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FALL HOUSING EDITION



Students consider housing prices

By Julia Mertes
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

As the fall semester progresses, many Penn State students are tasked with making housing decisions for the upcoming academic year; and the cost of living is a prominent factor for many, who are torn between on- or off-campus housing options.

Ranked as the 64th best place to live in Pennsylvania, State College fairs slightly below the national average for its median rental prices, according to Niche.com.

According to Libby Jones, the assistant director for Off-Campus Student Support, the State College area is currently experiencing a “surplus of housing” options following the completion of several new apartment buildings.

Jones said the “demand for downtown housing remains high and the market is brisk,” despite the “expanded capacity and increased availability for downtown units” in recent years.

When searching for off-campus housing, Jones said students should consider the cost of rent, utilities, transportation and food — along with any additional expenses some apartment complexes have.

Some off-campus living options include additional fees on top of the traditional ones, like application fees, charges for amenities, redecoration fees and costly cleaning requirements, Jones said.

“Take your time and do your research,” Jones said. “Searching for your first apartment is such an exciting time, but it’s important to have a clear picture of your budget and a solid understanding of the terms of your lease.”

If students want help configuring a budget or finding their total cost of living, Jones said they can request a one-on-one meeting at the Sokolov-Miller Family Financial and Life Skills Center.

Vanshika Madaan said this is her first year living in downtown State College after living in Penn State’s South Halls in previous years.

Due to the diverse and wide-ranging housing options, Madaan (senior-community environment and development) said prospective renters should consult with



Will Aguirre/Collegian

The Standard building on Saturday, Sept. 29. The new Luxury apartment building is located on 330 W College Ave. There are many housing options with varied pricing throughout State College.

their friends and connections — along with online reviews — before settling on a property or rental.

“You just have to dig through it because there are hidden gems all around,” Madaan said. “If you want to find an affordable and cheap place, you can find it — it’s just a lot of work to try to find it.”

For Madaan, university Housing Fairs helped acquaint her with different venues around town and kickstarted her research into local rental agencies and property listings.

This fall, Penn State will hold two Housing Fairs — one in person and one online — for students to learn about the off-campus housing options available.

The in-person Housing Fair will be Sunday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the HUB-Robeson Center’s Alumni Hall.

Then, the virtual Housing Fair will be Oct. 14 from 2-4 p.m.

When searching through off-campus listings, Madaan said she made a list of priorities — aspects she needed in her living option — and a list of things she was willing to sacrifice.

By defining her priorities,

Madaan said she refined her search better and found a living option optimal for her needs and wants.

Since location was her “No. 1 priority,” Madaan said she was willing to sacrifice other factors to be near campus and eliminate transportation hassles.

For instance, Madaan found a roommate to lower the monthly rent and compromised with the lack of laundry units in the building.

When finding roommates to further distribute monthly rent between tenants, Madaan said it’s important to meet the prospective roommates beforehand to make sure the living situation will work optimally.

“You’re stuck with the person for the entire lease period, so you just want to make sure that you know the person, that they’re good and that you’ll get along,” Madaan said.

Compared to living on campus, Madaan said she spends less money on housing costs by living off campus this year — making it an “efficient option” for students.

However, she said she spends more money on food compared

to when she had a meal plan because it’s easier and less time consuming to order takeout compared to cooking each night.

According to Jones, one of the “biggest potential financial pitfalls” for students in off-campus living options is failure to purchase renter’s insurance, which minimizes the risk of having to replace personal possessions or pay for damaged property.

Jones said some students sign their lease agreeing to be responsible for “more than just their share of the lease agreement,” which she said is called joint and several liability.

Before signing a lease, Jones said students should feel comfortable with all the terms and conditions.

For clarification about one’s lease, Jones said students can utilize Student Legal Services, an organization that provides free lease reviews for students.

When students sign off-campus leases, Jones said the contracts “tend to be less flexible” than on-campus ones.

According to Jones, if students decide to study abroad, transfer colleges or move to a new

housing location, they may have difficulty getting out of their lease obligations.

At the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, many students were similarly surprised to still maintain financial responsibility for their off-campus lease despite classes shifting to remote formats, Jones said.

Some students’ living preferences have shifted due to the pandemic, but deciding on housing remains “a very personal decision” that needs careful evaluation, Jones said.

Besides leasing issues, the pandemic also impacted how students have considered prospective housing options, because rather than touring the locations in person, most had to rely on virtual tours.

As the time nears for 2022-23 housing decisions, Jones said students should be cautious and evaluate their options thoroughly.

“Trust your instincts,” Jones said. “If it feels a little off, investigate before sending money.”

Some students, like Ciaran Costello, decided to live on campus this year since the pandemic complicated his housing search last fall.

Costello (sophomore-division of undergraduate studies) said he decided to live in North Halls this year because he was looking for a suite-style living option and found virtual house hunting to be “challenging.”

Despite living on campus this year, Costello said he plans to find an off-campus apartment in the coming years. He said his first experience participating in the off-campus housing search will likely be this fall, and he said the most important factors in his search will be location and price.

Student Carianne Lovas said finding off-campus housing has been a “very stressful [experience] — a lot of times unnecessarily stressful” since the market is highly competitive.

Lovas (senior-biomedical and mechanical engineering) said she was unable to view her apartment before signing the contract last year due to the pandemic, which was less than ideal and worsened the situation.

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‘WE UPLIFT EACH OTHER’

WISE House looks to build stronger community for Penn State women in STEM

By Anjelica Rubin
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Shivani Jayant had yet to step foot on campus when she accepted her offer to Penn State, let alone meet other women majoring in computer science like herself.

“When you are in such a male-dominated field, it can feel isolating,” Jayant (freshman-computer science) said. “I felt this urgency to find girls who understood that immediately.”

Jayant, now one of 28 residents living in the Women In Science and Engineering House located in Ritner Hall in Pollock Halls, said being part of the on-campus living learning community has been one of the “best decisions” she has made since arriving in Happy Valley.

“I have lived in India for the past few years,” Jayant said. “Even though I am a U.S. citizen, I had a lot of confusion going into the housing process.”

Most first-year students are required to live on campus as part of each student’s offer of admission, according to Penn State Housing.

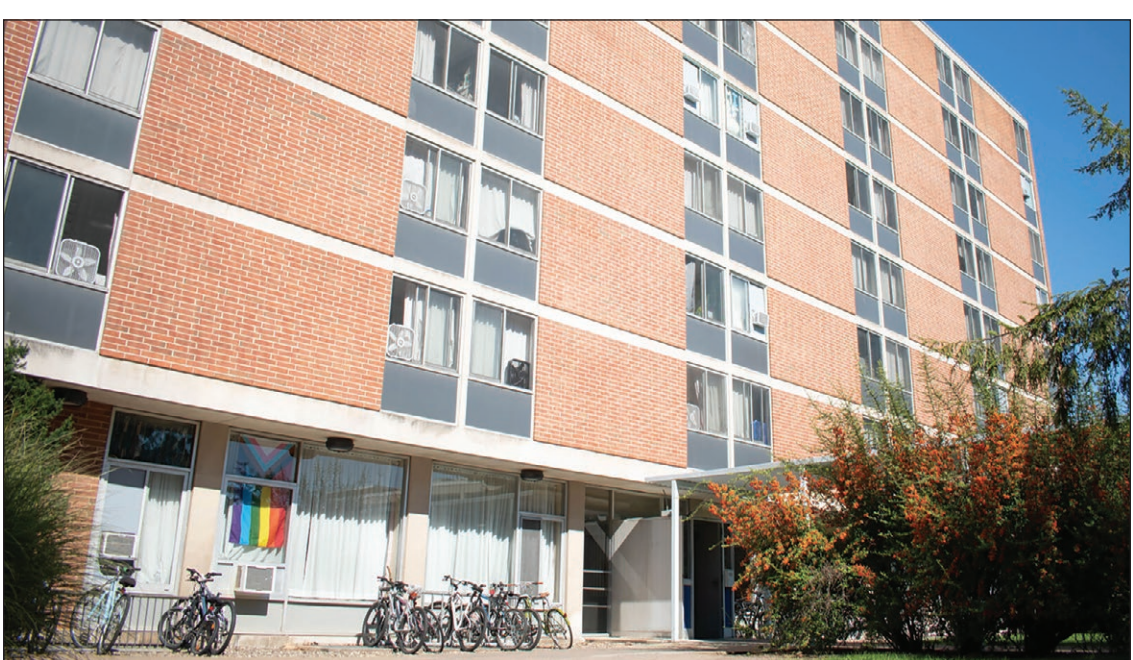
But for Jayant, housing considerations became more than just where she was staying during her first two semesters at Penn State.

“With all of the colleges I applied to, frankly, I wanted opportunities where I could be encouraged to be a woman in STEM,” Jayant said. “As soon as I completed my orientation, I came across the WISE housing option and wanted to learn more.”

Jayant said the idea of being on a floor with girls who were all also in the same field as her felt “strange” coming from her male-dominated high school experience.

“I guess I just needed the reassurance that numbers are changing,” Jayant said. “Luckily for me, I found a community as well.”

Abbie Canale has worked as the faculty associate for WISE House and the assistant director of the Women in Engineering Program for the past two years and said Jayant’s thoughts on representation in STEM fields are not “uncommon.”



Ernesto Estrema Jr./Collegian

WISE House is located in the Pollock Housing Area and is home to undergraduate women in science and engineering majors in all semester standings.

“Go to an engineering lecture hall, walk in and take a look around,” Canale said. “Chances are, only a few women will be in those classes, and the higher up in class number you go, the smaller that ratio gets.”

Canale said an internal push within Penn State’s College of Engineering to promote gender equality challenged her to find different routes to recruit girls on campus and understand that no matter what, “[they] do belong here,” and “it doesn’t make [them] any less valid to be a woman in science now.”

While Canale does not have a full history of the WISE House, she said it has been an LLC for at least 10-15 years.

“WISE [House] started as a joint initiative between the College of Engineering and the Eberly College of Science,” Canale said. “Our main goal is to build a community for students who are underrepresented in a wide variety of majors within the STEM fields.”

Located on the second floor of Ritner, there is “still room to grow,” according to Canale.

“We have an agreement that if we do have an influx of inter-

est, we can accommodate that,” Canale said. “We want to make sure we give each and every young woman interested at least the opportunity to be a part of the culture we have created.”

But for Bailey Shearer, a first-year student living in WISE House this year, this specific LLC was originally her second choice.

“I had applied to [Engineering House] first,” Shearer (freshman-computer engineering) said. “I knew I wanted some type of community before even reaching campus, and I felt that an LLC was the perfect fit for me, but I thought that meant the engineering specific one for me.”

Shearer said as part of her virtual orientation, she was introduced to the Women in Engineering Program, which then led to her discovery of WISE House.

“Everything happens for a reason, and I’m really lucky that it did,” Shear said. “At WISE House, we uplift each other.”

Jayant said she is also grateful so many of the girls on the floor are diligent about wearing masks and getting tested for coronavirus.

“We all follow the rules that have been set in place [by the uni-

versity] to stop the spread,” Jayant said, “It’s nice to know that we all want to protect ourselves, and I feel safer because of it.”

According to Canale, navigating recruitment through the pandemic has been challenging at times, and like many other LLCs on campus, WISE House has taken advantage of virtual visits.

Where other LLCs saw a drawback in the virtual format, Canale called these visits “much more equitable” for families across the country to learn about options like WISE House on such a big campus. If tours had been in person, some students might not have been able to visit.

“Even though we decided to do virtual things again this year, we’ve found great benefits,” Canale said. “We noticed students are often able to log in with more than just one family member, and that makes all the difference.”

When it comes to the housing process, after incoming freshmen accept their offer of admission and register for their living preferences through eLiving, the next step is an essay application.

According to Canale, a team of other faculty, including herself, read each essay and do their best

to accommodate residents based on the housing preferences they have selected.

“Being from North Carolina, I was the only person I knew coming to PSU,” Shearer said. “Having the opportunity to be in WISE with girls who have similar interests as I do has been an amazing introduction to what this school has to offer.”

Shearer said Ritner Hall has also offered opportunities to meet other STEM related majors through the First-Year in Science and Engineering House, which is located on another floor in Ritner Hall.

“In our [society], we spend so much time trying to tear women down — it’s been refreshing to be able to build each other up for once,” Shearer said. “That’s where living on this floor [in WISE House] has really come to help further my outlook on strong women.”

Similar to Shearer, Jayant said being part of WISE House has also given her unparalleled professional experience during her first month of college.

“One of the benefits of being part of WISE House is the first-year seminar many of the girls are part of,” Jayant said. “Of course we have assignments for the class, but we also have been taught the importance of attending networking career fairs, learning about resume building, elevator pitches and using the university to get our name out there.”

But WISE House also faces a challenge common to other LLCs — many students don’t know how to apply to WISE House and others don’t even know it exists.

“Expanding this community is definitely a goal,” Canale said, “but we also want to let people know we’re here in the first place.”

Jayant said the aforementioned experiences have given her a good understanding of the culture WISE House could spread into other aspects of college life but stressed the importance of expansion as the only real way to get the word out here.

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Students transition to off-campus living

By Kate Irwin
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Although it's mandatory for most Penn State freshmen to live in a dorm their first year on campus, many sophomores and juniors escape to downtown housing as soon as they're able.

Penn State dorms may have their pros and cons, but a bed will always be there — something student Bogdan Ivanov said he lacked when moving into his new apartment this fall.

My place was unfurnished, so I had to get all that furniture in there," Ivanov (sophomore-biology) said.

"I'm actually still working on getting a couch — it's been a big process."

Ivanov also noted he prefers the "calmer" atmosphere away from the dorms. He currently resides in Parkway Plaza, an apartment complex further off campus than living options on College Avenue.

The contrast between the social settings in on- and off-campus housing is one many Penn State students, such as Bryan Man, have noticed.

"I prefer being off campus because you're closer to your friends," Man (junior-cybersecurity) said. "I think on campus is

probably better for academics, whereas living off campus is better for your social life."

However, Alexis Galarza said her social life has been a bit more difficult since moving away from the dorms.

"I miss being super close with the people on my floor," Galarza (sophomore-kinesiology) said. "I feel kind of isolated having an apartment — I mean, I like being in an apartment better overall, but I miss being able to go across the hallway to hang out with someone."

Although Galarza was able to experience bonding with others on residence hall floors as a freshman amid the pandemic, fellow sophomore Emily Brown noted how the unique 2020-21 school year with online classes affected her housing experience differently.

"I live at the Metropolitan this year, but I think it's a little difficult for sophomores because we didn't really get to experience going to classes while living on campus," Brown (sophomore-biology) said. "Being all on your own and having school on top of that and never having the adjustment period of learning how to go to classes while living in dorms has been hard."

The extra space of an



Penn Tower, an off-campus student living option, stands taller than most downtown State College, Pa. buildings near Locust Lane on Wednesday, Oct. 6.

apartment and in-person classes this fall semester have been a major improvement for Erin Matthews, who now lives at the Collegian apartment complex.

"It's fantastic being off campus," Matthews (sophomore-chemical engineering) said. "I could reach out and hold hands with my roommate when we were both lying in our separate beds last year, and now I have so much more space."

Matthews lived in Wolf Hall in Pollock Halls as a freshman, a space she described as "old and musty."

A recurring complaint about off-campus living was summed up in one word by Matthews — "food."

"Finding time to cook can be really challenging," she said. "Sometimes, I just really miss my meal plan."

Ivanov also said his schedule makes preparing meals more difficult without a meal plan.

"I usually leave my apartment early in the morning and don't get back until late at night," he said. "So even though it's nice to have a kitchen to cook, I don't have time for that usually."

Grace Gonzalez said she believes the financial burden of eating is more stressful when living off campus.

"Now, when I buy food, it's on my own debit card," Gonzalez

(sophomore-communication sciences and disorders) said. "Before, my parents were paying for my meal plan."

Although many off-campus students including Chloe Warner mourn the loss of the meal plan's convenience, she said she remains practical about her nostalgia.

"I miss the dining hall, but at the same time I hated the dining hall," Warner (junior-economics) said. "You really just want what you can't have."

Other students like Dani Rigazio discovered living in apartments has given them the opportunity to develop their cooking skills.

"I've actually become quite a chef," Rigazio (junior-data science) said. "Some of my go-to meals are chicken parmesan and stuffed peppers."

Brad Kahalas said he has been making lots of chicken and fish in his apartment and realized having an apartment kitchen provides him with some "nice moments" in his day.

"It's a little tough to go and get groceries, but I don't mind taking the time to cook," Kahalas (sophomore-chemical engineering) said. "Cooking is a little break from the day."

The second most common complaint regarding off-campus housing compared to dorm life

is the commutes that students face. For Jasmine Merrill, long walks can be the most daunting on game days.

"It was so nice to be so close to Beaver Stadium when I lived in East [Halls] my freshman year," Merrill (junior-data science) said.

Lauren Lohman said she faces struggles with walking more during the week, as she bounces back and forth between her downtown townhouse and classes.

"Living downtown, I tend to go home in between classes, and it makes my days seem a lot longer," Lohman (senior-marketing) said.

Matthews said she's trying to look on the bright side when it comes to longer commutes.

"I like walking, so I really don't mind that part," Matthews said. "But in the winter, my answer might change."

Although an overwhelming majority of students said they preferred the freedom of off-campus housing, Rigazio balanced her opinion with advice for students who may be weighing the pros and cons.

"I definitely suggest living off campus to anyone who's looking forward to it, but I also recommend valuing your time on campus."

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Around a dozen floors comprise Penn Towers, an off-campus living option for Penn State students in downtown State College, Pa. on Wednesday, Oct. 6.

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ROAR helps students feel safe

By Conner Goetz
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

While many students stay in traditional dorms during their time at Penn State, some prefer the tight-knit nature of Special Living Options, where students can live with peers who share an academic interest or a similar identity, such as being part of the LGBTQ community or holding veteran status.

For students in recovery from substance use disorders — mainly alcohol use disorder, the Residence of Addiction Recovery House provides an alcohol- and drug-free environment, according to Penn State Student Affairs.

ROAR House is a SLO overseen by the Collegiate Recovery Community and located in Dunham Hall in White Course Apartments. Each year, approximately four to 12 students sign a contract to remain sober to use the on-campus apartment space.

The CRC is a program run by the Office of Student Affairs which offers weekly peer support meetings, sober events and mentorship opportunities to Penn State students in substance use disorder recovery.

Tyler Fishbein lived in ROAR House for both semesters of his junior year after he moved out of an off-campus recovery house — a transitional housing space for individuals coming out of alcohol rehabilitation programs.

“One of the guys who was affiliated with [the recovery house] was a part of the sober student living dorms at Rutgers University,” Fishbein (senior-biobehavioral health) said.

At first, Fishbein said he wanted to start a similar university-wide sober living program at Penn State before he found out about ROAR House.

“It was very easy to get in contact with Jason [Whitney, assistant teaching professor at Penn State and CRC program director], and live there on short notice,” Fishbein said.

Fishbein said living with other sober students was beneficial for his recovery since it provided a source of inspiration and accountability.

“A huge part of the program — and being in recovery — is seeing that it works for other people, to see how they go about their day to day as a student in recovery and still maintain their sobriety,” Fishbein said.

Meredith Simpson is a current resident of ROAR House and initially became involved after she met some CRC members at an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting she attended on campus.

“[Before I joined ROAR House], a lot of people lived [in the SLO], so I started hanging out there during my early sobriety,” Simpson (graduate student-counselor education) said. “They definitely helped keep me sober at the time.”



Dunham Hall stands in the White Course Apartments. The building hosts the Residence of Addiction Recovery House special living option for Penn State.

ROAR House residents will often have their own sober social events — such as movie and game nights — Simpson said, to provide an alternative to alcohol-centered college activities.

“In most campus housing, alcohol is prohibited, but students still sneak it in,” Simpson said. “[In ROAR House] we have a contract that... prohibits us from engaging in that out of respect for each other.”

Simpson said this approach to accountability can help students who are struggling “feel a little

safer in their sobriety.”

“It’s just different living with people who have the same experience as you because they understand what you’re going through,” Simpson said.

Penn State Residence Life Senior Director Mark Rameker said ROAR House has similar benefits to other SLOs.

“It’s helpful having a space they know, [with] people going through similar circumstances, that’s all of our living learning environments,” Rameker said.

Rameker said ROAR House,

like other SLOs, exists to help meet students’ needs so they can succeed and graduate.

Having the opportunity to house students in SLOs, Rameker said, allows Residence Life to “break down the large school” into smaller communities where students can live with their peers.

“[ROAR House is] a good community, and I hope it continues to grow over the years.”

To email reporter: cdg5358@psu.edu. Follow him on Twitter at [cgoetz18](https://twitter.com/cgoetz18).

A guide to off-campus housing

By Danny Gotwals
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Whether you know it, it’s probably time to investigate off-campus housing options for next year as lease deadlines are creeping up.

Here’s a how-to guide for finding housing in State College.

Roommates

The most important part of living anywhere is who you’re living with.

If you know your roommates

won’t ruin your life, then that’s a major bonus.

Ask around to see if any of your friends need a place to live. If they do, then you can look for an apartment together.

If not, you can look for a roommate on social media — specifically within Penn State Facebook groups. Describe who you are, what you’re interested in and what kind of lifestyle you live. There’s bound to be someone out there you can get along with.

However, in my opinion,

it’s important to demand cleanliness from your “flat mates,” as the British would say. Few things can be more uncomfortable than sharing a dirty, disorganized mess of an apartment.

Price

Who doesn’t love to admire all the new high-rises going up downtown? Just know you probably can’t afford them. They can cost twice — or sometimes three times as much — than what’s

reasonable for the average renter. I advise making friends who live in the high-rises, though. That way you can visit frequently and have all the benefits without any of the costs.

But seriously, create accounts for apps like Zillow or Craigslist and check their listings often. You’ll want to consider as many options as possible.

Location

Location, location, location. It means everything because

students often like to be as close as they can to their classes, which is why it often goes hand in hand with price. Try to balance these two.

Look for a place somewhat close to campus. If you are relatively close to everything, you will not need to use a car, which can be difficult and expensive to park and will pollute the environment more. And, you’ll stay fit by walking or biking to campus.

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Students evaluate off-campus living

By Olivia Estright
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

From bursting pipes to crashing Wi-Fi, from indoor gaming lawns to multi-sport simulators, Penn State’s off-campus housing features some of the best and worst apartments available for students.

With plenty of apartment complexes and houses for rent, students have a variety of off-campus living options for their sophomore, junior and senior years.

For some students, like Maura Dougherty, living off campus is essential after living in a dorm.

Dougherty (sophomore-marketing) said she lives in Penn Towers, located next to College Pizza in the center of downtown State College.

Though Dougherty said Penn Towers is in a nice location, she experiences a fair share of maintenance problems.

“A pipe burst the other day, so that was really fun,” Dougherty said.

Dougherty said while she believes Penn Towers is “small and old,” she enjoys the smaller aspects of her one bedroom apartment.

“I have a great view of campus, and I have a balcony,” Dougherty said.

Dougherty said in the future, she would want her own room, but as a starter apartment, Penn Towers is a fairly priced and entertaining place to live.

“People always throw stuff off the balconies,” Dougherty said.

Other students like Charles Qu said they enjoy living in luxury — specifically at newly constructed highrises like the RISE at State College.

Qu (sophomore-finance) said coming out of his freshman year,

he knew he would be looking for an apartment in a convenient location with plenty of amenities.

“I think it’s a little overboard for the price,” Qu said. “They definitely jacked up the rent for next year, though, and I think a few other places are doing the same.”

According to the RISE’s website, some of its amenities include a fitness center, a yoga room, a game lounge, a hot tub, a lounge patio and a “TV Viewing Area.”

Qu said before deciding where he wanted to live, he toured The Maxxen, formerly known as the HERE, and the RISE. In the end, Qu said he liked the atmosphere of the RISE more than The Maxxen’s.

“The RISE is just very convenient for me,” Qu said.

Living in the Meridian, Kyle Bonner said he would rank it as a “middle ground” apartment competitor.

For Bonner (sophomore-computer science and math), the selling points of the Meridian were its price and the space it provided.

“The location’s not great, but it’s much more spacious than other apartments I’ve seen,” Bonner said.

Bonner said after talking with friends, he discovered he was only paying a fraction of the price his friends were paying elsewhere off campus.

Josh Mills, who also lives in the Meridian, said paying less than \$700 for an apartment in downtown State College was the biggest reason he chose to live at the Meridian.

“There’s definitely better and worse places to live,” Mills (sophomore-management information systems) said. “The Meridian is definitely a walk, so to me, the price makes it a good spot to live.”

Mills shared Bonner’s sentiment of the Meridian being a



Jonah Rosen/Collegian file photo

The HERE, a high rise apartment building, stands tall among the various housing areas in downtown State College.

“middle ground” apartment for the State College area, but it works for him.

Ellie Pappas said renovated space is a necessity for her.

Pappas (senior-public relations) said she lives in Beaver Terrace, which crosses off her three main points when looking for apartments — price, renovation and location.

“I lived in [Alexander Court at The Canyon] two years ago, and it was pretty run down, which is why they renovated it this past year,” Pappas said.

After living in Alexander Court before its renovation, Pappas said she realized she would be willing to spend more money to live somewhere renovated.

“My current apartment was recently renovated, and it’s still pretty cheap,” Pappas said.

Pappas said her favorite part about Beaver Terrace is its location.

“You get to be downtown and pretty close to everything,” Pappas said.

Similarly, student Jonathan Augustin said he would rather live in a new or renovated complex — especially when getting a deal on the price.

Augustin (senior-computer science) lives in The Standard with one other roommate.

A major factor for deciding where he lived was the amenities offered by the apartment, Augustin said.

“It was a great deal,” Augustin said. “The average price is still fair. It’s worth it.”

At The Standard, residents have access to a multi-sport simulator, a clubroom, an academic lounge, a fitness center and yoga studio, a pool deck, a computer lab, two courtyards and free tanning.

“I couldn’t have picked a better place to live,” Augustin said. “It’s also really close to my classes.”

Apartments aren’t the only off-campus living option for students, though.

Maddie LaLomia said she lives in a house further downtown with five roommates.

“I live in an old house that’s definitely a fixer upper, but it’s in a cute little area,” LaLomia (senior-hospitality management) said. “It’s nice to be a little off campus in a house.”

Although LaLomia is a 20-minute walk to the HUB-Robeson Center and living in unrenovated conditions, she said she doesn’t mind it.

“I’m paying a relatively cheap price to be living in a house, so I love it,” LaLomia said.

LaLomia’s best advice for students searching for off-campus housing is one she chooses to live by.

“You can’t be picky.”

To email reporter: oxe108@psu.edu. Follow her on Twitter at [@OliviaEstright](https://twitter.com/OliviaEstright).

Shhh... where are the quietest places to live?

By Ayden Herold
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

When talking about dorm life at college, one may conjure up images of cramped living spaces full of students blasting music.

Contrary to these popular stereotypes, Penn State offers several dorms that satisfy students’ need for a quieter atmosphere.

A resident of Beam Hall, Gracie Misner described the quietness of North Halls as “very good for studying.”

“So it’s generally just a lot more [of a] chill vibe, I guess,” Misner (sophomore-veterinary and biomedical sciences) said. “The fact that there’s just generally less people there helps a lot.”

Compared to the 16 buildings located within East Halls, there are only five North residence halls.

Misner also attributes the calm atmosphere of north campus to its large population of upperclassmen.

“I know, for a fact, my building is all upperclassmen, there aren’t any freshmen in my building,” Misner said. “You don’t have a bunch of rowdy freshmen that have just had freedom for the first time running around [and] screaming — nothing against freshmen.”

Within Beam Hall, Misner said she does not see her neighbors often, aside from her friends on the same floor.

“I haven’t really gotten a chance to interact much with



Grace Miller/Collegian file photo

Brill Hall is one of the seven residence halls that make up Eastview Terrace campus housing. Some students elect to live in Eastview Terrace due to its quiet atmosphere.

other people,” Misner said. “I don’t see a ton of people going through the residence hall because it’s smaller. I don’t know if I just go out at the wrong time or whatever.”

Despite being a busy building, Misner described North’s Warnock Commons as “really quiet.”

“I’m in there a lot, and there are [often] a ton of people in there, and [they] are not loud,” Misner said. “They’re usually just in there studying or something.”

While dining halls at East and Pollock can often be found packed with people during the daily breakfast, lunch and dinner

rushes, Misner said North is an exception.

“The busiest I saw it was during Welcome Week when we all went for dinner at the same time,” Misner said. “Normally, there are not many people in there at all, which is nice.”

On the opposite side of campus, just a bit further south than the South Halls, Eastview Terrace borders East College Avenue.

Logan Tytus, a resident living in Curry Hall, said he found Eastview Terrace to be “surprisingly quiet.”

“Usually in dorms, you expect to hear people partying or maybe groups of people walking through the halls,” Tytus (senior-film pro-

duction) said. “I haven’t heard any of that. It’s very much just quiet all the time.”

Jessica Cook, another resident of Curry Hall, said she uses the quiet of the area to destress after a busy day.

Cook said she enjoys having a personal bed, bathroom and closet, as well as Curry Hall’s close proximity to her classes.

“[Curry Hall] is really convenient because it’s like five minutes away from Redifer [Commons]. So I can go get my breakfast and walk back here,” Cook said.

Tytus said the solitude Eastview Terrace provides is unlike most dorms on campus.

“There really isn’t as much

social interaction that you might find in a regular dorm,” Tytus said. “Nobody leaves their doors open... it’s a very much a ‘keep-to-yourself’ environment.”

When it comes to physically seeing her neighbors, Cook said she catches them in the halls “from time to time.”

“I will say ‘hi’ or something but not really interact with them,” Cook said. “I also don’t hear much at all either.”

Tytus also said he rarely sees people in his dorm or hanging outside the hall unless they are doing laundry.

Similar to Misner, Cook attributes Eastview Terrace’s silence to its lack of freshmen.

“I would definitely say it’s a quiet part of town because it’s [mainly] upperclassmen who live here,” Cook said. “I feel like Pollock and East, [since they] are for freshmen, are always popping off.”

For this reason, Cook recommends Eastview Terrace primarily to upperclassmen who don’t need a roommate and are looking for “peace and quiet.”

Nearly a mile away, West Halls sit quietly.

Seamus Dunn lives in Thompson Hall, a place he also would describe as lacking the hustle and bustle of other places on campus.

“I would say other than when people are going to their classes and stuff, it’s generally pretty quiet.”

Visit collegian.psu.edu to read the full story.

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PSU needs housing data

The Penn State admissions site offers a plethora of statistics showcasing the university's demographics from varying perspectives, including educational and the student body as a whole.

Whether it be the composite ACT academic scale or the total number of undergraduates at University Park, those curious about the backdrop of Penn State can find these specific numbers at ease.

The site also features the racial and ethnic diversity of Penn State. According to the undergraduate enrollment from 2018-2019, 64.95% of students were white. This classifies the university as a predominantly white institution, an institution of higher education that is made up of 50% or more white students enrolled.

International students make up the second most percentage with 9.36%, followed by Hispanics/Latinos, Asian Americans and African Americans. All of these numbers are present for the public to view.

With this in mind, Penn State does not display the demographics of on-campus residence halls for public access while other statistics are so easy to find. In fact, the university does not have that data at all.

In spring 2021, The Daily Collegian began looking into marginalized student experiences with housing after the Instagram @black at pennstate, created amid Black Lives Matter protests in summer 2020, shared anonymous student stories about residence halls.

OUR VIEW

Demographics are needed to acknowledge marginalized student experiences

One student said she was the only Black occupant on her floor in East Halls, with the only other marginalized student being her Asian roommate. Another East Halls occupant said there were only three Black students on their floor among 40 other students. Both of these students reported being isolated by their white floormates.

Several Black students spoke with The Daily Collegian about how, based on their experiences, they felt Penn State placed many marginalized students in Pollock residence halls, which are notoriously known for being the least desirable living area on campus, while white students were primarily assigned to renovated East halls.

We could not continue with the story as the university noted they don't keep track of the demographics of students in various residence halls. Ultimately, there was no way to prove the claims with statistics.

As of Oct. 1, Penn State spokesperson Lisa Powers said the university housing assignment process hasn't changed.

Powers said race nor ethnicity are categories in eLiving and are therefore not factored into the process.

Student preferences are taken into consideration for housing assignments, so if any first-year student would like to be placed in East Halls, they have the opportunity to be.

The process of housing is randomized, too, unless students opt for special living options, which offers them an opportunity to live with other students of similar interests and backgrounds.

Perhaps the randomized placement for students is affected by early decision admissions on a first come, first serve type of basis — a process typically associated with wealthier, white backgrounds, according to the Center for American Progress. The lack of resources available for marginalized students and those from poor socioeconomic statuses serves as another obstacle that may in turn impact housing.

However, many marginalized students have shared experiences feeling isolated in renovated dorms among many white peers or siloed off to worse buildings. But since there's no demographics on housing available, it's hard for these claims from marginalized students to gain traction.

Additionally, one of the SLOs available to marginalized

students — the Bunton-Waller fellows program — is in Pollock residence halls. Bunton-Waller scholarships are awarded to students for their high performance in academics and diverse backgrounds.

There are several SLOs in Pollock residence halls that aren't connected to race and ethnicity, though it's disappointing to see the space designated for gifted marginalized students in one of the most run down areas on campus.

The university has the records of all students. It knows their ages, ethnicities, high school GPA and, of course, their housing assignments. Why not have a database available to provide demographics on a rather prevalent portion of the college experience?

No action is an action in this manner, as it seems telling of what the separation is for race and ethnicity within housing. Students shouldn't have to ask for this information considering the breadth of information that's already available. Unless the administration hasn't put two and two together yet, it appears oblivious to gloss over something brought up before by marginalized students.

Even if the housing process is truly randomized, there is still enough of a problem that several students have come forward sharing negative experiences. By not keeping demographics of housing, the university will be unaware of the discrepancies present in halls.

A change to the housing system is not the definite resolution to the issues marginalized students face at Penn State. The assumption that placing two marginalized students on a floor together will solve everything is an issue in its own right.

If students cannot see the university is making strides to combat discrimination, then no change will be made. Penn State is not being asked to come up with a solution entirely, rather show a sense of care in the claims made by marginalized students.

While Penn State has its responsibility in this issue, there is also an empetius on students to become more inclusive of marginalized students. In the two Instagram posts, both parties said no one on their floor would interact with them, including an RA.

A primary focal point of Penn State and any college experience should be to ensure students feel included. The minority experience shouldn't be erased by artificial grouping. By constantly thinking about diversity and inclusion, Penn State will be able to create an environment of acceptance for all — something that has truly been lacking at the university.



MY VIEW | Kyle Hutchinson

Students should live in new places each year

There's no doubt that living situations in college are fairly important to most students. Where you live affects where you eat, how close you are to study spots and where you and your friends can hang out.

It's also where you can personalize your room, keep your belongings and at the end of the day, sleep.

Penn State and State College as a whole offer such a large and diverse range of housing options. You could live on campus in either one of the five dorm areas or in on-campus housing such as Nittany Apartments or Eastview Terrace.

If you're in greek life, the sorority floors and fraternity houses are available to live in. There's also the option to live downtown in the various apartments or high rises, as well as houses situated just outside of campus.

And if you're looking to

commute to campus, there are tons of housing options that are a bus ride away.

While each housing option comes with advantages and disadvantages, no two are quite the same. They're all exceptionally different.

Now as a junior and in my third different living situation at Penn State, the one certainty I can say is try living in as many places as you can.

I know people who plan on living in dorms all four years because it's comfortable for them. I also know others who spent the one required year on campus and then lived in the same apartment for three straight years after.

If you're truly happy somewhere and know you couldn't see yourself living anywhere else, by all means stay put. But to me, maximizing the college experience is going out of your comfort

zone and trying new things.

With housing, there's no better opportunity to try new things than switching up where you live each year.

As a freshman, I lived in East Halls. Living on campus was convenient in getting to classes, having provided a cheap meal plan and I ended up making some of the closest friends I have here — friends I intend to stay in touch with the rest of my life.

Sophomore year, I lived in an off-campus apartment/condo with friends from my floor freshman year. This was a great experience in learning how to truly live and share a home with those you know outside your family. It was also fun being able to host things at our house and be separated from campus life.

This year, I'm living in my fraternity house, which has offered

a fun experience to be in a home with 20 of my fraternity brothers, giving me the best social atmosphere I've had in college thus far.

I haven't always been on cloud nine every second in any of the previous living situations I've had. There are the ups and downs of living with just one other person or a group of 20.

But I've learned to make the most of where I live, to adapt to different settings and now to experience co-living with varying amounts of different people — not just the same group of people all of college.

I'd like to think getting out of my comfort zone and trying new places to live during college will push me to try new things in other aspects of life.

College goes by quickly — we're only here for a few years. Make the most of it by living everywhere you can.

Kyle Hutchinson is a junior majoring in criminology and is a columnist for The Daily Collegian. Email him at kkh5359@psu.edu or follow him on Twitter at [@kylehutchhutch](https://twitter.com/kylehutchhutch).



Hutchinson

“I’d like to think getting out of my comfort zone and trying new places to live during college will push me to try new things in other aspects of life.”

Kyle Hutchinson

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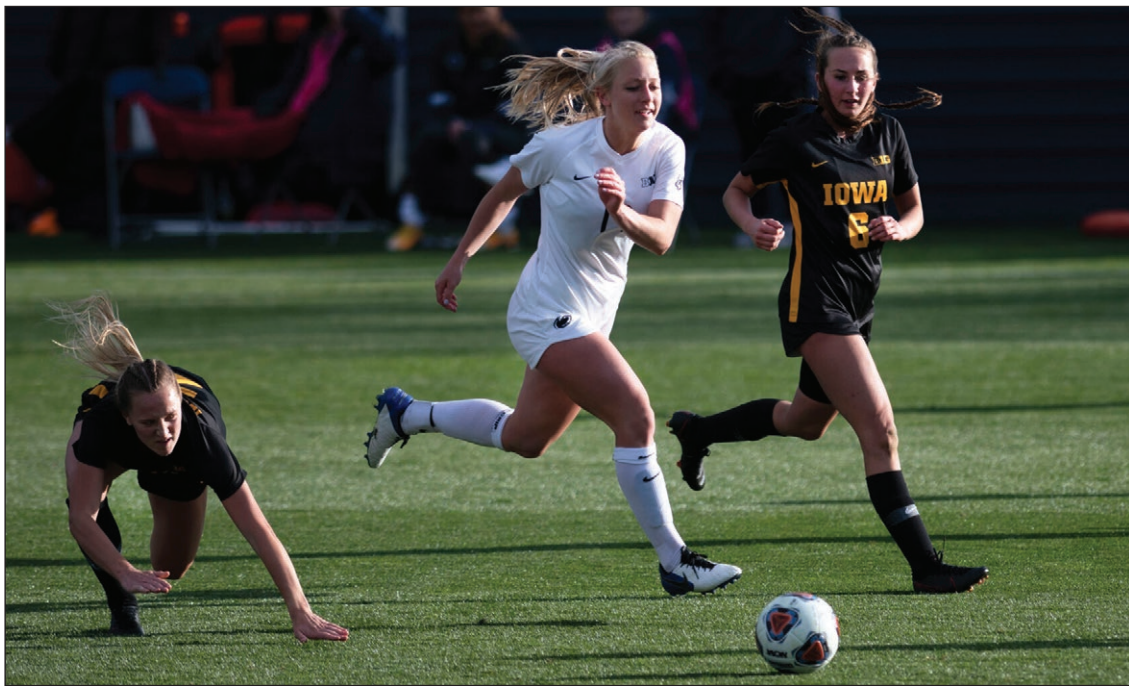
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THE TRANSFER'S TOLL

The cost of moving closer to home, for parents to watch PSU women's soccer

By Luke Vargas
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN



Lily LaRegina/Collégian

On May 20, senior midfielder Frankie Tagliaferri was unveiled at Rutgers after transferring from Penn State. The New Jersey native chose the Scarlet Knights to spend her final season 30 minutes away from her family.

In the weeks following Penn State's 3-1 defeat to Florida State in last season's NCAA Tournament, one of the top players in the nation announced she was transferring from Penn State.

Senior midfielder Frankie Tagliaferri held an "emotional" meeting with coach Erica Dambach and associate head coach Anne Cook where she revealed she was leaving the program to join conference rivals Rutgers.

All of this happened only months after Tagliaferri, along side her fellow team captains Sam Coffey and Kerry Abello, announced the veteran trio would stay together for one final season in hopes of winning a national championship to bookend their All-American careers.

For Tagliaferri, hopes of hoisting the College Cup was not enough to sway her from going back on her decision to stay in Happy Valley.

In the eyes of the four time all Big Ten player, it wasn't that she was abandoning Penn State; rather, Tagliaferri viewed the transfer as a way to come home to her family, and she admitted as much to her coaches and teammates.

"It was a hard conversation because I didn't want to leave. It wasn't like I left because I wasn't necessarily happy, I wasn't happy with being so far away from home," Tagliaferri told the Daily Collegian, "So I love [Penn State], and there's still days that I miss it so much."

"I absolutely love that place, but I'm so happy at home right now."

For the last four years, Tagliaferri's parents, Francis and Tracy, had been making the four-hour journey from Colts Neck, New Jersey, to watch their daughter play for the blue and white.

To do so, they were forced to leave Tagliaferri's 11-year-old brother at home. Now, her

parents don't have to choose between the two, as the fifth-year senior plays only 30 minutes away in Piscataway.

"Just by the end of the season, I just kind of missed home. I missed being home. I missed being with my family. I was tired of missing out on everything my brother was doing," Tagliaferri said.

Traveling to Centre County to watch women's soccer is a struggle for the majority of the parents on the team, as 28 of the 31 families live outside of Pennsylvania.

In that number are parents of two starting midfielders, Cori Dyke and the aforementioned Coffey.

Wayne Coffey and his wife Denise Willi never miss a home game, despite living four hours away in Sleepy Hollow, New York, and the couple has been taking turns this season in order to ensure at least one of them is present for away games.

For the Nittany Lions' matchup

at Minnesota last Sunday, Wayne flew into Chicago, drove to Wisconsin and drove to Minneapolis before flying back to New York the next day.

"Our attitude is really that we're never going to get this time back. Samantha's gonna go pro, and she's already been drafted, of course," Wayne told the Collegian. "So if all goes according to plan, she'll be in Portland probably in January, and we'll do the same thing with Portland Thorn games, I'm sure."

Over the course of his daughter's career, Wayne said he never totaled the cost of all of the traveling required to be present at Sam's matches.

"I've never tallied up what it costs, but it's not a small number. And it's worth every penny," Wayne said.

However, Wayne admitted his ability to travel those distances came down to the fortune of his circumstances. Sam is the young

est of three siblings, who are now all independent, which frees up her parents to be at her games.

Wayne said there were a number of players on Penn State who had younger siblings at home, and he called it all a "great, big juggling act" to manage life at home along with the team's schedule.

For the parents of Dyke, the complexity of making it to Jeffrey Field for soccer games is exacerbated by living in Littleton, Colorado, and having another daughter, Camryn, who plays soccer at Notre Dame.

Cori's mother, Annette Dyke, said she had mapped out the travel logistics for the season so she could make it to 10 games for each of her two daughters.

On weeks where the Nittany Lions play two home matches, Annette is able to fly from Denver to State College and spend five days in University Park to watch her daughter play and spend time with Cori.

"We just kind of look at it like, 'This is a short period of time, this is four or five years of college, and who knows what can happen after that,'" Annette told the Collegian. "It's an investment, and we'll never get this time back."

"So, I mean we are blessed that we can afford to do it, but you just can't put a price on what it's like to be there."

Tagliaferri's decision to return to New Jersey was influenced heavily by her desire to be closer to home, but the Big Ten's leading goal scorer said her desire to be with her family was augmented by the difficulty of playing in the thick of the coronavirus last season.

The New Jersey native planned on coming back to Penn State, but at the end of the season, after speaking with her parents, Tagliaferri had a change of heart.

Following a "mentally tough" season where players were forced to live in a hyper-cautious environment for the sake of sports, Tagliaferri was further separated from her parents and from being able to share her senior season with them.

"From a parent's perspective, I totally understand how Frankie feels. That year, last year, was excruciating in so many ways," Wayne said.

Wayne said his daughter lived in a bubble from June 2020 until May of this year, and in that time he barely saw her, while Sam and her teammates "jumped through hoops" to have a "truncated" season.

Tagliaferri's former teammate, and striker for IFK Kalmar, Kristin Schnurr said the Rutgers midfielder was not alone in her struggles during the coronavirus-marked 2021 season.

Schnurr said because players weren't allowed to interact with family or friends, a toll was taken on the mental health of her teammates last spring.

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