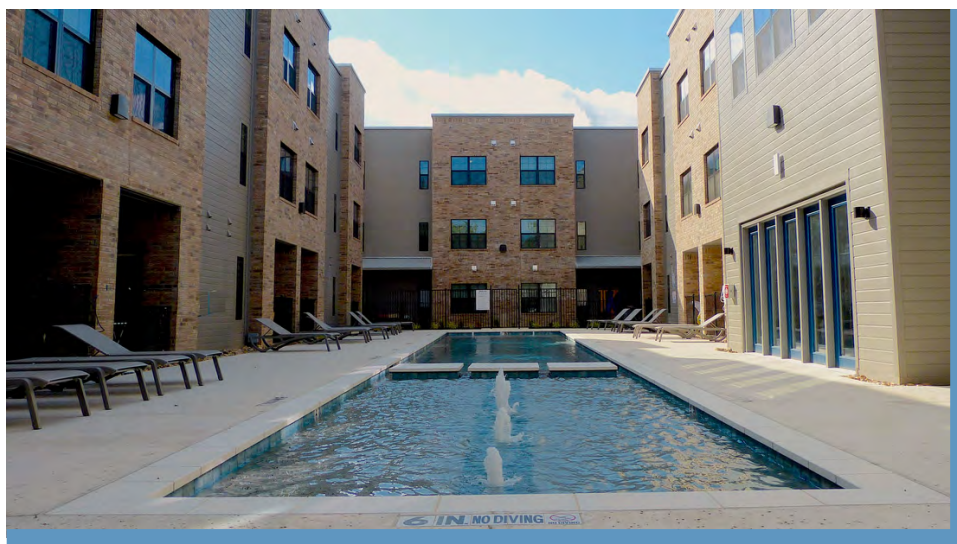
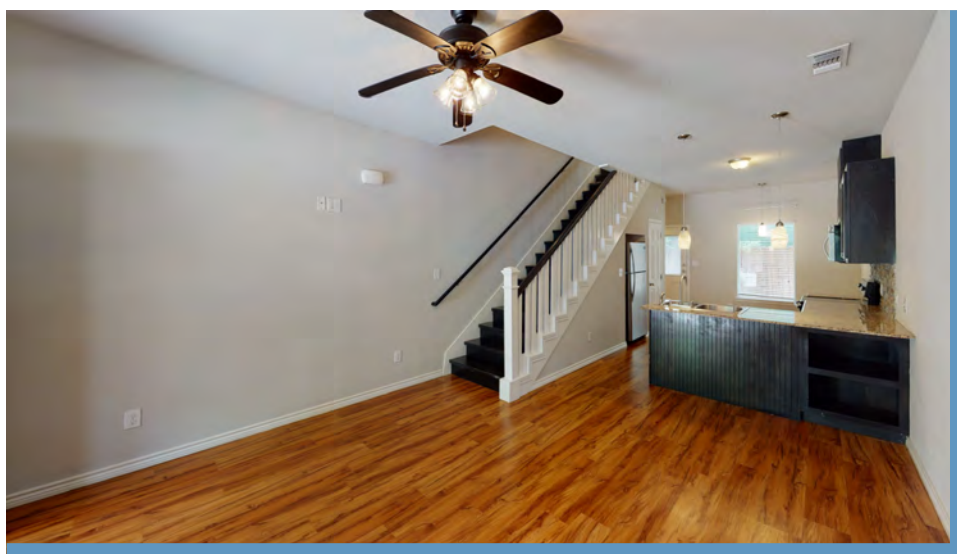
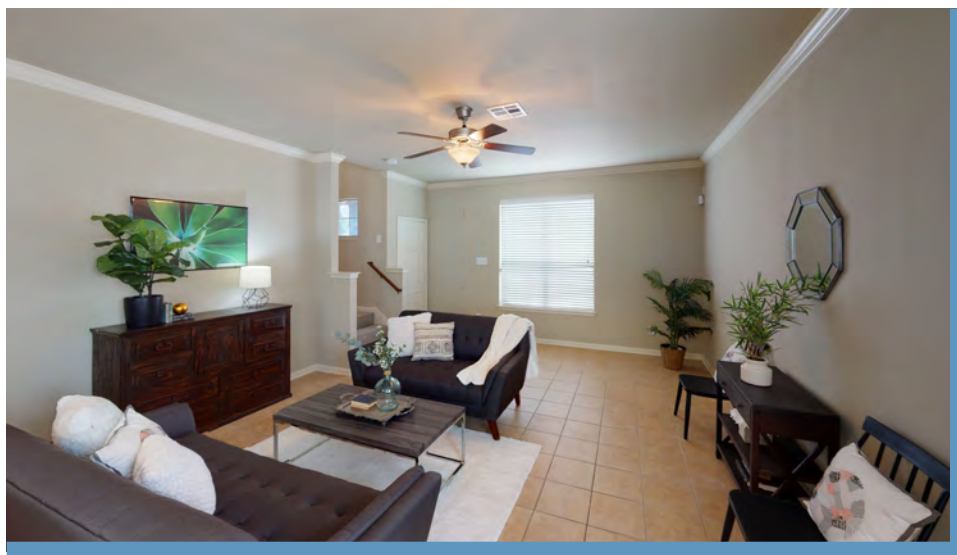


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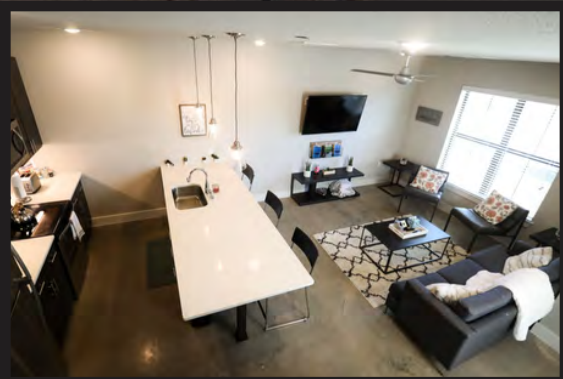
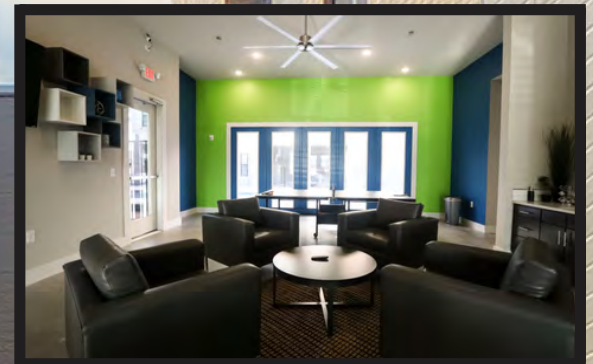
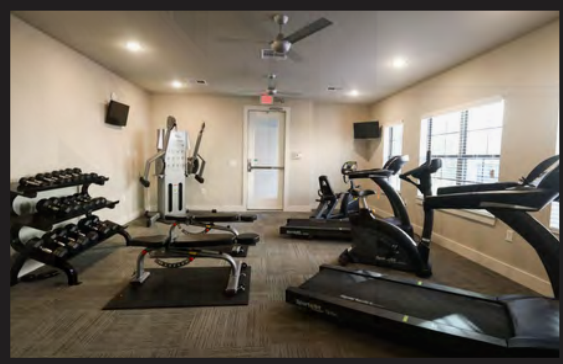
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MADALYN WATSON
Editor-in-Chief

Around the same time I began my freshman year at Baylor, my parents divorced and sold my childhood home. So when my friends and peers returned to their families during break, I moved from house to house searching for that familiar feeling — the feeling of home.

I grew up in the suburbs of Anaheim Hills, Calif., less than half an hour away from Disneyland and about an hour from Los Angeles County. I lived on a street where everyone knew each other, every kid played together and almost all the parents got along. I had a relatively normal, albeit privileged, childhood.



During my senior year of high school, everything changed. After several medical scares in my family and my mother's brain surgery, my family was left raw and vulnerable, although it was already susceptible to the perils of divorce.

By the time I was posing for my annual "first day of school" pictures in front of the front gate and packing up my car to travel to Texas, the home I loved was in the process of being sold.

I looked at the curbside where I broke my leg, the windowsill where my cat lazily overlooked the driveway and the red front door I struggled to open for what felt like the last time. It wasn't, of course, but it was the last time I saw my childhood home look anything like my home.

When I visited my extended family and friends in Southern California, I would drive by the old house. I would help one of my parents finish packing up my whole life for separate destinations or I would sit in the backyard and cry where the roots of two great trees were ripped from the ground. No matter what I did, it was an empty and haunted shadow of what the home once was.

However, most of the time I would stay with

my father, his girlfriend (now my stepmom) and her kids at their home. Or I would stay with my mother as she traveled the world as a flight attendant or now as she continues to go on adventures with her boyfriend.

But none of it is the same. Most of the time when I visit my parents, it is someone else's home, not mine.

I have always struggled with my mental health, with depression, with anxiety. I have always struggled to be comfortable in my own skin. My first year of college amplified my concerns, and I was sent spiraling.

But then something happened. After hitting my own form of rock bottom, I remembered why I came to Baylor: to grow up, mature and become what I want to be.

I took care of my body like the foundation of a house. I learned how to take care of myself without relying on anyone else. I found a community that made me feel like I had a place in the grand scheme of things.

I returned to doing the things I once loved: reading, writing and exercising for myself. And I found new things to love: working at The Baylor

Lariat, mindfulness meditation and taking time for self-care in bubble baths.

I even took one of the family cats with me to Waco my junior year. It was not the one who reigned over my childhood home, but a former stray, a lucky Penny. I forgot how much taking care of another life can help you take control of your own.

Although I never felt good in my own skin before, with nowhere else to run, I changed the way I felt about myself. Here are three concepts that helped me:

1. You cannot love someone else properly until you love yourself.
2. Until you feel comfortable in your own skin, you will never be comfortable anywhere.
3. You do yourself and everyone else a disservice when you act like something you are not.

Without a home, I had to find comfort and solace on my own. Without a house to call my own, I had to learn how to be at home with myself.

Madalyn Watson is a senior journalism major from Anaheim Hills, Calif.

Leaving my home state made me finally appreciate it

TYLER BUI
Opinion Editor

Moving away from home made me realize how much I love my home state.

I was lucky enough to grow up in the same house in Massachusetts my whole childhood. I got to play in the same backyard, hang out with the same friends and walk my dog around the same cul-de-sac from the day I was born to age 17. It was comfortable and familiar — I never had to worry about my home ever changing.

Then came my freshman year, when I moved from Massachusetts all the way to Texas and



my parents got divorced. My mom moved to Florida, and my dad moved to a new city in Massachusetts. But I still had my "home." While my dad's new house looked different, the interior had all the familiar furniture and decorations, and my friends were still a short drive away.

It wasn't until junior year when I lost my sense of "home." My dad married my stepmom and moved to California to be with the rest of my family. I was not only happy for my Dad, but I had always pictured myself living in California after graduation — it was new and exciting. But after moving and spending my summer there, I finally realized how much I missed my home state.

To be honest, I didn't expect myself to miss Massachusetts too much. It was too cold in the winters, and I lived too far from the coast to consider Massachusetts a "beachy" state — and going to the beach is one of my favorite things to do.

But I thought wrong.

Massachusetts was so much more than a state to me. It was my home, my roots, my community.

I miss going to Friendly's after a long day at the barn. I miss being able to hang out with friends whenever I wanted. I miss seeing the same familiar faces at the family-owned restaurants I used to frequent. I miss going to Boston and seeing all the diversity.

The state itself has a special culture, and experiencing both Texas and California made me feel so much more grateful to have grown up with the people I was surrounded by. Massachusetts, and especially my high school, both pride themselves on being inclusive and diverse, so moving to a more conservative state was a big shock and adjustment.

Spending most of my time in two states where the cultures are significantly different made me realize that I had taken for granted a lot of special things Massachusetts has to offer. I didn't expect the culture and values to vary so much from state to state. The people are genuine,

accepting and supportive in Massachusetts — and I don't feel the same sense of statewide community where I live now.

But most importantly, I miss the people that made home feel like "home." I have spent the past 17 years of my life riding horses, and with that I made so many friends that were scattered throughout the state. I got so used to seeing my school friends during the day, hanging out with barn friends in the afternoon and seeing other horse friends on the weekends at competitions. My friends, my competitors and my coaches all became my second family — and I feel like a part of me is missing without them.

I've found an amazing group of friends at school and get to be surrounded by my cousins, aunts, uncles and grandparents at home in California. It has definitely been an adjustment, but I've learned to love my new home as it is. Massachusetts will always have a big piece of my heart, and I can't wait to visit sometime soon.

Tyler Bui is a senior journalism major from Hopkinton, Mass.

Complexes see rise in lease takeovers as more students study online

MEREDITH HOWARD
Assistant News Editor

With some students deciding to stay home this semester, local apartment complexes have received an influx of requests to re-let unit leases.

Houston senior Alexander Van Fleet, an employee of The View on 10th, said while students who signed leases at The View for the 2020-2021 academic year have been requesting lease takeovers at a higher rate than usual, people who are reletting have still been able to fill those spots at the expected pace.

"Surprising with the amount of stuff we have with COVID, a lot of people have been really quickly finding lease takeovers. So the market's still there; people need housing. It's like food. People need it, and it's not going to go away," Van Fleet said. "Regardless of the circumstances of the economy ... they are going to get housing."

Sasha Ramjattan, URSA sales and marketing manager, said URSA has also seen an uptick in residents looking to re-let.

"We have had individuals that are trying to re-let their lease because of going online, and also just because they don't want to be in a unit with more than, you know, one other person, or if it's three other people they don't feel comfortable ... that has been definitely an issue this year," Ramjattan said.

URSA has also been able to fill most of those spots.

According to Baylor, about 1,400 students requested online schedules this fall, and it's likely many of them looked to get off the hook for their leases. Van Fleet said reletting an apartment is the only way to get out of a lease agreement.

"Typically when people get leases, they are legally binding, so there's next to no criteria in which an individual can really get out of it, unless they have what we [call] a lease takeover," Van Fleet said. "A lease takeover essentially is where an individual comes to us, they have to have the intent and actually tell us, 'We do not want to have a lease anymore. Is there any way we can get out?' ... The way of getting it is having another individual take it over for them."

One pro of taking over someone else's lease is that an individual can secure a

comparatively low rent price if the person who is re-letting signed their lease early.

"That price stays the same. It doesn't change with the inflow of the market; if they signed really early, the person that is going to be signing the lease takeover will be getting that same price," Van Fleet said.

At The View, one wanting to re-let their apartment is responsible for finding someone to fill their spot.

"We don't do any of the searching for them; however, they are welcome to go ahead and search on their own end, if they do want to get a lease takeover," Van Fleet said.

At URSA, the complex assists students in finding someone to take over their leases.

"First they have to express interest in reletting, and then we will send them their re-let authorization, which basically authorizes that if we have anybody coming in, that we can openly market their apartment to that individual to backfill that spot," Ramjattan said. "It is a \$300 fee associated with reletting; we always let them know that upfront."

Ramjattan said URSA has had "a lot" of students added to its re-let list because of online schedules this semester.

Ramjattan said November to January is prime time to put a lease on the re-let list because of incoming graduate and transfer students. Summer is a good time too.

During these peaks, Ramjattan said it takes "maybe two to four weeks" to get a lease re-let. The time range depends on how many bedrooms students are looking for as well. Ramjattan said transfers, graduate students and undergrads typically look for different sized apartments, so it's best to list studios and one-bedrooms in spring semesters when graduate students often come to Baylor and larger apartments when transfers start in the fall.

"Other than those times, of course, our leasing season does slow down, so it is hard for us to help you backfill those spots, because, we only openly advertise to individuals that are coming in and out of the door," Ramjattan said. "At the end of the day, it is technically the responsibility of the resident to make sure and backfill their spot, however, we do our due diligence to help where we can."

Students reflect on first year on-campus housing

LUCY RUSCITTO
Staff Writer

After newly admitted students are welcomed to the Baylor family, freshmen are prompted to apply for housing through Campus Living & Learning to complete the required first-year on-campus housing requirement — no matter their living preference.

Terri Garrett, associate director for academic initiatives, has served in the department of Campus Living & Learning since 2002. Garrett said the university is purposeful in its plans behind the first-year on-campus residency requirement.

"The first-year residency requirement started in fall 2004 as part of Baylor's 10 year vision plan called 'Baylor 2012,' in which 12 different university imperatives were established to aid in Baylor becoming a Tier 1 university that still maintained its Christian heritage," she said. "One of the 12 imperatives specifically called for Baylor to become a 'truly residential campus' and to increase the number of undergraduates

living in residential communities on Baylor's campus."

Under the current pandemic conditions, many other universities in other parts of the country, such as Chico State University and San Diego State University, made the decision not to require students to uphold their on-campus housing contracts in order to reduce the cases of the virus, no questions asked.

Baylor Campus Living & Learning, has asked students to continue to live on campus despite the pandemic's conditions, unless they had previous grounds to dissolve the initial agreement. Garrett said her department afforded the freshman students the opportunity to leave the housing obligation if they needed to do so.

"In light of COVID, prior to the start of classes and move-in, Baylor allowed all new or returning students that were approved for an online only course schedule and assigned to on-campus housing, the opportunity to apply for a

CAMPUS HOUSING >> Page 8

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Photo courtesy of Hannah McClard

FRAT HOUSE Fort Worth senior Hannah McClard lives in a Pi Beta Phi house that has been inhabited by other members of the sorority for generations in-place of an official Greek house.

Greek Life tradition: Passing down houses

MEREDITH PRATT
Staff Writer

Baylor's sororities and fraternities differ from most schools in that they do not have official Greek houses. Instead, pass-down houses off campus have been cultivated over the years as hubs for the individual groups.

For large sorority gatherings, such as chapter meetings and All-University Sing practices, sororities meet in individual chapter rooms in the Stacy Riddle Forum. Fraternities also often use the chapel inside the forum for certain traditions.

Frisco junior Hannah Dryden is one of many sorority members who live in a pass-down house. She lives in a Delta Delta Delta house called 'SUNNY D,' which she said she thinks is three generations old.

"The girls who passed down the house to us were senior Tri Deltas. They all had exec positions," Dryden said. "One was Tri Delta president."

Dryden said she really likes the tradition of passing down houses that exists at Baylor.

"Living in a pass-down house is special because you

get to see how it has evolved as it has been passed down, and you get to create different memories from different years of life under the same letters and same roof," Dryden said.

After this school year, Dryden said she and her roommates are passing down the house to younger members.

"Hopefully, it can stay a Tri Delt home for many more generations," Dryden said.

Dallas senior Travis Smith is a member of Phi Kappa Chi, one of Baylor's fraternity chapters. Smith lives in a Phi Chi house called Mount Olympus, which he said he and his roommates usually just refer to as "Mount O."

"The house has been passed down for at least 20 years," Smith said. "Our current adviser, Kyle Howerton, lived in our house back when he was a Baylor student."

Smith said he enjoys the tradition because of all the things in his house that have been left from previous generations.

"We have composites, sorority jerseys, random Baylor paraphernalia and other cool things that have

been passed down along with the house," Smith said.

Fort Worth senior Hannah McClard lives in a Pi Beta Phi house called Paradise. She knew the girls who lived in the house previously and got really close with one of them, who ended up becoming her big.

"I'm not entirely sure how many generations it's been, but I'm pretty sure it's been a Pi Phi house since the beginning," McClard said.

McClard also said her experience living in a pass-down house has connected her with alumni who used to live there.

"It's been sweet meeting Pi Phi alumni and hearing about their friends who lived in Paradise before us," McClard said.

The tradition is something McClard said she enjoys in the absence of official sorority houses.

"You get to choose a few of your closest friends to live with but still get to have a sorority feel where we can all go to meetings or Sing practice together but not have the overwhelming aspects of living in an official house with your whole sorority," McClard said.

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HEAVY LIFTING Before move-in, students have to deal with the stress of signing a lease agreement. Many decide to sign earlier to benefit from lower rent rates, but some wait until later to better decide whom they want to room with.

When to sign the dotted line

VIVIAN ROACH
Staff Writer

Students are faced with many decisions as they navigate their way to their first lease agreement: one-year or two-year lease? How many roommates will they live with? Budget? Location? Amenities? Is there a best time to sign?

Most apartment complexes around campus open their next leasing season around October. Those who sign earlier in the season will likely get the lowest rates.

Caroll McCann, the general manager of U Pointe on Speight, said they start leasing mid-October, and those that sign first benefit.

"The best time to sign is sooner rather than later," McCann said. "You will also get placement preferences above people who sign later, but we still have to take into account any students who decide to renew their leases with us."

Humble sophomore Julia Ericson held off signing a lease at U Pointe for a couple of months

to not rush finding roommates or decide what exactly she wanted in an apartment.

"Though if you sign early you can choose what apartment complex works best for you based on price and location. The longer you wait, the more expensive apartments will be and there are less options to choose from," Ericson said. "When I signed in December, there were a few apartment complexes starting to fill up, but most still had plenty of spots open. There was still the pressure of rent increasing, so we decided to sign before it raised to a price that was too high."

Barrington, Ill., junior Lilly Robbins is a former resident of Park Place Waco, another apartment complex just off campus. She didn't think the price increase by signing later was a big enough difference to matter, so she signed a lease the winter prior to its start date in August.

"A lot of people rush to sign first semester, but then you might get stuck with people you don't really get

along well with," Robbins said.

Sasha Ramjattan, the sales and marketing manager of Ursa Apartments, said usually rates are lower in the beginning of the leasing season at Ursa too, but there's no deadline to early signing or general leasing.

"There usually aren't any deadlines for signing," Ramjattan said. "In the past, we have done like a certain number of spots for lower pricing and then we will increase gradually."

Oso Verde Student Living Assistant Manager Brian Brooks said there isn't a strict deadline to sign at Oso either. While only current residents get access to early signing, new residents can sign starting in October up until there are no more spots available.

Maple Lake, Minn., senior Kinsley Hurt lived in Ursa her sophomore year and signed earlier her freshman year, in November.

"It was nice to get it off our plate," she said. "After rush, I did get asked to live in a house with my sorority sisters, so at that time I regretted signing so early."

CAMPUS HOUSING from Page 5

housing exemption and cancel their residence hall contract," Garrett said. "For freshmen students approved for all online courses, the exemption was granted for the fall semester only."

Garrett additionally said first-year students who are either are graduates from a McLennan County high school who want to live with a guardian who lives in the county, 21 years old or more before the first day of classes, married or are in charge of dependents can be exempt from the housing requirement if they complete the Application for Residency Exemption to Campus Living & Learning. This non-related COVID-19 chance for housing exemption is available every year for first-year students.

Despite the pandemic, some students said they truly believe the housing mandate has been a blessing in a multitude of ways.

Waco freshman Raegan Null lives on the north second floor of Collins Residence Hall this year. Null said she believes the obligation for her class to live on campus for their first year is practical and welcomed.

"It makes sense to have all first-year students on campus so they can get involved as much as possible with activities on campus," Null said.

Jacksonville, Fla., sophomore Mary Watson is a community leader on the north second floor of Collins Residence Hall.

"I think living on campus is important especially for first-year students because it allows them to build community, create authentic relationships and expose themselves to people of different backgrounds," Watson said. "I've seen it in action because I've been able to help facilitate community between

residents, while also providing them with resources to get to know one another better and to get involved on campus."

Null said she too admits while the unparalleled circumstances of the pandemic have certainly altered her experience, the requirement has compelled her to reach out to her fellow classmates more than she would have if she had lived off-campus.

"Although it has been hard to make friends with COVID guidelines in the dorm, I believe it would be even harder to meet people if I were to live off campus,"

Null said. "With COVID I believe living off campus would make it even more difficult to meet people, specifically other freshman."

Even though she is in closer quarters than she could be off-campus, Null said she additionally believes Baylor's efforts have contributed to the positivity of her experience residing on-campus thus far.

"I believe Baylor has done a great job preventing COVID outbreaks, and I feel extremely safe living in my dorm," Null said.

Also, Garrett said in a more "typical" school year, an average of more than three-quarters of those who resided on campus are satisfied with their Baylor housing experience, and only seem to have one major concern: finances.

"Data collected from February 2020



I think living on campus is important especially for first-year students because it allows them to build community, create authentic relationships and expose themselves to people of different backgrounds.

**MARY WATSON |
COLLINS RESIDENCE HALL
COMMUNITY LEADER**

indicated that that 86.7% of all residents, [about] 4,500, were satisfied with living on campus and 85% of students said they would recommend living on campus to new students," she said. "Overall, cost of housing is the largest concern for student satisfaction."

Null said she too predicts she will be content with her on-campus freshman year living experience.

"My on-campus experience will make my freshman year memorable, and I'm very thankful for the girls I have met in Collins," Null said.

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Photo courtesy of Eunice Philip

AROUND THE WORLD Maiduguri, Nigeria, sophomore Eunice Philip (right) came to America in 2014. Being isolated from her family, found Baylor as her home.



Photo courtesy of Eunice Philip

AROUND THE WORLD Maiduguri, Nigeria, sophomore Eunice Philip (left) said she was worried about the transition to college. Philip said Baylor made the cultural adjustment fun and less worrisome.

Students from around the world make Baylor home

AVA DUNWOODY
Staff Writer

International students returned to Baylor, bringing along with them the diversity that contributes to the university's culture. While 62% of Baylor students come from Texas, 4.9% of students have come from out of the country to call Baylor home.

The university's 19,297 students, both undergraduate and graduate, come from a total of 96 countries.

Sophomore Eunice Philip was born in Maiduguri, Nigeria, and is one of the many international students with a story behind how Baylor became her home.

"In Nigeria, we have a lot of terrorist group activities that dominate the area," Philip said.

When she was 14, her school was demolished and she "couldn't go to school anymore because it did not exist."

When the story got global attention, missionaries from the nonprofit organization Unlikely Heroes departed for restoration aid. Philip's father talked with them to help find a solution for the girls,

including his daughter, that were now unable to attend school.

Philip was sent to live with host families in America in 2014 to attend school. She left behind both of her parents and her six siblings and hasn't seen them since.

"I wasn't even a part of the conversation," Philip said. "It just happened. I ended up here. It was a process that I still don't understand."

Philip said communication with her family was difficult at first, but now with Whatsapp, she talks to them about once a week. The "separation with family" was the hardest part, she said, but it was also difficult to adjust to a new culture.

"I grew up in my country and that's all I knew. Then in a blink of an eye, I'm no longer there," Philip said. "To come in and see how completely different everything is was the greatest shock of my life."

She said she first noticed the culture shock at the airport when she arrived. Everything from "the food" to the "way people talked to each other" was different. Even learning social cues like making eye contact was hard for her to learn, she said,

because "back home, we don't do eye contact."

"It was a whole new world for me and I had to start from the beginning," Philip said. "Everything that I knew felt like it was the opposite here."

Philip said she had time in high school to adjust to American culture, but she was nervous about the transition to college. But once she got to Baylor, she said, "it became something that was fun."

She learned to enjoy talking to new people and liked how at Baylor, she was able to meet people from all around the world. When she joined a sorority, Philip said she found a community that helped her find a family when she was so far away from her own.

"Tri Delta has definitely made a difference because I know that I can always pick up the phone and call someone, and they will be there — and that's what family is," Phillips said. "It doesn't have to be biological. It's just knowing someone cares."

Freshman Faith Skariah is another student who comes from outside of the country and has found family at Baylor. She lived in Brunssum, the

Netherlands, until she came to Baylor, where her brother, sophomore Micah Skariah, also attended.

"My dad is in the military," Skariah said. "So we'd move every two to three years because he'd get stationed in a new country."

In total, Skariah has moved eight times. For the most part, she said "it has been exciting and a great experience," and she plans to continue traveling in the future. Sometimes, however, it felt "unstable" to never live in the same place for more than four years.

"It always takes me awhile to adjust to a new place," Skariah said. "But with [Baylor], it's been pretty quick. It definitely helps that my brother Micah is already here, and I have a family member here to ground me, but already I feel home at Baylor."

Skariah said she also feels connected through the Leadership LLC in Dawson Hall, where she lives on campus. In her Introduction to Leadership class, she met another girl who comes from a military family and said it was "a good feeling" to be with someone with a similar background.

"I feel like I really fit in here,"

Skariah said. "With COVID, classes have been hard to meet people, but still, even in classes, I feel like I am sitting with and learning at the same pace as everyone else, so it's been good."

Philip said she also has found community through her academics as a biology major.

"I have the opportunity and the privilege that Baylor provides a home that I know when I'm here, I can be me," Philip said. "I don't have to fear feeling different or being selective. I am here at Baylor, I can study whatever major I want, do whatever I can and in the process, make memories."

Baylor has impacted Philip's life in many aspects, but most importantly, she said, is the feeling of unity created by the student body.

"It's a whole family of different people. The diversity of it too plays a huge role because I meet people from similar backgrounds," Philip said. "I've met so many Nigerians. I've met so many international people that can relate to what I am going through, so at the end of the day, I know I am not alone."

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BAYLOR



NAVIGATE



Brittney Matthews | Photo Editor

RAISE THE WOOF Minneapolis, Minn., junior Caelin Hoben pampers her yorkie-maltese named Maverick and treats him like her own child. Hoben and Maverick call Upointe on Speight home.

Emotional support animals aid students on, off campus

SARAH PINKERTON
Staff Writer

Owning pets while in college differs for everyone. While on-campus residence halls only allow certified emotional support animals, most apartment complexes and housing near campus allow any type of pet if the resident pays a certain fee.

Since pets aren't allowed in residence halls, students can apply to have an Emotional Support Animal with them through the Office of Access and Learning Accommodation.

Anna Shaw, assistant director of OALA, said within the last few years, there has been an increase in requests for ESAs across U.S. universities.

"Currently, I think there are five animals in the dorms," Shaw said.

Shaw said while service animals work for people who have a disability and are allowed to go with them anywhere, Emotional Support Animals are only allowed in residential housing.

"After they have been approved by our office, the approval goes to Tiffany Lowe, who is the director of Living and Learning, and she has to sign off on it as well," Shaw said. "The students will need to provide appropriate medical documentation."

The documentation must show the history of the pet working with the student and prove because of their psychological diagnosis, an ESA is something that the doctor recommends.

Dae Vasek, director of OALA, said after

contacting the office of Living and Learning, the residence hall must contact the roommates of the individual requesting the ESA as well as contact the other residents in the hall.

"We have run into a situation where a student is allergic to cats and can't be on the same hall as someone with a cat," Vasek said. "Or they have a fear of animals, a fear of dogs."

They then have to decide if they need to move anyone. Vet paperwork, shot records and proof of liability insurance for the pet are also required.

"The animal also needs to be spayed or neutered, and a lot of students requesting, they just got a puppy and the puppy's too young to be spay-neutered or they don't want the animal to be spay-neutered," Shaw said. "Those requests are denied."

A weight limit of 50 pounds is also set to prevent large dogs from living in residence halls.

"There are always exceptions, but we try to stay within 50 pounds or less, as far as weight goes," Vasek said. "That's really for the health and safety of the animal too."

She said because Baylor is a private university, it has its own process that may look different from public universities.

If a student brings in an unapproved animal, they may be denied future ESA requests. However, once a student finds a place to live off campus after their freshman year, pet restrictions loosen depending on what lease a student decides to take up.



Chase Li | Photographer

SPRUCING UP Decorating your own apartment is fun and feels fulfilling. Baylor students share how they can decorate their space cheaply.

A guide to organization, decoration

OLIVIA MARTIN
Social Media Editor

Whether you are moving into your first dorm room or an off-campus house or apartment, the struggle of staying organized is real — especially in a small space, good luck, freshmen!

Luckily, this simple organization and decorating guide will provide you with the tips and tricks necessary to stay organized and create a space that feels like home.

Before you can begin to think about decorating, you should start with going through all the items you are bringing to your new space and getting rid of anything you won't need. Remembering that less is more is the most important mindset to have when moving into a new space.

Working as a home organizer for many years, Sunnyvale, Calif., sophomore Sarah French said the importance of having less.

"Always consolidate your items before you move in anywhere so that you can go in with less because you can always add and replenish later," she said.

Next, you're going to want to pick a general theme for your room. This could be colors, furniture styles, decorations and whatever you want the overall feel of the room to be. Consider the layout and decide on the major furniture that you would like to feature in the space.

A typical Baylor dorm room will come already furnished. Some off-campus apartments also include furniture. Just make sure you know what to expect before you get there so you don't have double of everything, unless you plan on making a mega bed.

French said you should keep your furniture minimal so that the room doesn't feel smaller than it already is.

"If you are in a small room like a dorm or bedroom or apartment, it's a lot easier to make

the space feel bigger and more open ... if you have less furniture," French said.

After picking the general theme and type of furniture you want, the next step will be to buy essential pieces for the room. This could include: mirrors, shelves, extra storage space, hangers, etc. You should only buy what you know you will actually use. Don't overdo it.

Now that you've got all the essentials, here comes the fun part: decorating and organizing.

French said the the three most important steps to staying organized are:

1. Plan at least one day a week to deep clean.
2. Consolidate your things regularly.
3. Put your things away at the end of each day.

San Antonio sophomore Megan Penny, an interior design major, said there are ways to brighten up a space and make it feel more welcoming.

"Using warm colors and tones as accents in fabrics and decor can help create a sense of comfort within spaces," Penny said.

Additionally, Penny said she suggests decorating a small space with lighter colors, minimal furniture and wall art mirrors. She also said adding soft textures or plants contributes to the aesthetic of a room.

"Incorporating these elements in small spaces will brighten up a space and make the room appear larger and more open than it actually is," Penny said.

It takes time to make a space exactly what you want. As long as you are organized and uncluttered, the room will feel good. Don't worry about not having all your decorations up. As time goes on, you may find new pieces that you want to put in your room. The most important thing to make a room feel like home is making sure your setup makes you comfortable and happy.

And don't forget, less is more!

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Baylor graduate Taylor Beightol moved to Dallas after graduating from Baylor in May. Beightol wanted to stay in Texas after graduating instead of moving back home to Washington.

Graduation brings struggles of juggling jobs, housing

TRISHA PORZYCKI
Reporter

Most Baylor students spend their first year in one of the university's dorms, followed by three years in apartments or houses. Most can find living options from word of mouth, making the process simple for some. But once they graduate, finding a place to live is a whole new game.

For many Baylor graduates, Dallas is a hot spot to live. The numerous alumni connections, large companies and lively atmosphere draw in young adults.

After graduating from Baylor in May 2020 with a degree in journalism and public relations, Taylor Beightol signed a lease for an apartment with her longtime boyfriend in the West Village District of Dallas.

"During the fall semester of my senior year, I knew I wanted to stay in Texas, even though my parents wanted me to come home to Washington," Beightol said. "All of my friends were deciding who

they were going to live with in Dallas, and I could not miss out on the opportunity to have fun with them while starting my career."

Entering the real world, college graduates are responsible for knowing about monthly rent payments, security deposits, renters' rights and broker fees. Growing up comes with new and hefty expenses.

"Because of COVID-19, my parents have been helping me out with my rent, but since I have been able to find a new job in Dallas, I will be responsible for paying my portion of the rent while my boyfriend pays his portion," Beightol said. "I am so grateful that my parents were able to help me, as I know a lot of recent graduates had to do it all on their own."

This is the case for Kilgore senior Abi Cervantes, who will be responsible for paying all of her rent when she graduates in December. Cervantes said she hopes to get a full-time position in Waco after graduation.

"My current Waco lease

is a one-year lease, so if I can't find a solid job after graduation, I will stay in Waco for those remaining months of my lease," Cervantes said. "Currently, I have a retail job, so I would have to work more hours there or an internship to pay my rent, and that will be hard."

Beightol said finding the perfect place to call home can be difficult, especially after leaving a small community like Baylor.

"We used a locator, which essentially is a realtor estate agent for apartments, which made finding a place in Dallas a simple process for us," Beightol said. "They asked us what we were looking for in our home and what our price range was. Plus, we didn't have to pay them a separate fee because they receive a commission from your apartment when you sign."

Beightol said even with the difficulty, it's a right of passage for growing up.

"There was no discussion with my parents. It was my decision – I felt like a true adult," Beightol said.

Roommates' guide to avoiding conflict

EMILY COUSINS
Staff Writer

While living with other people, conflict is bound to rise up. People can't always agree, but there are ways to find solutions and compromise.

Alycia McCormack, the assistant director for resident learning, said when students live in dorms on campus, they are given a roommate agreement, which can help them address some differences right off the bat. However, conflict can get trickier in off-campus housing.

"Confrontation can be challenging, but we encourage residents to start from a place of mutual respect, listening to understand one another and communicating honestly and early on," McCormack said.

People living on campus have the opportunity to utilize community leaders as moderators in roommate conflicts if necessary.

Attempting to address the problem first without the CL is ideal, but Cypress senior Kailey Kolb said she wished she had taken advantage of her CL's assistance when she lived on campus.

"I lived with that same person the next year, and then those problems carried into that year," Kolb said. "And so then there was like a falling out because of it, and maybe if we had just had a chance to talk to each other and someone to mediate it that could have been prevented."

McCormack said it is not only important to communicate when issues come up, but a preferred method of communication also needs to be addressed.

"We would also encourage residents to be forthcoming about what the issue is and speak directly to the impact on the person," McCormack said. "Another important thing to consider is to address the behavior and not the person. In conflict resolution, it is important to address the issues directly, early and honestly from a place of respect and a desire to move forward."

Kolb said sometimes it's best to leave issues alone.

"If it's in a situation where you just feel like that's just not part of their living habits, and they're not going to be able to really fulfill that, then there might be a time where you just have to let it go and not be too uptight about it," Kolb said.

Baylor has a section about roommate issues on and off campus and advice on how to handle situations.

"Make a commitment to your roommates to work together in order to have the best living situation possible," the website said. "Realize that negotiation and compromise are essential factors when living with someone. Share decisions and be sure you give compliments as freely as criticism."



Brittney Matthews | Photo Editor

BESTIES HOME (Left to right) Seniors Hannah Graves, Mary-Callen Freeman, Anna Joy Seeger and Julianna Comstock live in their house called Something Blue. They said they chose to live together because they wanted a community of love and support.

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