Ryan’s Question: What’s the atmosphere like in college? Can you feel certain distinct moods in the air — for instance, if it’s the week before finals, is there a lot of stress around?

Amberly’s Answer: With midterms taking place over the course of the next two weeks, I figured now would be an excellent time to answer this particular question!

I’m honestly not sure if there’s an overall distinct mood. There might be with smaller colleges on campus, but honestly? UMass is so big that it would be inaccurate to create an overall generalization. I was talking to my friends about this the other day — the mood between Southwest and Northeast, and Central/Orchard Hill is so different because of the fact that the hill of Central and O. Hill divides them from the rest of the campus, therefore creating some sort of ... subculture, you could say.

Like, I live at the CHCRC, which is right next to Southwest. There are some student businesses I’ve never been to that I know are in Central and O. Hill, like Greeno Sub Shop and Sweets N’ Moore. I learned the other day from my Central friends that one of the residential buildings, Butterfield, has a Koffee Haus every month. I nearly got an asthma attack the other day walking up the O. Hill/Central Hill, while my friend barely broke into a sweat. Meanwhile, at the CHCRC, you have ... a bunch of nerds. (The “Nerd Forest,” as one of my floor mates dubbed us.)

I feel like I can safely say though that there is one general mood that overtakes everyone when finals and midterms season comes up — tired and stressed out. There’s a lot of pressure on college students these days that definitely wasn’t there before. It just costs so much, you know? And you don’t want to waste your parents’ hard-earned money and faith by failing an exam or essay that makes up 25% of your grade.

How do we combat that stress? Well ... I’m still trying to figure that out. I have to be
way more organized than I had to be in high school, especially this semester as I have more essays than I do exams. Therefore, it’s not like high school where there’s one special week for midyears and then it’s one and done. Nope, this is on my own time now, and that’s been the trickiest part of my second semester — trying to manage that time with these newfound educational duties.

It’s been hard, but I know one thing that always, definitely helps with my finals/midterms mood, as well as many other students’.

PUPPIES!

Yep, puppies. UMass, bless them, always brings therapy dogs for a few hours to the Student Union Ballroom when finals/midterms season is in full swing. There are about fifteen dogs for students to pet, hug, and play with, and they’re all some of the cutest dogs I’ve ever seen. My personal favorite is Peanut, a tiny poodle mix. The dogs came back on Monday (so, yesterday), and I can tell you that my spirits feel instantly lifted when I saw their faces.

My spirits will also feel instantly lifted when I go on spring break. Not only will I get to see you and Mom and Dad again, but nearly all my midterms will be over too! I absolutely can’t wait for when it comes.

Blog Column:
Amberly's Answers

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