The bustle of move-in day: Chaotic, yes … and the University at its finest

Our University, with its location high on the north edge of Reno, has sometimes felt like it “has a tone of enduring quiet,” as the novelist Walter Van Tilburg ’32 (honorary degree) once wrote. Appearances, though, even when described in words from one of Nevada’s most masterful writers, can be deceiving. Take our annual residence hall move-in day in late August as an example.

Things are anything but quiet. If anything endures, it is the pent-up energy and high excitement of young people about to stretch their wings in this important rite of passage.

Our students usually arrive well before their prescribed move-in time. They bring with them enough household items to stock one of the fully loaded kitchens from the Real Housewives of Orange County and, enough electronic equipment to successfully listen to the entire alphabet of the world’s most complete playlist during the course of a semester. The many talents of mothers, fathers, younger and older siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles and friends are usually enlisted on these typically hot and sunny move-in days to help with the transition. This is the beginning … the first step of our students’ personal University journey and the start of yet another chapter in our University’s long, tradition-rich history.

Residence halls and the sense of community they create are central to the life of a successful university. From the 168-square foot room at 224 Pyne on the Princeton University campus that housed future First Lady Michelle Obama to the two-bedroom suite complete with pull-chain toilet that future President Franklin Delano Roosevelt rented for $500 during the 1900-01 academic year at Harvard University, to today’s sparkling “Bed, Bath and Beyond”-ready residential communities that house students by academic interest, the halls in which students live on university campuses sculpt world views, shape relationships and structure key values, such as involvement, volunteerism and service.

In the coming months, we will be sharing in greater detail our plan to enhance the residential life of our campus. The University has already reached a public-private partnership to provide new graduate student housing to replace the 53-year-old University Village on Evans Ave. In addition, we have plans to add another residence hall, necessitated by the campus’ growth and the tremendous demand of students for more on-campus housing, located south of Argenta Hall near Virginia Street. These efforts underscore our commitment to student success, and in creating a vibrant, dynamic campus life for our students to experience.

To be certain, I’m a fan of the moments of quiet contemplation that one often finds on a university campus. But our University always seems to find its perfect equilibrium during those days in late August when the sidewalks on Virginia Street are locked in good-natured gridlock as our students clamor to move in. We become a place with boundless, enduring energy. The dreams we are here to help realize are about to begin.

Sincerely,

Marc A. Johnson
President
www.unr.edu/president