



# HEARTS DIVIDED

## Ditching burnt orange for maroon

Story by Maryhelen Guerrero, Staff Writer

In a city synonymous with Longhorn pride, an increasing number of students are trading burnt orange for maroon, choosing Texas A&M over the University of Texas.

With tensions rising ahead of the highly anticipated football game, players will face off on the field for the first time since 2011. Students raised in Austin or from a family of proud Longhorns are making the unconventional decision to become Aggies. A&M undergraduates share personal stories, motives and experiences that led them to embrace the Aggie Spirit. Longhorn legacies are breaking the pattern and welcoming something new.

First-generation Aggie Miguel Loredo chose A&M after discovering the community and traditions. Having visited t.u. during middle school, he found the campus lacked the charm and excitement he sought. In contrast, his first visit to A&M revealed a college town atmosphere, where he says that A&M defines College Station. The political science junior was one of three students that came to A&M. With his involvement in organizations like Fish Camp, a first-year student experience, he was able to form friendships.

“Nothing caught my attention about UT, I knew I wanted to go somewhere else,” Loredo said. “The first time coming to campus, I ended up liking it so much more because overall, how A&M is built really is a college town and you can see where campus ends unlike UT where half of it is downtown.”

When choosing to decide between the two universities, Loredo also considered the best financial option as a first-generation college student. He is a Regent Scholar and highlights the best resources A&M offers, including scholarships, safe transportation and housing. Loredo said most of his friends from t.u. had to live with their families because living near campus is costly.

“If you hop on the Austin metro bus, you will most likely be sitting next to strangers who also live downtown,” Loredo said.

Despite a family legacy at t.u., including a father who was a professor, ag leadership & development junior Mia Broyles chose A&M after experiencing



its welcoming environment. She felt A&M’s slower pace and stronger sense of community was a better fit.

“Life is a lot faster [at t.u.] whereas at A&M everything is centered on its culture and there’s more time to soak in and appreciate [the college town],” Broyles said.

Broyles, a leadership and development major, wasn’t familiar with A&M traditions initially, until she joined communities such as Fish Camp and a Freshman Leadership Organization called FAST, Freshman Aggies Spreading Tradition. Her connections there led to friendships, connections and current roommate arrangements.

“I was in Houston the other day wearing an A&M shirt and three people stopped me and were like ‘Do you go to A&M?’ and they were all older, and I said ‘yes’ and they talked about how much they loved the university,” Broyles said.

Now that both schools are in the SEC, she finds the rivalry even more exciting.

Senior Ben Scott chose A&M despite growing up as a Longhorn. With a passion for engineering and a desire for a new experience from Austin, he was drawn to A&M’s larger campus and community. Financial considerations also played a role as the university offered lower tuition. While

his family has deep roots at t.u., he felt no animosity in his decision and said his family respects A&M as a reputable institution, despite the friendly rivalry and jokes at family gatherings.

“There’s a lot on the line coming in November, but it’s all friendly banter,” Scott said.

Scott appreciates that A&M accepts more students and the scale of its academic programs which provide diverse opportunities.

“Having an engineering program that has 25,000 students is crazy,” Scott said. “But at the same time, they do make you feel like a student in your major which is impressive to do with so many students.”

Scott believes the loyalty of the 12th Man where nearly half the stadium is filled with students that create a strong sense of community among fans who show up to support the university.

“The environment is based on how the team is playing [at t.u.], but the environment [here] is not based on how the Aggies are doing, it’s based on how much we love our team no matter how they are doing and that’s been so apparent,” Scott said.

Although Loredo, Broyles and Scott come from different families, they all agree on one thing: we must BTHO t.u.