

Graduates share college tips

Inside scoop of what college is really like

BY RYLIE SCOTT
News Editor

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."

Band always puts best foot forward

Members share marching experiences

BY GENEVIEVE STUNKARD
Features Editor

High school marching bands are a staple of school spirit, starting off each new year with music and merriment. Pep rallies, halftime shows, and the occasional parade allow the band of performers to give back to the community in the form of exciting entertainment.

The elaborate uniforms, degree of concentration, and arduous practices make up a culture that certainly marches to the beat of its own drum.

Junior Sydney Key, who has been playing saxophone since fifth grade, was chosen to serve as this year's field director by band director John Stockdale. As both a band member and a varsity cheerleader, she splits her Friday nights between the two organizations.

"There's a lot of pressure, because I'm expected to do my job as a cheerleader well and then turn around to join the band," Key said. "As soon as the buzzer for halftime sounds, I rush to get my instrument, music, and whistle and make it over to where the rest of the band is. I get in my place, and I make sure everyone is being respectful to the other band."

As field director, Key is responsible for providing commands as to when the band should begin their routine and when they should play. Key, unlike field directors from most other schools, marches alongside her fellow band members throughout the routine.

"I get everyone lined up in their place, and then I start the show," Key said. "I get really nervous having to walk out before everyone else does (to give the starting command), and it puts even more pressure on me when Mr. Stockdale announces my name over the

speakers."

Key describes feeling even more pressured by the way she's dressed in comparison to the other band members.

"It's definitely strange being in a cheer uniform while marching," Key said. "I stick out like a sore thumb with it on, so I think it's more noticeable if I mess up. Also, my shoes are a different color than everybody else's, so if I'm out of step, it really shows."

Sophomore band member and fellow varsity cheerleader McKenna Thompson says she can relate to Key's situation.

"I feel a lot of stress to do the marching routine correctly because of my uniform, too," Thompson said.

Despite the tension that accompanies performing in front of the bleachers filled with fans, Thompson thinks putting on the show is a noteworthy experience.

"Once we begin marching, I love listening to how we all sound together on the open field compared to inside the crowded band hall," Thompson said.

Key agrees.

"I enjoy the games and the whole environment," Key said. "The energy from the stands is contagious."

After each nerve-wracking show, Key is glad to have the night's halftime performance complete.

"There's always a major sense of relief when we finally click off the field and over to our tunnel," Key said.

Rehearsing the show is done during many strenuous practices, and perfecting the routine does not come without hard work and dedication. The marching band began its practices a week before the first day of school, and continues to practice every day during second period.

"I don't like having to go outside first thing in the morning to practice, because it's either freezing or unbearably hot," Key said. "So, you're either cold all day or you're sweaty and gross."



Sophomore band student Sloan Graham agrees.

"My least favorite thing about band is having to march in the mornings because it's so hot right now, and we have to do such repetitive marches," Graham said.

Thompson believes that the key to improving problematic practice sessions lies in students' behavior.

"The hardest part about marching would definitely be the uncooperative people," Thompson said. "I think the only members of the band should be those who want to contribute to our cause."

Key also wishes some members of the band were more committed.

"There are a lot of people who don't respect the program," Key said. "If we can't respect ourselves, there's no way anyone else will respect us. Our band is full of wasted potential, and that's quite discouraging."

However, Key tries to keep a positive mindset.

"I really try to encourage everyone," Key said. "I try to make sure everyone knows what they're doing because when the band makes a mistake, I feel terrible."

For the most part, band mem-



Drum major Sydney Key (left) guides the members of the Raging Red Band through their halftime routine during practice recently. Key, a junior, serving as field director for the band for the first time, still plays her saxophone during the performances. The 60-member group is planning a trip over spring break. Band members played in the stands (below) during the football season opener in Colorado City in August. PHOTOS BY RACHEL HILL AND CURRY WILSON

bers who have had a year or more of experience feel confident in the routines they currently march, expressing a desire to perform more complicated shows.

"It gets pretty difficult to march when you haven't quite gotten your music memorized, so you have to choose between playing well or marching correctly," Key said. "However, I think that most of the drills we do are very simple while being very cool visually, but I also think the band has the potential to do some very complex drills."

Thompson agrees.

"I wish the drills were a bit more complex, because the basic marching up and down the field gets boring for both the band and the audience," Thompson said.

Thompson and Key both say

they intend to stay in band throughout high school.

"I plan to stay in marching band until I graduate," Thompson said. "I've always had a love for music, and I'd even love to remain in band through college!"

Key shares similar ideas.

"I definitely plan on sticking with band throughout high school because I genuinely enjoy playing my saxophone," Key said. "However, I'm unsure about doing college band because that's a whole new level of difficulty."

In the end, both Thompson and Key expressed that the rewards that come with being in marching band are well worth the effort required.

"I wouldn't trade being in the band for anything," Key said. "I love the instruments and all the people that come along with it."