

October 2009

Dear Hokie Parents and Students:

We are pleased to be a part of the Hokie experience by offering a variety of housing and dining options to your student. We want to provide you with some information about on-campus housing for the upcoming 2010-2011 academic school year. We believe it is important for parents and students to hear about the on-campus housing process so you can make an informed decision. Knowing “the whole story” allows you to evaluate offers from off-campus leasing agents, as well as to dispel a few myths about housing in Blacksburg.

Each year, all first-time freshmen are guaranteed a space in our residence hall system however on-campus housing is not guaranteed to returning students. Returning undergraduate students not in the Corps of Cadets, or an on-campus fraternity and sorority, must request housing for the next year. Students who want to be eligible for a contract offer for the upcoming academic year must enter the Housing Application Process (HAP) during January 2010 by visiting our web site, www.studentprograms.vt.edu, and following the provided instructions. Simply entering HAP (known informally as “the housing lottery”) does not obligate a student to an on-campus contract; a student is not obligated until he or she completes a contract offer. However, if a student does not participate in HAP, it is unlikely that he/she would receive a contract offer later, outside of the process.

On Wednesday 14 October the Housing Office will be hosting an Open House from 5pm-7pm in New Hall West. We encourage all students to come and discuss both their on and off-campus housing options with the Assignments Staff and seek answers to any housing questions they may have.

Myth 1: Very few students are offered housing contracts from the lottery.

Reality: During the first week in February, the housing lottery will be completed and students are notified if they will receive an offer for on-campus housing. In the past several years, 85-100 percent of returning students who participated in HAP received a contract offer. Later in February, if space permits, we may make a second round of contract offers using the HAP applicant pool. If students do not have a contract offer by the end of February, we encourage them to seek off-campus accommodations. Students who did not enter the computerized application process may place their names on a waiting list. We sometimes can make offers to students on this list, but only after we have exhausted offers to HAP participants.

Myth 2: Housing in Blacksburg fills up fast – you should sign a lease as soon as possible.

Reality: The housing market in Blacksburg follows the “college town” academic year cycle. Many off-campus leases run from August to August to maximize occupancy in the off-campus market. Unlike the on-campus academic year only leases, most off-campus facilities require a 12-month lease. Some off-campus students will decide to stay in Blacksburg over the summer while others will attempt to find a sublease, if allowed, for their apartment. Co-op and study abroad students especially like our leases since the lease is suspended during their absence – subleasing is not necessary.

In the past several years and continuing to the present, Blacksburg has experienced a “housing boom,” resulting in a surplus of off-campus housing. For example, several apartment complexes have opened with vacancies for the current academic year, and leasing agents are scrambling both for early lease renewals and new commitments. While premium locations, based on amenities or proximity to campus, do lease-up

earlier than others, student housing off-campus continues to be available in Blacksburg even this late into the fall semester.

Myth 3: All your student’s friends will be living in off-campus housing.

Reality: It is true that some students choose to live off-campus after their freshman year. For many students, this is an expected and healthy transition. For others, the convenience we provide with our location, included utilities, simplified billing, resident advisor support, and other on-campus amenities have them choosing to live on-campus for the duration of their academic career.

Students who decide to move off-campus are eligible for dining plans – more than 9,500 off-campus students choose to purchase a dining plan for their meals each semester. In addition, the Division of Student Affairs continues to provide support in the areas of Fraternity & Sorority Life and Student Conduct to our off-campus population.

Myth 4: It’s cheaper to live off-campus.

Reality: Although special offers can seem more attractive, comparing the costs from several local apartment communities with our on-campus housing costs, on-campus housing proves to be an economical choice.

Rates (All rates are per person)	Apartment A	Apartment B	Virginia Tech On-Campus Housing
Room	\$3,285	\$4,612	\$3,300
Cable/Internet	\$675	\$675	Included
Electricity	\$540	\$540	Included
Water/Trash	Included	\$180	Included
Telephone	\$55	\$55	Included
Total (9-month)*	\$4,555	\$6,062	\$3,300

**Rates reflect a 9-month period for comparison with on-campus academic year contracts. Rates were found in the NRV Apartment Guide, October 2009, looking at mid-range and premium housing rates. On-campus rates reflect double-occupancy in a traditional-style building for the current 2009-2010 academic year. Apartment costs listed above represent 2-bedroom apartment configurations, priced per resident, over a 9-month occupancy period. Please note: Local apartment complexes rarely offer academic year leases like on-campus housing.*

The Office of Housing and Dining Services strives to provide affordable & convenient housing and dining options to our students. We will continue to support our students whether they choose to remain on-campus, or move to an off-campus apartment and purchase one of our dining plans. Please contact us if you have questions about our housing and dining program. We encourage parents and students to discuss the benefits of living on-campus in order to make an informed decision about next year’s housing while attending Virginia Tech!