

AU to modify residency requirement for new students

3/08/06

Beginning in fall 2008, juniors at Alfred University will be required to live on campus, provided the University has sufficient space to accommodate them. Currently, students must live on campus for two years, or four semesters. First-year students who enter this fall will be the first class affected by the new requirement. In increasing its residency requirement, Alfred University joins a growing list of four-year colleges and universities that have a residential requirement of more than two years. "Our decision to increase the residency requirement can be traced back to 2002, when the Board of Trustees voted to eliminate fraternities and sororities," said Michael E. Hyde, vice president for University Relations. A task force appointed to evaluate the Greek system made the recommendation to increase the requirement to "three or possibly four years." In its report, the task force said, "It is clear that students benefit from a more structured residential environment after they leave home. A longer residency requirement would bring students under the guidance of the Residence Life system and other caring and trained adults." Various forms of residential life should be offered to accommodate the various needs of students with different tastes, interests, and personal habits," the task force members wrote. Additionally, the Task Force on Civility and Violence Prevention in its 2004 report recommended a "tightening of requirements" for students who want to live off campus. "The residential experience is an important component of the education we offer our students," said Hyde. "By increasing the number of semesters students are expected to live on campus, we can enhance what it means to be part of the Alfred University community. We want to provide a high-quality residential experience for as many students as we can." Alfred University is a residential community, Kathy Woughter, interim vice president for Student Affairs, emphasized. "Residence hall living is a key component of a student-centered educational experience that integrates academic learning and student development." She said the University will be increasing the amount of programming it does in the residence halls, particularly in the first-year halls. "We will see an increased collaboration between academic learning and student development through the FYE (First-Year Experience) Program." Woughter said the Office of Residence Life is exploring various living options, particularly for upperclassmen. Special interest housing, which right now includes the Honors House, the Language House, the Environmental Studies House, Hillel, the international students' house and Joel's House for students interested in community service, is very popular with upperclassmen. AU increases residency requirement 3-3-3 The University will not be able to accommodate all juniors on campus by the year 2008, Hyde noted, even though since 2004, AU has added two special interest houses - Joel's House and the former Sigma Chi Nu sorority house on Sayles Street that houses international students. There are plans to convert South Hall into a residence hall to accommodate another 90 students, but even that will not be sufficient to provide housing for all juniors by the fall of 2008, Hyde said. "Our strategic plan calls for undergraduate enrollment to increase by 10 percent within the next three or four years," said Hyde. "As that occurs, we will actually face increased demand for residential space. Even with the increased residential requirement, we anticipate there may be as many students living off-campus as there are right now, although the number of students living on-campus will grow with the new requirement."