Ryan’s Question: What are the pros and cons of dorm life?

Amberly’s Answer: Hi Ryan! So, I’m going to tackle this question for my blog post, simply because I know that while a lot of people have figured out housing already next year, there are still quite a few people leftover who are debating what to do. I fall into the former category. This year, I’ve been living in Sycamore (an Honors freshmen dorm), but next semester I’ll be moving to Southwest – specifically Crampton, which is home to the Nuance DRC.

You might be wondering, what is a DRC? Well, a DRC stands not for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (a country within Africa), but actually for Defined Residential Community. What that basically means is that there are specific residence halls (i.e. Crampton) that designate floors for students who want to live with friends and people who share similar interests and identities. There are a whole lot of DRCs, which you can learn about here, but the particular one I am going to be living in—Nuance—is for those who want to familiarize themselves with intersectionality and social justice.

That’s not the only option though! Some people choose to live in non-DRCs across various residential areas across campus (Northeast, Central, Southwest, Sylvan, and the CHCRC). Some choose to live in North Apartments, and others choose to live completely off campus altogether.

There are many pros and cons to living on campus, specifically in a dorm. The CHCRC (Commonwealth Honors College Residential Community) is nice because it’s been built fairly recently. However, there’s not enough room for every Honors student can live there, so that brings up the debate – do I still live on campus in a dorm, or do I go off campus?

Some people chose to stay on campus for a number of reasons. For me in particular, it
was because I still wanted to be in the hub of university life and activity, and to be able to walk to my classes within a reasonable distance. I also wanted to be close to the Dining Halls, because I can’t really cook . . . at all. I chose Nuance specifically because of the type of community it aims to achieve.

However, there are a lot of reasons why somebody wouldn’t want to live in a dorm on campus. The main reason (from what I gather) is money. You already have to pay about $14,000 in tuition and fees ($31,000 if you’re out of state). Nearly everyone is required to have a meal plan, which can add $3,000 to your bill, depending on the plan you get. So already, you’re paying $17,000 or $31,000 just to be a student at this university — without considering other fees that are probably thrown into the mix.

Average housing adds about another $3,000 to your plate, but depending on where you want to live, it can get up to $6,000. If you’re an RA, you can get the fee waived, but there’s only so many RA positions — which leaves you back at square one paying for on-campus housing. If you can afford it, that’s great, but if you can’t, there’s likely a chance you can find some housing for cheaper off campus.

So, for me personally, I am happy to stay on campus and still be an active part of dorm life. It's just that there are some people who don’t want to or simply can’t, and those are all valid reasons too. Hope this helps!

Blog Column:
Amberly's Answers

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