

AGGIELIFE

THE BATTALION

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State of mind

Students from other states make necessary adjustments to Texas, A&M way of life

By Jose Cruz
THE BATTALION

Karen Putnam, a junior accounting major, grew up in Anchorage, Ala., and always planned to go to school out of state.

"Alaska has a few universities, so your options are very limited if you want to earn a higher education," Putnam said.

Every year, graduating high school seniors decide which university they will attend if they decide to continue their education.

Many of those students choose to remain close to home. Going to a nearby college makes sense for these students for many reasons but, even so, some choose to leave their home states and pursue a complete education far from home.

Putnam said students in Texas are in a great position for choosing a place to study. She said some people believe Texas has some of the best public universities in the country.

While Putnam is glad to be an Aggie, she said it was hard to adjust to a different environment and that she still misses home.

"I really like the snow, so the constant heat and humidity of College Station is uncomfortable. To me, anything above 70 degrees is hot," she said.

Apart from the weather, Putnam said she misses the Alaskan landscape because it is so beautiful and people regularly go outdoors to hike and fish, and that adjusting to the Texas flatlands was difficult for her.

"I also like the fact that there are less people where I'm from and we never have to worry about traffic," she said.

Some students have had an easier transition from their home states to Texas.

Ashley Cassel, a junior communication major, grew up in Morton, Ill., and didn't follow everyone else's footsteps leaving high school.

"Only two people out of 200 from my high school graduating class decided to go to college out of state. When I first came here I didn't know a single person," she said.

Although the first year away from home can be rough, Cassel said she doesn't miss home anymore.

"I love the weather here. It's nice to not have to wear three layers of clothes when you go outside. I didn't notice how rude people were up north until I went back home (to Illinois) after living here in Texas for a few years. I have grown to love Texas so much that I convinced my parents to move down here as well. They are retired and now live in Conroe," she said.

Erin Glynn, a junior kinesiology major, grew up in Mandeville, La., and agrees that moving far away from home can be tough.

"The moving experience can be scary for someone who is 17 or 18 years old, but after high school in Louisiana, I was ready for something different. Starting over in a new place makes you a well-rounded and stronger person because you experience a different culture and learn from it," Glynn said.

While finding comfort close to home may be one of the reasons many students attend a university within their state, students such as Glynn explain that tuition is probably the biggest factor in effecting where many go to school.

According to Texas A&M's official Web site, spring 2004 tuition for residents of Texas was \$101 per semester credit hour, while tuition for non-residents was \$337 per semester credit hour.

Even though tuition is a great deal more expensive for non-resident students, students such as Cassel think the experience is worth the price.

"I liked my high school because I had a lot of really close friends, but now whenever I go back I see them and they still hang out with the

same people from high school," Cassel said. "They haven't met any other people. It's kind of sad. I'm glad I decided to come here because I've met a lot of great people the past three years."

Glynn also said she thinks living in Texas has made her a better and more mature person now that she has lived here for a few years.

"Texas has a much more conservative culture," Glynn said. "Louisiana is much more of a party culture. Parents used to buy us alcohol on the weekends. There are definitely better morals here at A&M."

Even though Putnam still hasn't adjusted to the hot Texas weather, she said she doesn't regret coming to A&M at all.

"Getting used to a different environment can be difficult, but I'm glad I decided to move out here," Putnam said. "Now that I look back I would have missed out on so much if I decided to stay home. A&M has offered me things like a great education and career networking that will ultimately make me more successful in life."

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— Erin Glynn
junior kinesiology major



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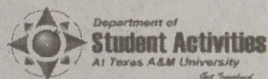
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