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On-campus living completes educational experience

Column by **Kalee Iacoangeli**, OU Student Writer

With student enrollment well over the 16,000 mark, it amazes me that less than 10 percent of that population actually resides on campus. The 90-plus percent of Oakland students that commute are really missing out on all that college has to offer.

I've heard all the reasons why students decide to live at home, and I guess I can understand the economics of it, but when looking at what residence life offers, it becomes an impossible comparison. Being part of life on campus is something you cannot put a price tag on.

Money aside, just remember when you were a kid with the aspirations of one day going to college. I doubt the visions you entertained were ones of fighting traffic, spending all day in class with people you don't really get to know and then driving back home again.

You probably thought more about the friendships you would make and the memories you would create and all the things you would do to define these years as some of the best of your life. To me, that's what college is all about.

It is true that above all we are here for a higher education, but going to class is only part of your education. There is so much more to college than just showing up for class, and living on campus is the missing piece of a complete, well-rounded education.

It's hard for me to list all of the benefits. From forming numerous new friendships, to being a part of a close community, to having everything within walking distance, and learning to be self-reliant and responsible, living on campus during college creates an ideal bridge from living at home to complete independence.

Unfortunately, many commuter students never realize all that is offered through living on campus. There are, however, a few who do recognize what it can add to the college experience. Sophomore Dan Stepanian-Bennett is a prime example.

Stepanian-Bennett lives 1.3 miles away from the university, and like the majority of students at OU, decided commuting would be the most practical option. After the first semester of his freshman year, he began to reevaluate the benefits of living off campus.

"The lack of consistent campus-wide activities and involvement for commuters is what really changed my mind," he said. "I felt like I was missing so much of what was going on."

After discussing the idea of moving to campus, Stepanian-Bennett and his parents agreed it would be a positive experience, and he moved into the residence halls at the beginning of winter semester last year.

"You can't duplicate the residence hall experience anywhere else in life. This is the only time for that," Stepanian-Bennett said.

Even though he is now paying more for his college education by living on campus, Stepanian-Bennett believes it is worth every extra penny.

"You really can't think about it in terms of money," he said. "That's not the only way to weigh things. All that you learn about yourself and being independent and out on your own is much more valuable."

When looking at all of the factors about on-campus life, both positive and negative, Stepanian-Bennett still remains confident in his decision.

“This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Overall, it’s a great experience to broaden your horizons and to have the chance to learn so much from the other people you come in contact with,” he said. “College is only what you make of it, and I believe that there is so much more to the educational experience than what you learn in the classroom.”

(Kalee Iacoangeli is a sophomore majoring in journalism. She also works as a resident assistant in Hamlin Hall.)

SUMMARY

Sophomore journalism major Kalee Iacoangeli, who works as a resident assistant in Hamlin Hall, writes of the advantages of living on Oakland University's campus.

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