Hi everybody and welcome to our webinar covering university housing and dining. Before we get started I want to talk about questions and answers. We invite you to share your questions with us by the question and answer function while you are watching the webinar. Please use that instead of the chat function. If you have technical difficulties you can let us know by the chat but any questions you have please enter them in the Q&A we will answer those at the end of the webinar so please stick around for that, we will ask them live we will ask the panelists the questions and one other thing you can find out where you can raise your hand digitally here. If you could I am going to ask if you are a graduate student to please click that button that says raise hand and if you are an undergraduate student please click raise hand.

Thank you very much.

One of the item is that one of the previous webinars are now posted on our website international.uiowa.edu and there is a search bar at the top right corner, if you were to tape in pre-departure webinar you should be able to find that link pretty easily. It is also located under the New Student tab that you can find easily as well.

Just to go over our orientation dates and information quickly. Please note that orientation is mandatory. You have to arrive at orientation if you would like to enroll in classes. You are going to meet with an academic advisor during orientation as well some people will need to take English exam on campus and there is also some great information that you are going to be given at orientation that is going to help you be really successful at Iowa during your first semester.

Undergraduate orientation is held the week of August 13. We recommend that you arrive a few days early so you can get used to the time. Graduate orientation is going to be the week of August 8. Again arriving early is recommended. When you are traveling to the University of Iowa, we ask that you arrive at the Cedar Rapids airport, the Eastern Iowa Airport, the code is CID. It is about 30 minutes away from campus. There is taxis and shuttles available for you there that will take you right to Iowa City. We don’t recommend using any unauthorized taxies or ride shares, we do recommend those shuttles and taxis and if you see a group of students standing around you can share the shuttle and it will lower the cost for everybody.

We are going to introduce ourselves and our panelists. I’ll start. I am Bob Gutwein, I am an assistant director in International Student and Scholar Services.

I am Michael Bortscheller, I am the other assistant director at the International Student and Scholar Services.

And the two other people that you are going to hear from the most today are:
Good afternoon, I am Virginia Ibrahim-Olin. I am the assistant director for Contracts and Assignments University Housing and Dining.

Good afternoon, my name is Moni Marcelo and I am the assistant director for Student Conduct within University Housing and Dining. My pronoun of references are she, her and hers.

So to get us going today what we would like to do is to talk with you a little bit about University Housing and Dining, our overall application and assignment timeline. We want to talk with you about what is exactly a living learning community, some roommate options that you will have living on campus, we will provide an overview of meal plans and how you eat when you live in a residence halls, we will discuss the cost, opportunities for you to work for University Housing and Dining, and we are going to address some frequently asked questions that we receive and shortly after wards Michael is going to address off campus housing for those of you that are going to be interested in it, and at the very end again is when we will be answering all of your questions that are coming in the Q&A section while we review this information.

Alright! So welcome to University Housing and Dining for those of you that will be living on campus with us. We are very excited to see you on August. Our system is large, we have over 7000 students that choose to live with us as well as 173 resident assistants and I am going into that a little bit later on in our presentation about what is a resident assistant. We also have a fantastic community comprised 28 living learning communities, every student is a part of a living learning community and I will talk about that a little bit more later as well. We have 13 residence halls and apartments that are part of our system as well as 8 retail dining locations, 3 market places and this year we launched a food truck which take my word it is delicious.

Our general timeline just to give you all some perspective, our application opened for students to apply for housing and dining in November 2016. May 1st was our priority deadline for roommate requests and livening learning community preferences. May 15th was the deadline for ADA or medical accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act. May 31st we shut down the housing application but please do not worry, we are reopening it this afternoon for those of you have not yet applied for housing and dining, we look forward to you being able to live with us this fall. Now June through August room assignments and roommate information will be sent to all students and then on August 12th we have an early arrival date specifically for international students who will need to be on campus in order to attend orientation on Sunday August 13th. You are able to move in on August 12th , an earlier start time to your housing contract and there is a small fee $135 associated with that earlier arrival but that is not put in your housing bill until September. We will talk about that again at the end of the presentation.

For those of you who have already completed your housing application you may have noticed that you selected a living learning community to live in here at the University of Iowa. As I stated there are 28 living learning communities. The reason that we have a living learning community for all our students is that it is a really great way to connect with peers, faculty and staff at the university. There are 5 bullets that talk about what is a living learning community and I encourage you to take a look when you can to review all that information but some big points to walk away with are that research have demonstrated that students that are parts of a living learning community is linked to staying in college, earning a higher GPA and overall a greater degree of satisfaction with our college experience. Because of this
research we transitioned our communities to all be a part of a living learning communities system. So we welcome you and we are excited to have you connect with our community.

One of the question you will be asked on your application is to indicate not only living leaning community preferences with that following a theme or interest related to your academics but then you will also be asked what room type preferences do you have. On this screen you see a number of our most common room type preferences. The majority of students who live on campus at the University of Iowa are housed in a double room and that is two students sharing a bedroom with a community style or an individual used bathroom down the hall. I do want to let everyone know that there is adequate privacy when using the restroom facilities so you don’t have to worry about that being an open facility. A standard double room is one that is slightly smaller than a regular double and we do have many of those on campus, only just a handful. We have a double room with pod configuration that is where there is individuals used bathroom down the hall in our newer residence halls. We have suite style rooms with a shared bathroom and kitchen and what these are is two double rooms that have a kitchen and bathroom in between and so four students share the use of those rooms. We offer a triple room which is three student sharing a room, and we also occasionally offer expended housing and so for folks who apply for housing later may begin the year in this lounge that is temporary but then we move them to a more permanent room type.

It is important that I highlight the note at the bottom that single rooms or rooms with a private bathroom are very limited on campus and just not often an option that a first year or new student would have.

One of the things that I mentioned earlier was that we have the American with Disabilities Act which is the ADA accommodations. And really what we do is we work with students who may have a documented disability or a medical need for an adjustment to their room assignment. You can make an initial request for this in your housing application via the checkbox on step 6 or you can just go to our website and we have got all the paper work on their. You as a student and your medical provider must submit documentations to us. We had a priority deadline on May 15 but please do not worry if you do have a disability and a need for an adjustment to your housing assignment based on that disability we will continue to work with you one on one, we just may need to take a little bit more time and wait until an appropriate room type becomes available to support your individual need. If you have a question regarding this you are more than welcome to reach Colleen Shaull and she works in our office or specifically students with disabilities. One special thing to note is that if you may need disability accommodations in the classroom you would work with another office on campus called Student Disability Services. They are an excellent resource and they help students communicate with faculty members regarding their accommodations needs.

Another resource that I would like to highlight is our embedded therapist physicians. We have two embedded therapist that work specifically and directly with students that live on campus in our residence halls. These individuals will meet with students one on one or in group counseling session depending on what the student and our embedded counselor decide but we have multiple and different options for students. These individuals provide same-day crisis or problem-solving counseling and they do crisis intervention as well. A crisis can have a range to maybe a death in the family, maybe an incident of bias or homesickness and so there is varying degrees to be able to meet with a counselor and being able to work and strategize the next step forward and thinking about mental health. So we encourage
you to use this resource, and again the embedded counselors are fantastic and providing outreach programming in mindfulness, self-care, coping with stress, preventing burnout. This is our resources available to students living on campus.

Most of our students who live in University Housing and Dining live with a roommate and so we have got 4 general strategies that we would like you to consider as you are preparing to move on to campus. First and for most, please get to know your roommate. You two will be sharing a bedroom together for the entire year so it may help for you to talk to one another and start to learn who each other is what your experiences are interpreting into the room.

The second strategy we recommend is taking your roommate agreement seriously. Every student roommate pair will have the opportunity to complete a roommate agreement with the support of their resident assistant and these are great tool for you to start the conversation around common sleep time, negotiating study hours in the room, talking through your presences for guests maybe that is friends or overnight significant others. And we want to give you an opportunity to lay your expectations out on the table for your roommate that so that both of you understand where each other is coming from.

The third strategy we recommend is assume goodwill. We know that it can take some very healthy conflicts as you are learning to live in a space with someone else, and we want you to be encouraged to give second and third chances when mistakes maybe made. Overall, the important thing to remember is communication is key to all solid roommates’ relationships. And again, we have resident assistants and we have hall coordinator who can help you out when communications maybe breaking down between you and your roommate.

Alright! So earlier in our presentation I said that I would talk about resident assistants. Resident assistants are students and staff members that live in each of our residence halls and on every floor. Within your community you will have a resident assistant and I encourage you to connect with them and get to know them. Your resident assistant is going to support your living learning community and provide fantastic pragmatic opportunities for you to engage. RAs are student staff so these are undergraduate students that have been carefully selected and trained. They receive training in the fall as well as spring semester as well as throughout the year also go on training. Their job is to assist residents in their communities to adjust and to have support throughout their experience with living on campus with us. In addition, living in every building we have hall coordinators. These are professional staff that live in our buildings to support student’s success and engagement. Get to know your hall coordinator. They are there to support you and they are excited to have you living with us. And finally, as I shared a few slides prior, we have embedded therapists. These are confidential resource for students. It is important for me to share that it is confidential so that when you are engaging in those services you know that what you are going to discuss is going to stay between you and your embedded therapist.

Once you have submitted your housing application you will have the opportunity to select a meal plan and this takes place from June until July 12th that you can pick a meal plan. We have three different options for those of who are going to be living in the residence hall or for those of you who may be living off campus. The largest plan that we offer is the Gold plan. It has a limited marketplace meals and 75 flex meals along with 8 guest’s meals for a cost of $1800 per semester. The way this plan works is that you would pay that money on your university bill and when you enter to one of our market places which is very close to like cafeteria’s style dining where you can walk-in in and there is a large food court with
several different stations that have a variety of different food type for you to select from. It is all you care to eat it at that moment and so we ask that you take only what you can eat. We have a black plan that has slightly fewer meals and that would be 145 market place meals and 75 flex meals and then the 8 guest’s meals. And for those students who were assigned to a room that have a kitchen with them, because you have your own kitchen you have the option to have our lowest plan and that is the 75 flex meals option in the Hawkeye plan. And those flex meals are wonderful because they can be used at either a market place so again that cafeteria’s style dining or they could be used at a retail location for a meal that you can take on the go with you which is great such as at our food truck down at the Memorial Union, there is a lot of variety there. Please note that meal plan changes must be made by September 1st. I have got a little typo that I didn’t not correct on our slide but we will give you reminders about that as you get closer to being here on campus.

Just a quick slide, for individuals with dietary needs and would like meal plans accommodations, we have a registered dietitian who works with us within university housing and dining. Dietary accommodations provide support for specific diet, food allergies and medical conditions. If you would like to fill out a form and submit a request for accommodation you can visit dining.uiowa.edu/nutrition.

To provide you with an overview of what are our annual cost are. Here is what most common students would pay. It is important for you to be aware that your rate would increase or decrease based on either the room type that you are assigned to or the meal plan that you have selected. A double room with air conditioning and please note that all our rooms come both with air-conditioning and heat in the winter time because it gets quite chilly, the cost for that is $6560 for the academic year. The black meal plan which is that 220 total meals is $3255. And you are provided with $200 Hawkeye Dollars, $100 per semester to be able to do your laundry and facilities or to be able to purchase small incidentals at our convenient store for a total of $10,015 for the academic year. Please note that we allow students to make changes to their room type preferences until May 1st and if you as you are submitting your housing application would like to make adjustment to those please be certain to contact our office.

Alright! Some folks may be wondering what beside my room what else is offered in the residence halls? Within our facilities we have some wonderful amenities that I would like to talk about. First is we have workout facilities. We have facilities in several of our buildings that are lovely and are free for students that live on campus in the residence halls, you just need you card, your University of Iowa ID to swipe in. We also have billiard or pool table available and tennis ping pong tables. We have computer rooms, so if you need to use a computer or working on a group project we have facilities for you to use again this is all part of living on campus. We have beautiful study lounges throughout our buildings as well as hall associations, so if you are wanting a leadership opportunity or a way to further your engagement in your hall you can join your hall association. We also have as we discussed the living leaning communities, another wonderful way to have leadership opportunities. We have dining locations, all of our halls are conveniently located to campus. Laundry facilities in every single building as well as front desk where you can receive mail, letters and packages. At our front desk we also have board games and something I didn’t include is that we have Wi-Fi in all our facilities as well and every single one of our rooms has air so if you are wanting an air conditioner we have that as well.

Some of you in addition to preparing for your trip to the United States, some things for you to consider either bringing with you or can purchase when you get here is bedding, you are going to need to have extra-long sheets. Laundry, you are going to need detergents, other amenities for however you want to
do your laundry so be thinking about that. Make sure to bring or purchase shower items and toiletries. You will need academic supplies because we want you to be successful so don’t forget your favorite pen or your lucky notebook. There are beside on campus off campus many locations where you can purchase food and groceries. If you are living in an apartment think about pots and other utensils you may need as well as cleaning supplies. You can also bring an Ethernet cord if you would like we have Wi-Fi as I shared and a desk lamp. These are just a few items that you may consider purchasing or bringing with you when you come to Iowa.

Overall there is a few general recommendations that we have as you are submitting your housing application. It is important for you to know that assignment are made on a first come first served basis and so your room assignment may be impacted on those Hawkeyes who have applied for housing before you. Your living learning community preferences and availability is what determine your room assignment. Our staff may never guarantee you a particular living learning community, building, or roommate. Room and roommate assignments may change over the summer without notice because sometimes individual student circumstances change. Overall, we encourage that you be flexible and open to a variety of options. And we hope that you are just as excited about your number one and your number 10 living learning community as you are submitting your housing application.

For some of you, you may be super excited to come to Iowa, I hope it is all of you! And some of you may wish to join our team. University Housing and Dining, we are hiring and we are looking for individuals that want to join our team. I can speak for my own experience, it is a lot of fun working for our department and it is really a great way to meet friends and connect with peers and other staff members within University Housing and Dining, and it also a great way to develop leadership skills and to be able to employ your skills to a position. We are very flexible so you are able to create a schedule around your classes and if you work for a dining services you also receive a meal for every shift you work.

Now we are going to delve into some frequently asked questions that you may have thought about may not. The first one is who can live with University Housing and Dining and we are open to all undergraduate students over the age of 16 and you must be enrolled in at least 1 credit hour, however, as an international student you also must be enrolled full time and that is very important. Students who withdraw from the University it is important that you be aware that you would need to move out of the residence hall as you return home if you choose to withdraw.

The deadline to apply for housing was May 1st initially, however, we will be the housing application open this afternoon and we will have it open as long as spaces are available. You may submit a housing application before you submit your final commitment to the University of Iowa and we certainly hope that you do choose to come.

Some of you may be wondering when can I pick my room? Room selection is a not available for first year students. First year room assignments will be made by University Housing and Dining staff based on your living learning community preferences, room type preferences, date of application and mutual roommate requests. So be thinking about those things when you fill out your application. You will have the option to select your own room if you return to live with us for the 2018-2019 academic year.

Sometimes students ask can I request a room in a specific hall? We do not collect this information as part of you housing application. As previously mentioned, your room assignment will be based on living learning community and room type preferences, not necessarily the hall or neighborhood. And a fun fact
to be aware of is that first year students live across all of campus, and actually those who live the West side report the highest satisfaction with their housing assignment.

Is the housing application fee refundable? No, the housing application fee is a one-time, non-refundable $75 charge for all students that apply. I should say all new students that are applying. Returning students if you decide to continue living with us do not pay the housing application fee when they reapply to come back the following year.

Can I cancel my housing application? And the answer is yes. You can cancel your housing application without financial penalty up until 7 days after you receive your official room assignment. It is important to be aware that when you receive the official notice of housing room assignment and contract that your housing contract is for the full academic year. So we will be offering you housing from August until May. You will not be released from your housing contract without a penalty after your binding date and again that is 7 days after we have sent you your official notification. This is all outlined very clearly in your notice of room assignment and housing contract. If you have any questions about this or you are thinking about canceling please be certain with talk to a housing staff member before you officially cancel or sign any agreements for another style of housing. We would hate to have you have two housing contract that you would be responsible for.

Some folks asked if they can ship their belongings before they move in. The answer is no. Until you are resident with us, we are unable to receive packages and keep them behind our desk. In addition, our front desk have limited availability for space and so packages are kept behind our front desk and we are just unable to hold on to that many packages due to the space, so we request that you do not send packages with your belongings until after you move in and become a resident living with us. After that, you can use you the front desk to receive packages.

As a general reminder, international students have the option to move in to the residence hall starting on August 12th. This is a specific moving date just for you to give you time to get here and get acclimated. You would be assessed an earlier arrival fee of $135 because you would be move in several days before the official start of your housing contract. This fee is lower than what you might be charged if you were living or staying, pardon me, in an area hotel and that $45 a night does include meals so for those of you who are traveling and wondering hey how would I eat? Don’t worry we would provide meals for you once you arrive. You also do not have to have cash on hand, that $135 is placed on your University bill so you don’t have to worry about having that immediately when you get off the plane.

Finally, some of our community has a pod-style bathrooms and folks are curious what those are. A pod-style restroom is very similar to a bathroom that you would have at home. It is a space with a toilet, a sink and a shower behind a lockable door. There are typically 5 to 6 of these bathrooms in a community with a pod style restrooms that is used by the entire hallway. These are cleaned daily by University Housing and Dining custodial staff.

We will be opening up for questions after Michael gets done to talking with you about off campus housing but if you are looking to get in touch with housing staff our contact information is available here. You are welcome to call, you are welcome to email, please feel free to include your name and your university ID number in all communication so we know exactly who we are talking to and can give the most accurate response. And if you are interested in a step by step walk through of the housing application just simply go to our website housing.uiowa.edu/apply-housing.
Okay! So now I am going to talk about some off campus housing options. Now this is going to be a specially of interest to graduate students who cannot live in residence halls and would be looking either on or off campus apartments and maybe of interest to some undergraduate as well while the vast majority of undergraduate students at the University of Iowa do attend University housing in their first year, there are some who would prefer to be off campus during their first year for whatever reason and so this is for all of you who will not live in university residence halls at the very start of your program.

First of all, there are many off campus housing options in the Iowa City and Coralville area but something you do need to know is that they are not operated by the University of Iowa. Now one option is on campus apartments complex called Aspire at West Campus but even though it is on University of Iowa property it is managed by a private company and something that everyone listening should know is that Aspire at West Campus is specifically for graduate students, first year undergraduates cannot apply and if you are interested in Aspire you can go on University’s website and just search for Aspire and you will be given a link to their website where you can apply. As I said before, these are privately managed even though they are on campus. One thing that is nice about them being on campus is that there is a bus that will take you from that location to the campus to different parts of University campus at regular intervals but once again it is privately managed so if you choose to rent their you will not be working directly with the University of Iowa.

In addition, beside Aspire, there hundreds even thousands of apartments in Iowa City scattered throughout the area. Of course, it would be impossible for us to direct you to all of them but one thing that is really nice is that the University of Iowa offers something called the Off-Campus Housing Service which is a central location for property owners to advertise their apartments to University of Iowa students and if you go to the website that I have listed here offcampushousing.uiowa.edu if you go to this website you could search by a number of different criteria, the number of bedroom and bathrooms and whether or not they allow you to have pets and things like that. And you can find a list of apartments that meet your criteria and decide if you want to move there. It is a really nice service.

Now if you do choose to live in an off-campus apartment there are some things you need to be aware of, some important ways in which they are different from living in University Housing and Dining. The first and I would think is the most important is that virtually all apartments in Iowa City are unfurnished. What that means is that there is no furniture in them. We have got a picture of a blank apartment up there, that is what you will be looking at when you go into these apartments. You will have to purchase or somehow provide your own furniture in these apartments. There is not going to be tables or chairs or TVs or anything like that for you.

Another thing you need to know is that when you live an apartment you are going to sign a lease which is a kind of contract with a landlord which is basically the property owner and this lease will stipulate the conditions of living there. There would be certain rules and certain restriction as well. One of those common rules in leases around Iowa City is that your move in date is probably going to be August 1st and your move out date is going to be July 27th, that means you can move in in August 1st of 2017 but you probably have to move out on July 27th of that same year. That gives time to the landlord time to clean up the apartment before the new tenant move in. You can find out a lot more about leases and also your right as a student who wants to rent an apartment by going to the University of Iowa Student Legal Service website. They have a really great guide there to live in Iowa City. It tells you what your landlord is allowed to include on the lease and what they are not allowed to include on the lease. And what your rights are as a tenant or somebody who wants to rents from these landlords. If you go to our website
listed here legal.studentlife.uiowa.edu/rental-guide/ and if you didn’t have time to write that down remember we are going to be posting this whole presentation online shortly after we are finished and you will be able to get the URL.

The last thing I want to mention is short-term housing which is of special interest to students who will be arriving before their contract with residence halls begins with the University Housing begins or if they arrive that before August 1st date that most off-campus apartments start. Unfortunately, short term housing can be difficult to find in Iowa City but we do have a couple of resources that maybe of interest to you. The first one is what is called 3 Day Stay at Hawks Ridge, this is an apartment complex that is not on campus it is actually pretty far away but it does have a bus that will take you to campus and what is nice about this is they have a furnished apartment, it means this will have furniture and it will allow you to stay there for a very small rate about $5 per day but the stipulation is you can only stay there for only 3 days. This is not a permanent solution. It is a just something to give you a place to stay while you make more permanent arrangements in Iowa City. You can find more information at their website which is www.livehawksridge.com.

If you want something else or you are going to come and need to find a place for more than 3 days we recommend that you look at either a hotel room or a Bed & Breakfasts which is something that we also call B&B. These are places where you can stay and get food and it usually much smaller than a hotel. We have a number of these throughout Iowa City. You can find a list of them on a website which is thinkiowacity.com/places-to-stay/. Once again, if you didn’t get those URLs written down you will have plenty of time to write down after this is posted online.
2017 Pre-departure Webinar Series – Making Travel Arrangement & Move-in
Questions & Answer

Originally aired on Friday, June 9, 2017

Question: the first question I can answer. If I fly to Chicago how do I get to Iowa City?

Answer: We really do recommend that people fly directly to Cedar Rapids. From Chicago, you would need to take the bus or rent a car and drive. It is about a 4 hours drive by car. It is probably 5 to 6 hours by bus. And you would need to research that and figure that out yourself. It is much easier to just add the extra Chicago to Cedar Rapids onto your flight. It is about 45 minutes and then you would be 30 minutes from campus instead of hundreds of miles away.

Question: Here is a good question. If I choose a roommate or if I am assigned a roommate and we don’t get along, how can we do to work on that?

Answer: That is a wonderful question and I am glad you asked. Within all of our halls we have resident assistants and they are trained to help navigate conflicts. And within residence education, I should say within University Housing and Dining we try to embrace conflicts because you can really learn through difference. When you are living with a roommate, if you find that you are having a disagreement we encourage you to have a discussion with that person about what it is that is bothering you. If you are unable to find a resolution, our resident assistants can help coach you through that challenge. Something to consider prior to your arrival is thinking about your sleep patterns, your study patterns because we find that lot of conflicts can happen around wanting to study, needing to sleep and also cleanliness like taking off the trash and doing your laundry. So think about what it is to that you really need to be successful and communicate that with your roommate when you arrive at the university. And if you need support, we have resident assistants and hall coordinators that are here to assist you through the process.

Question: What if I am living in a residence hall and a friend of mine gets a room off campus, can I leave the residence hall?

Answer: No, you are not able to leave the residence hall. Mean you are a free person you can do whatever you choose however there would be financial consequences for that. You housing contract if you choose to accept it, it would be for the full academic year. Again, that is from august until December you have the option to get a winter break contract for $300 and then January until May. And we will hold you responsible for both semesters of housing within University Housing and Dining. We do not release students from their academic year contract to go live in a private apartment off campus. The one time that we would give you an exception is if it is before your contract binding date and that is the seven day one week window that we give you once we have issued you an official housing assignment. So this summer if you are thinking hey I may want an apartment, once we notify you of where you will be living you will have seven days to decide. Yes I am going to continue and stick with this or no I would like to cancel it.
Question: A person is asking this question heard that they can work in residence or dining and they would like to know more please.

Answer: Wonderful! So that is true. Within University Housing and Dining you are able to work with us. As a student you are able to work up to 20 hours. In addition, you can work for dining services. You can work in our market places or in our dining halls and after you have lived with us for a year you will be able to apply to be a resident assistant. That is also something that you can do. More information will be available and if you are looking to begin your search process you can visit the University of Iowa website and there is actually a location where you can look for hireahawk and look for available position that are on campus. We have as I shared folks that work dining services, we have desk clerks that work at our front desks and resident assistant positions and custodian positions. So if you are wanting to get leadership experience and an opportunity to engage with peers make friends and connect with staff, this is a great way to do that. Would you add anything else Virginia? No, just that we really value our student employees. We are hiring and we are looking for 1400 of them and it is quite easy to work for housing and dining and we will certainly support you academic pursuit on campus. Absolutely!

Question: There is this question that comes up couple times. Can you show me on map where I am going to live? I want to show my parents.

Answer: That is a wonderful question and the answer is yes. When you visit the University of Iowa main webpage, if you scroll to the bottom, there is actually a campus map that you can click on that will show you the entirety of the campus. Also, you can click on the building pages, so under University Housing and dining where are listed different buildings there are also pictures. It is very exciting to be able to see where you are going to live before you get here. Speaking about once you are on campus you are able to access maps. We have maps in every single front lobby of our buildings that are in several languages. So when you are here and get oriented to campus, you are able to use that map as well to navigate campus.

Question: I am limited by my religion of what I can eat. I am worried that I can’t eat at the dining halls.

Answer: I really appreciate for you sharing that with us and I want you to hear that we do have options for all our students. Earlier In this presentation we shared a slide about meal accommodations. I encourage to look at that and determine if that is something you should fill out to have accommodations. In addition, we have a large menu of options so if you are restricted and you can’t eat a specific meal or if there is something else that you just can’t have, our food are labeled and our staff should what is in it and you can just ask questions and we can get those answers for you so that we are able to support you in your dining success here on campus. It is helpful for you to know that you can work one on one with our dietitian Laura Croteau. She would we happy to talk trough how to navigate the marketplaces and the retail locations for a variety of health or religion needs. Our dining facilities are not kosher or halal certified so that is important for you to be aware of as you are trying to decide do I want to live in the residence hall and do I want to eat on campus. We can make adjustments for many people’s needs but we would not be able to meet the highest standard of your religious organization depending on what you are looking for.

Question: For graduate students living off campus, are they able to purchase a meal plan at the dining halls?
Answer: Yes, Graduate students, faculty, staff and any undergraduate living off campus is welcome to eat in the dining halls. You could choose to pay the walk-in price which is $10.50 for a meal for either lunch or dinner or you could purchase a meal plan. Most students tend to purchase if they live off campus either the Hawkeye plan which has 75 meals or they would purchase what we call Herkey Booster Pack and that just has 25 meals to it. But yes, we welcome you to come and eat with us.

Question: I understand that there is rooms with kitchens. Are there still available and how do I apply for that room in particular?

Answer: We do have rooms with kitchens available. Those are the ones that would be shared between four different students to share a kitchen and a bathroom and so as you are submitting your housing application, you will indicate your both living community preferences and your room type preferences and you just want to make sure that you indicate at the top of your room type preferences that you would like a room with a university supplied kitchen. That is going to be the best way for us to know that you are interested in living in a room with your own kitchen.

And that answered another question which was about the living learning community. That is something that students need to choose themselves.

Yes we ask you to preference 10 of them. It could be something that you are interested in academically, you find personally engaging or are completely new to the topic but would like to check it out.

Question: I can’t bring my blankets with me, are there places for items like that?

Answer: This is a wonderful question. Yes, we have lot of places near campus where you can go to purchase belongings. If you are looking for linens, blankets, clothing, food, we have locations close to campus where you can purchase these. For locations that are little further away, we have a location called the Coralville Mall and it it’s a big building with lots of shops inside. You are able to go to this location by bus. So when you are here on campus we have a shuttle that will take you for free around campus. If you are wanting to go to Coralville which isn’t very far away, there is a small fee to taking the bus and it will take you to the mall to help you shuttle back and forth. If you are able to drive legally in the United States, we also have zip car which help you purchasing your items. And unaffiliated with the University, Iowa City was recently approved for Uber so we have Uber as well which is similar to a taxi service.

Question: Does everyone have to pay $135 arrival fee? Can you explain that a little bit?

Answer: Yes, all students that move in to the residence halls early do pay an early arrival fee. Now for international students that arrive on Saturday that totally fee would be $135 because there is 3 night before your housing contract would begin. If you were to move in a little bit later we have some domestic students that would move in on Sunday they would pay lower. Everyone is charged $45 a day to move in before the official start of the housing contract and we do that to allow you the opportunity to have housing available but not necessarily have to pay as much as you might pay if you were staying in a hotel.

Question: Are students able to sign their contract before they arrive in the US?

Answer: Yes, your housing application is submitted electronically and so by submitting an application you would be indicating that yes you would like to live with us and you can do that electronically. Now if
you are looking for off campus arrangement those would vary based on the landlord and the amenities that that particular landlord offers administratively.

**Question:** what is the cost of living off campus?

**Answer:** There is a couple different resources that you can look at. One is on University of Iowa Admissions’ homepage, there is a cost living calculator. That will show you the difference between on campus and living off campus but it really depends on how you live, what you expenses are like, do you like to go out to dinner a lot, do you go a lot to the movies, it really depends on you. It is also depends on where you live in the Iowa City area. Lot of apartments off campus have a wide range of cost and if you have roommate as well. These are all factors that you have to consider ahead of time and things that would take away from a large cost but I do recommend looking at that Admissions website to see that cost difference. Did anyone else want to add anything to that?

I think a couple of other things that you really want to consider is especially distance from campus and the safety of the building that you are considering renting and the term of your lease, how long you would be expected to pay for that lease. With University Housing and Dining it only the academic year so only while you are only expected to be here for classes which may offer you a couple of extra months to either travel or return home to your family in the summer time. We do have summer housing contracts available but it is important for you to be thoughtful about that because you may be able to find something that on the surface seems much more affordable off campus but in the time that you may spend traveling there or in the safety or the money that you may need to spend furnishing your apartment whereas the residence halls come with a bed, a dresser, and a desk. You know the cost saving may not be as apparent as it seems. Any other thoughts?

I will just add that at the University for international students we have a monthly living expense estimate which is not necessarily what everyone would pay but our estimate is going to be about $1000 per month and that is right along the line of how much you pay for rent and food for a month off campus in most places. Again, there can be variances but that is the kind of estimate you should have in mind.

**Question:** If somebody arrives late on August 12th can they still check in to the residence halls?

**Answer:** Absolutely! August 12th is when international students are able to come in for early arrival but if you come after that you are still able to check in. You just need to go to the front desk in your building and you will need to have your student ID or some form of identification so we can check you in and give you your key to be able to move in.

And if there is flight problems that occur we know sometimes you are not going to get here until 10 at night and that is okay. Our front desks will be open. The doors might be locked but there would be instructions on how you can get in touch with a staff. You would just go directly to your building and hopefully get a little sleep and be up to get ready for orientation that starts on the 13th for all students.

I will add that from the airport you would be able to find a taxi or shuttle as long as flights are arriving. They will stay there to make sure people have transportation.

**Question:** I am a graduate student. I still don’t have housing. What would you recommend for housing for graduate students?
Answer: So if you are just concerned about finding a place and want to make sure that you have done that, I think Aspire at west campus is one where you are going to be able to secure a location quickly and easily because they are specifically for graduate students; however, if you are willing to take a little bit more time to look at your options, the off campus housing services website that we mentioned earlier really does have some great tools to search for exactly what you want in an apartment. Renting off campus in Iowa City is unfortunately more expensive certainly than I would like it be. But if you take the time to look at things and explore your options you can find something that can work for you because there are a number of different public transport options in Iowa City to get you from places that are perhaps a little bit further away from campus to get you to campus and still be able to do that at an affordable rate. So if you just take the time to look at things you can find something that would work for your preferences. But if you just want to ease your mind and have something secure Aspire at west campus is probably going to have something for you.

That is great! And that’s it for questions and we are right at time which is really nice. The last thing that we have for you is in the chat we are going to add a link to a survey and we ask that you please take a couple minutes to answer that for us. It will help us improve our future webinars and what we can offer before you arrive here. And I want to thank our panelist today and thank you for listening to the webinar on housing and dining and we look forward to seeing you in the fall.