

Good luck finding housing, chumps



RYAN HEISE

The state of housing options for students in Edmonton—specifically in and around campus—has led me to the verge of starting a new marketing campaign for the City and the University of Alberta. I wholly admit that its primary aim will be preventing snot-nosed kids from sweeping up all the \$500 basement suites out from under me.

I can picture it now: mass mail-outs proclaiming what a shit-hole the city is and how campus smells so badly of skunk asshole that it's palpable. Perhaps even a postcard with two large, ominous-looking men, the U of A crest, and the simple message: "Bitch, where's your confirmation deposit?" Hopefully these efforts will slow the demand for sexy, swinging bachelor pads around my lovely university.

If, like me, you're still looking for housing this late in August, I sympathize with you immensely, and also invite you to join me in questioning why we're such idiots. It's getting down to crunch time, and even the sleaziest dives are going fast. Seriously, want to fill your email inbox and waste all your daytime cell phone minutes? Put up a posting for a \$700-a-month, 400-square-foot, rat-infested shit box on the Students' Union Housing Registry.

Still, it remains a bit of a mystery as to why the immediate area around

one of the five largest universities in Canada—and in the wealthiest province to boot—is so short on affordable housing for students.

These aren't even new issues springing up; they just seem to be getting significantly worse with each passing school year. And for whatever reason, the same solutions that are constantly being thrown around don't seem to be alleviating the problems.

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University residences along the lines of Lister Hall—with meal plans, shared kitchens, washrooms, and common spaces—won't appeal to students later in their degrees who value privacy, as well as peace and quiet.

They're great for younger students looking to experience university through beer goggles, but I don't know many 22-year-olds who want to share a shower with two dozen other people—not even while taking turns.

Constructing spaces such as Newton Place and East Campus Village are good solutions, but the University needs to pledge upkeep to them. The current state of ECV ranges from mediocre to atrocious.

They should also aim to be more reasonably priced. The University already soaks students on tuition; if they're going to offer housing, they should be respecting the already-precarious financial situations of those shelling out to get an education.

The U-Pass has made living further from campus a viable solution for many, and the SU should be applauded for their efforts. But a spotty transit system and horrible rush-hour traffic still means a lengthy trip for many.

Legalizing secondary and basement suites by the City would be a great move, but the majority of people willing to offer accommodations to students in their homes probably already do so under the table.

If the City or Province offered an incentive—a break on property taxes or utilities rebates, for example—for those who provide student housing, it might just open up another few hundred rooms and suites.

Admittedly, there is no band-aid solution in sight. Neither the SU, the University, nor the City of Edmonton, nor the Government of Alberta can conjure up a way to give the students that require accommodations this year anything more than what's currently available. And, sadly, they likely won't be able to for the foreseeable future.

In the interim, I urge all potential U of A students who will be relocating to the city to check out the new infomercial I'll be running in promotion of the school. It's a loop of the film *Glitter* with scenes of an ice-locked campus in late January, along with Robert Capa photos of war atrocities spliced in for good measure.

A few extra pounds isn't the end of the world—it's just the end of your old jeans



PAUL OWEN

I believe it was Sir Winston Churchill—or was it Sir Mix-a-Lot—who put it best when he said, "I like big butts and I cannot lie." It's not that I necessarily have a thing for women with larger-than-average glutes—it's more of a "taking what I can get" situation.

See, what you incoming freshmen don't yet understand is that we've all got a little extra junk in the trunk, or a backload of laundry on our washboard abs.

People gain weight when they hit university, but despite what you may have heard about the "Freshman 15," it's not the end of the world. In fact—and this is coming from someone who's put on about 30 pounds since starting university four Septembers ago—it's perfectly acceptable.

First off, while most people gain some weight coming into university, they don't all get fat. High schoolers aren't exactly the most physically mature specimens out there, and a lot of weight gain during university can be attributed to added muscle mass in the chest, shoulders and thighs—especially in men.

It's these physical changes that make you look like an adult instead of a child, and sometimes they happen to coincide with your first year.

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That's not to say that all the weight added during your time here will be part of growing up. Moving away from home and taking on a huge workload can mean drastic alterations to your diet.

Whether it means eating out more or simply being unable to afford the same balanced meals that you were consuming while living on mommy and daddy's dime, your body is going to suffer for it.

And that's not even counting the consumption of beer. Most people turn 18 the year they graduate, and that means that their alcohol intake is probably going to increase. Being able to legally obtain booze is a surprisingly liberating experience the first few times you do so—it's called a *beer belly* for a reason.

Of course, just about everyone else is going through this as well, so while you may be getting a little larger, proportionally you're staying the same. So you can take solace in the fact that you're all losing that high school shine and replacing it with the apathetic look of a college student. It's just another ritual of growing up—kind of like your first time puking on the shoes of a campus police officer in an elevator in Lister.

And besides, it's not like a little

weight gain is going to ruin your life. We're not talking about dangerous, starting-to-resemble-a-farm-animal amounts of weight—just a few pounds here and there. You'll still be able to handle your weekend pick-up game or intramural schedule.

Carrying a spare tire is less detrimental to your ability to be physically active than atrophy. Keeping your heart, lungs, and muscles in shape with regular exercise will help you keep pace in any athletic endeavour, even if you're surrounding them with solidified pools of gravy from your daily poutine run. It's when this exercise stops that you'll find it more difficult to begin again—and your weight will seriously begin to balloon.

So don't worry too much if you're beginning to develop a bit of a bubble butt. Others are going through the same thing, and a little extra body mass isn't going to stop you from living your life.

And while your friends from high school may give you a hard time, they probably can't do the belly wave, making them much less entertaining at parties. Besides, it's cold most of the school year, and a good hoodie can hide a lot of RATT burgers—46 to be exact.

GET BUCKED



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