

## Survival of the fish

### Seniors, professors offer wisdom to freshmen for handling first week of college

By Kirk Ehlig  
THE BATTALION

On his first day of school at Texas A&M, Keller Wall, a senior mechanical engineering major, decided he was going to start things on the right track by eating a healthy breakfast and taking his vitamins before class. He took some vitamin supplements and headed from Howard Hall over to Sbisa for a good, all-you-can-eat breakfast.

He eagerly piled his tray with nutritious items, but as he found a place to sit he felt uneasy, and before he could take two steps toward the bathroom, he vomited all over the floor.

Later, Wall realized that if he had read the instructions on the vitamins container, he would have known that the supplements were to be taken after eating, not before.

As new freshmen try to feel confident and prepared for their first week of college, a little advice from seasoned students can prevent new students from feeling lost or confused, especially within a 45,000-member student body on a 5,200-acre campus.

To prevent these symptoms, some seniors and faculty members have offered do's and don'ts for getting settled at A&M.

Many students say transportation is an annoying hassle at A&M. When it comes to parking on campus, Wall says don't even try.

"Before we had segregated lots, I'd go to the Zachry parking lot and I'd drive around for 45 minutes, maybe an hour looking for a spot," Wall said. "I could have ridden the bus."

But, Wall says he has learned from experience that the bus system isn't always dependable.

"The bus route helps, but don't count on the bus coming," Wall said. "Don't come out five minutes before it gets there because I came out 10 minutes before my test started once and the bus never came. The lights in town were out and so all the traffic was jammed up, and I missed my test. I walked in and the prof made me take it anyway, and I failed it."

Getting your books (often hundreds of dollars' worth) can also be a hassle.

Ben Welch, director of the Center for Executive Development and a clinical associate professor for the Department of Management, deals with at least 1,200 freshmen each year. Welch advises students to purchase their textbooks after the first day of class.

"Many times, there will be three sections of the same course being offered and (the students) bought the wrong book, and now they're having to go back to get it," Welch said. "I always think it's great just to wait until the first day."

Thomas Bledsoe, a senior English major, said it's best to buy or use a book from a friend.

**INSIDER'S INPUT**

Here's some advice from some seniors and TAMU faculty members:

- Search for used textbooks
- Budget time for bus delays
- Don't go home every weekend
- Attend supplemental instruction sessions
- Get involved

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"The best thing to do is find someone who has already taken the class," Bledsoe said.

Betty Milburn, associate director of counseling for the A&M Student Counseling Service and an ATmentors coordinator, said it's not advisable for freshmen to go home every weekend, because it affects areas other than grades.

"If you're going home every weekend, you're not getting established in the community, you're not really making friends, and you're not taking advantage of the social activities that are available to you here," Milburn said.

Wall also recommended not going home every weekend.

"If you have to call your parents every night of the week, do it, but don't go home every weekend," Wall said. "It's hard to make friends, and the weekend is when everything is going on. That's when everyone has fun, and you're just missing out on a big part of college if you go home."

When it comes to budgeting work and fun, Wall's advice is to "study hard so you can play hard afterward."

Welch said it's a good idea for students to take advantage of Supplemental Instruction, commonly known as SI.

"The SI (instructors) chosen have taken the class that they are providing supplemental instruction for and have mastered how to study for and approach the class," Welch said. "I always see at least a letter grade higher for those that attend SI."

Fatima Friday, a senior biology major, said reviewing her notes before and after class has helped her remember topics covered.

"What I've learned that's really important is you should always

read your notes before you go to class, and also read your notes after class," Friday said.

Friday also said students don't always need to read every chapter in their textbooks.

"You don't necessarily have to read each chapter," she said. "The professor may say, 'Read chapters one through five,' and you have three to four other classes. Your other profs start telling you to do the same thing, and you're working 20-plus hours a week. It's impossible."

Welch said it is important that freshmen make time for themselves.

"Often students are so committed to success in all areas of their life that they experience burn-out," Welch said. "Don't get so busy that you fail to stop and smell the roses."

One way for students to do this, Welch said, is by getting involved at A&M.

"There are over 750 organizations for incoming freshman to get involved with," Welch said. "When we talk about the Aggie spirit, students need to experience it, and it comes from 'The Other Education.' Learn about the traditions that are at the heart of our University."

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