

## **Early Arrival Initiative**

In fall of 2008, the Offices of the VP for Campus Life and VP for Facilities began exploring a new initiative to address the significant growth in undergraduate students arriving well before the start of school, prior to many of the University's support services being available. Princeton's academic calendar drives a later start than many of our peers (September 17<sup>th</sup> for 2009) and increases the number of students needing to arrive for orientation, pre-orientation and athletic activities. Beyond this group needing to arrive early, there had been a growing number of friends and roommates arriving to enjoy some time on campus before classes began. This new initiative sought to review all these activities through a new lens of safety, security, savings and sustainability. The need to understand who was on campus, why they needed to be here early and who was responsible for them during this time became the primary force to gain traction on this effort. Amy Campbell, Director of Campus Life Initiatives along with Chad Klaus, Assistant VP for Facilities, met with dozens of campus departments who are involved with bringing students back to campus early as well service providers who are effected during this time. It became clear that establishing a cross departmental committee to implement policies, establish more formal processes and review requests for early arrival was essential.

The Early Arrival Policy Committee was created, early in 2009, with representation from the following offices, Registrar, Athletics, Residential Colleges, Heath Services, Financial Aid, Dean of Undergraduate Students, Dean of the College, Housing, Public Safety, Campus Life, and Facilities. This collaborative effort established stringent guidelines for early arrivals to be permitted for direct support of orientation activities or intercollegiate athletic teams. Online application processes were created for campus units to bring groups of students back early as well as individual student requests, each of which would be reviewed for need with detailed negotiations for the latest date possible for arrival. The committee recognized the important role communications would play in creating this culture shift and therefore initiated dozens of messages to reach the undergraduates, including emails, web postings, newspaper articles and advertisements, presentations to the USG, ULC and CPUC, and notices on spring grades and term bills.

In this first year, the committee reviewed 110 group requests and 94 individual requests. All group requests were approved, many with negotiated arrival dates and several with recognition that future requests would not be approved, given more time to plan for alternate arrangements. Only 15 individual requests were approved this year. For each group request a campus administrator was required to sponsor the need for early arrival. Each sponsor signed a contract demonstrating their responsibility for the students in the group during this early arrival period.

In previous years, all arrivals after the middle of August, were provided access to their academic year room. This created the need to have all 50 dormitories ready for move-in nearly a month prior to the start of classes. The group recognized limiting the number of students arriving early could dramatically reduce the quantity of dorms needed if we could also assign them to alternate housing during this early arrival period. For the fall of 2009, it was determined that all arrivals prior to September 1, would be placed in assigned housing. This effort allowed Princeton to house all of the early arrival students plus

the summer housing students in just seven dormitories, allowing far more time to finish maintenance and cleaning efforts in the other 40+ dorms.

This initiative has been a success in several meaningful ways. From a safety and security perspective we were able to track by each day, who was scheduled to be on campus and in which dormitories, should something have occurred. There were also no alcohol transports prior to September 11, when a very significant proportion of our students had arrived on campus, as well as far fewer lockout requests to Public Safety. The cost savings were far more dramatic than anticipated. The savings to operating budgets in Building Services, Grounds & Buildings Maintenance and Public Safety, were approximately \$100K, largely due to the decrease in overtime expenses. The Office of Design and Construction realized approximately \$190K in savings from having additional time to complete project work in dormitories, and thus reducing or eliminating the need for premium pay. The success of this initiative would not have been possible without the impressive efforts and collaboration of so many administrative offices across campus.

The next phase of this initiative is to address some analogous safety and security concerns during the winter break period. There is an effort to create an online registration process that will require students to submit the days they plan to be on campus during winter break to maintain access to the dorms.