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10-7-2020

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Recommended Citation

Moore, Michaela, "Students Adjust to Life on Campus During COVID-19" (2020). *The Spectator Online*. 364.

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Students Adjust to Life on Campus during COVID-19

Michaela Moore, Staff Reporter

Living on campus during the COVID-19 pandemic has changed many ways students interact with one another in the dorms. With limited ability to contact one another, the residence halls are not as lively as they once were.

This time last year, students were playing Super Smash Bros. at the fish bowl inside of Campion, they were baking cookies in the Bellarmine basement with their neighbors, and were laughing away the night with friends at the bistro. This year, students are living a quieter life, following the COVID-19 regulations set in place by Seattle University.

The COVID-19 housing regulations include no guests, face masks everywhere except in personal rooms, and high rates of single occupancy rooms. If a student is infected with COVID-19, Seattle plan is to quarantine them in the Yobi Apartments.

Along with the above measures, Interim Director of Housing, Timothy Albert, praises the custodial staff and discusses sanitation of residence halls, in his Zoom interview with The Spectator .

“They’re really one of the biggest supporters, they have been doing a great job,” Albert said.

Albert went on to explain that sanitizing and cleaning begins at 6:30 a.m. The process of sanitizing all public spaces includes; door knobs, hallways, and of course, the bathrooms, with a fine mist that has a nonreactive chemical that is known to kill the virus.

However, Albert acknowledged that it is not only the responsibility of the custodial staff to make spaces safer for students, but also the residents’ responsibility.

“Although there have been some violations of these guidelines, they haven’t been widespread,” Albert said.

Albert explained that student behavior has improved since the beginning of the year, and with the help of housing staff and Public Safety, things are looking better on campus.

“I think we have a lot of students who are doing great, particularly our returning students and it’s easier for them because they have a friend group already,” Albert said.

When asked about the current state of compliance from students, Albert shared that things were looking good.

Jennifer Huffman, a second-year criminal justice major, lives in the Murphy Apartments. She spends a lot of time with her roommate, who she lived with last year, FaceTiming her friends since she cannot be with them.



"It's been weird just compared to last year. Seeing the number of students that were on campus last year, the interactions and the social events, none of that's happening this year," Huffman said.

Huffman echoed Albert's observations agreeing that students are obeying the guidelines, apart from the occasional crowd at C-street. She also believes Seattle U has good policies set in place, or she would not have returned.

"Before I made the move back to campus I had a serious talk with my parents and we went over all the guidelines, and if I didn't feel safe at all, I would've stayed home," Huffman said. "But with everything the university is doing, I feel really safe and comfortable living on campus."

First-year biology major Alex Jensen told The Spectator despite the regulations, he is enjoying his college experience overall. He is happy to be living in Champion Hall with his roommate and use his time to get ahead on assignments. Feeling content and safe on campus, Jensen explained he feels like students are complying for the most part.

"There's not really much that I can worry about," Jensen said. "I can't control if I get the virus or not at that point. If I do my part, that's all I can do."

In regard to socialization, Huffman fortunately has her roommate, but some students do not have a roommate at all. While Albert is happy to see some students back on campus, he worries about their socialization.

"I think the areas I'm most concerned about right now are because of some of the limited opportunities for students to get to know each other," Albert said. "We have many students who are feeling isolated and alone in their rooms, not feeling that they know a lot of people. It's a challenge that not only housing should address, but the university, too."

Albert mentioned that RAs are trying to plan virtual games and floor chats to help people get acquainted, but it can be challenging with Zoom fatigue. Housing will be working on finding more creative and safe ways to get residents involved as the quarter and school year continues in the midst of the pandemic.