

ASU houses record 13,000 students

by **Dianna M. Náñez** - Aug. 15, 2010 08:13 PM
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A record 13,000 students have reserved housing for the fall semester at Arizona State University's four campuses, in Tempe, downtown Phoenix, east Mesa and northwest Phoenix.

The mass move-in began Saturday and will continue this week until the new semester starts Thursday.

To ease moving, ASU has provided 1,500 volunteers to assist with carrying loads and help students settle into their new living quarters. ASU organized "cruise style" move-ins that allow students and parents to drive up to dorms, where volunteers help unload belongings. Items are placed on a mechanical lift that hoists them into dorms' upper stories.

All 14 residence halls and three apartment buildings on the Tempe campus are at capacity.

ASU has moved 630 students into a temporary dorm that was scheduled to be closed for renovation this year. Once the university can confirm how many students actually moved into their reserved residence, officials will evaluate space and whether they need to keep the temporary hall open.

"It's a fully functioning dorm. The demand is high ... we don't want anyone who wants to live on campus not to be able to," said Eliza Robinson, an official with ASU's University Housing.

The demand for campus housing has increased in the past few years following ASU's push to encourage freshmen to live on campus. In 2007, ASU had 9,000 residents. That number increased by 700 in 2008 and was up to 11,600 last year. ASU has built several new campus residences to satisfy demand.

Taylor Place was built two years ago on the downtown Phoenix campus. A record 1,200 students are expected to live in Taylor, pushing the hall nearly to capacity this year and doubling the number who lived there two years ago prior to an expansion.

An estimated 1,200 students will move on to the Polytechnic campus in east Mesa. ASU's West campus will house about 340 students.

To ease the transition to the nation's largest campus, many new students participate in programs such as the Cesar Chavez Leadership Institute, at which students got a taste of dorm living during a summer orientation.

Incoming freshman Elyssa Tapetillo, 18, a Cesar Chavez institute participant, enjoyed the camaraderie in the dorms and the easy access to ASU activities so much that she decided to live on campus this year.

"It's nice to be around students and experience the university more, to join clubs, and they provide tutoring," she said.

Although ASU only expects freshmen to live on campus, more upperclassmen are choosing to continue living on campus because of the benefits, said ASU student Will Aja, a junior who has lived in Tempe dorms since he was a freshman.

"I decided that living in the dorm your freshman year is really going to define your college experience, and I didn't want to miss the full college experience," he said.

Aja said his decision to live in a dorm has made his academic and social experience at ASU more fulfilling. As a mechanical-engineering major, Aja was placed in a dorm that included students from his academic discipline.

"I'd never met my roommate before I moved in freshman year, and he turned out to be my best friend," he said. "When you live in a residence, you're assigned a peer mentor. Mine was a mechanical engineer who had taken all the classes I was taking. Whenever I needed help, I could go to him."

Aja counts dorm study sessions and get-togethers, Sun Devil game-day celebrations, the ability to walk to classes, and the money he saved not owning a vehicle among the benefits of living on campus. He said he will likely live on campus until he graduates.

During his sophomore year, Aja became an officer with ASU's Residence Hall Association, a student-government and -programming organization for ASU residents.

Robinson said ASU's push six years ago to add dorms so all freshmen could live on campus has resulted in countless experiences similar to Aja's. The payoff is more successful students, she added.

"Studies show that students that live on campus typically transition more easily, they persist to graduation at a higher rate and are more involved in the university community," she said.

Read more: <http://www.azcentral.com/community/tempe/articles/2010/08/15/20100815asu-student-housing-record.html#ixzz0wuEH8xkK>