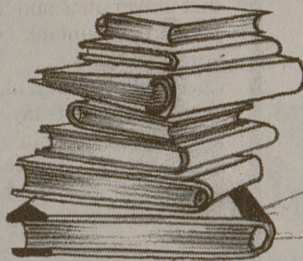
Jennifer Moriarty, a senior political science major, said she knows many students in credit card debt. While credit cards may initially seem to be an attractive means of paying, it doesn't always work out the way one plans, she said.

"My advice would be that if you don't have money to spend, don't spend it," Moriarty said.

Ellis agrees, saying she thinks credit cards are tricky.

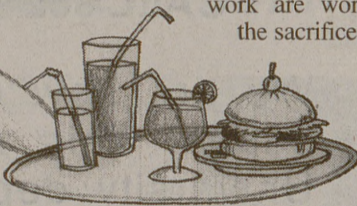
"It always seems like you will be able to pay it off but in reality you aren't really able to pay it off," Ellis said. "I just save my money for things I really want and need."

Students advise looking in the Sunday newspaper for coupons. Moriarty said she thinks it's a great way to save a few extra dollars that not many people take advantage of.



work and school is difficult at first," she said.

Ellis said the hardships of having to work are worth the sacrifices.



"Having a job has prepared me for life after college. I am more familiar with the interview process," Ellis said. "Having a job disciplines you, teaches you how to get along in the work place and gives you hands-on experience. Though I would recommend getting a job related to your major."

Greg Morehead, a senior biology major, has four years of experience of working while going to college and said he understands what it takes to succeed in college while maintaining a worthwhile job.

"I usually work between 30 to 40 hours a week," Morehead said. "If you have to work in college I would remind students that first and foremost you are here to learn so that you can have a better job than you do in college, so don't lose sight of that."

Throughout the years, Morehead said he has learned the value of hard work in a job situation and in class.

"You have to be more effective at time management, because you don't have as much free time as you would think and it's really easy

to get behind in a hurry," Morehead said. "People who don't work are going to have a bit of a shock when they leave college and get their first job. They will have to face becoming completely independent and taking care of themselves for the first time."

She also advises waiting until one's freshman year is complete to seek work and urges students to take advantage of the A&M financial aid loans that

don't charge interest until after graduation.

Williamson offers some other helpful tips she said she learned the hard way.

"If you have to work, I would keep it at a minimum number of hours because balancing

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