

# Graduates share college tips

## Inside scoop of what college is really like

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The day has come. Parents and their kids walk up and down the halls, hugging and crying, saying their goodbyes.

For some, it's the day they've been waiting for their whole life. But for others, their worst fear has finally become a reality: college.

Past graduates shared their experience about how college life really is, such as Albany graduate Steve Phillips.

"When you are from a small town like Albany, you never know what to expect," Phillips said. "You just have to learn to adapt, and once you get a feel for everything, it's really fun."

Phillips is starting his freshman year at Texas Tech University this fall, along with Molly Lee, who is classified as a sophomore, thanks to dual-credit courses.

"College is honestly the best time of your life if you choose to make it that way," Lee said. "I know people hear this all the time, but you have to get involved on campus."

Sophomore Conor Wilson is involved in many Tech campus organizations.

"The football games are out of this world fun, and I love my sorority," Wilson said. "They really do mean it when they say you find your lifelong friends in college."

With a year under their belts, sophomores have a different attitude about returning to campus this semester, such as Kathryn Hamilton, who is attending the University of Arkansas.

"As a sophomore, you aren't as wrapped up in the transition and kind of 'have it down' in a sense," Hamilton said.

However, freshman year was tough, according to Hamilton.

"Being from out of state, I felt truly independent," Hamilton said. "That's the thing freshmen are usually most excited for, but for me it was a really scary process of being completely on my own for



Albany alumni Rob Montgomery (top) poses with friends at the University of Texas at Austin. Molly Lee (right) is congratulated by sister Lexie after receiving a bid from the Texas Tech chapter of Chi Omega in August. PHOTOS PROVIDED BY ROB MONTGOMERY AND MOLLY LEE

the first time in my life."

Sometimes college turns out to be the exact opposite from how it's been advertised.

"Throughout my childhood I heard about how terrible it was to have to live in the dorm," Texas Tech sophomore Lewis Kelly said. "While living in the dorm, you have a meal plan for the whole year, you are close to all your classes, and if you're lucky, your friends live right down the hall from you."

A warning was issued by one former graduate.

"You really do need to go to class," junior at University of Texas at Austin, Rob Montgomery said. "That is the biggest thing older people tell you, and I really believe it is the difference maker. You can read all you want, but if you don't have the professor's perspective, it can become really confusing."

Wilson agrees, saying the col-

lege experience has a serious side.

"It's not all rainbows and sunshine," Wilson said. "They didn't tell me about the part where you're literally responsible for every action or choice you make."

Just beginning his first semester at Tech, Phillips was shocked at the number of people in his college classes.

"My whole graduating class was 23 people, and my smallest class at Tech is 450 people," Phillips said. "I have still yet to see the same people twice."

Lee also agrees that college courses are much different than high school classes.

"In college you're expected to anticipate things and know what to do without being told," Lee said. "You have to do things like bring your own scantrons to your tests and be able to take a 50-question test based solely on the few pages of



lecture notes you took yourself in class."

Attending a large, out-of-state college, Hamilton said college course options are vast.

"You are able to be more selective with courses closer to your interests," Hamilton said. "Professors usually have too many students to hear about your concerns or complaints about your classes, so you have to learn to deal with it by yourself."

Wilson has warned that some classes require more time than others.

"Some aren't hard at all and are a breeze, but there are some like my anatomy classes that you have to devote a lot of time to," Wilson said.

Transitioning to the routine of college can cause major adjustments.

"The biggest adjustment I had to make was balancing my free and social time," Lee said. "Your parents aren't around to tell you what you can and cannot do, which also means no one is making you do anything anymore."

Others have had no problem adjusting to the college life.

"The toughest part was moving all of my stuff into my dorm," Phillips said. "Nothing else has really bothered me."

From Wilson's point of view, independence has caused the biggest adjustments.

"Focusing on myself and not worrying about what other people think has been a huge thing I've had to get used to," Wilson said. "I have had to learn not to rely on people as much, which has made me a stronger, more independent person."

The former Albany students had tips they wanted to share.

"Buy a planner and make yourself use it," Lee said. "I never balanced my time, which didn't work out well."

Kelly stressed the importance of applying early.

"Getting your applications in quickly so you can qualify for early admission will make for a much more relaxed and enjoyable senior year," Kelly said.

Wilson stressed the importance of prioritizing.

"Stay focused on what you're really there for, which should be an education," Wilson said. "Stay true to yourself and strengthen your relationship with God because this time in your life is the biggest transition you will have faced so far."

Parents continue to be important during college, too.

"Stay in touch with your parents," Wilson said. "They can be literal life savers in college."