A Year in the CHC Residential Community

Being on Commonwealth Honors College’s student staff since September 2012 and continuing (at least I hope) through my graduation in May 2015 has provided me with a unique perspective on the transition from Goodell to the CHC Residential Community. I was deeply involved in presenting the Community, and what it would be, to the media, parents and the students who would inhabit it. Only through getting to know our exceptionally qualified staff did I begin to fully understand the immense impact having a centralized home, linked inherently with 1,500 students, would have on CHC.

The only qualification that informs that perspective further is my residency in the Community throughout this academic year.

Living in a new community, with no precedents or traditions, seemed like a daunting task, particularly living with three random apartment-mates. I had previously lived with great friends from high school during my freshman and sophomore years. However, while we may not have become best friends, I have had a wonderful experience living with my roommates. In the fall, the “majors” of our room read as follows: architecture, biology, physics and political science/economics. That’s a pretty diverse educational background for four people, and, for the duration, I have learned about the pedagogical differences and similarities between our studies and juxtaposed ideas and theories in politics and physics.

The physical benefits are clear. The sheer convenience of actually living on-campus, near DuBois, the Campus Center, my classes and workplaces, was one of the major reasons I chose to live in CHCRC. Having a brand-new bathroom and kitchen doesn’t
hurt either. Even absent the amenities, simply living in a new space is thrilling; I can only imagine that it is akin, in a small way, to the opening of Southwest Residential Area in the 1970s.

There are disadvantages as well. I did not move off-campus with all of my friends. I have to park in Lot 12, far behind the Mullins Center and Parking Services. I have to travel off-campus often and do not have many close friends that live in my building. That may be a function of the novelty and inexperience of CHCRC. I lived in Van Meter and Grayson with non-honors students and many of my friends are non-honors students, who don’t have the opportunity to live here.

Regardless, the living and learning benefits of CHCRC are numerous, and I would not trade in the experience to live off-campus with my friends for an extra year. I can’t speak for first-year students who may choose to remain here throughout their University careers, but spending one of my four years living in the CHC Residential Community was a beneficial choice that allowed me to focus on my work and my studies.

Oh, and the late-night café didn’t hurt either.

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