Spring 2021 Pre-arrival Webinar Series:
On-Campus Housing and Off-Campus Living

Andrea: Hello, everyone and welcome to our next webinar in the pre-arrival webinar series for new international students starting their first semester at the University of Iowa in the spring 2021. Today's topic is on-campus housing and off-campus living. Welcome. The next slide will be a brief greeting from one of the University administrators over-seeing this area.

Von: Hello, my name is Von Stange. I am the Assistant Vice-President for Student Life and the Senior Director of University Housing and Dining. We look forward to seeing you on campus, but in the meantime, please watch this webinar on Housing and Dining services.

Andrea: Thank you and now quickly about the webinar series. If you have not attended our webinar yet, please know that this is an optional series provided to you as new incoming international students before arriving to Iowa City. The objective of the series is for you to arrange plans for travel to and living in Iowa City, to understand orientation expectations and responsibilities and finally to transition to student life and academics at the University of Iowa. All webinars are recorded and posted on our website where you registered for the webinar, which is international.uiowa.edu/prearrival-webinar.

Andrea: During the webinar, if you encounter any technical difficulties, please let us know in the chat function. If you have any questions related to today's topic, please use the Q&A function to post your questions. We will answer them live at the end of the webinar, as time permits.

Andrea: If you have not received your I-20 or DS-2019 immigration document, please note, if you are an incoming F-1 student your I-20 will be sent to you electronically or by email. This is permitted by the US government for the time being, if things change we will let you know. However, the DS-2019 document requires still an eShipGlobal shipping fee payment in order to receive this document abroad. Once you receive either I-20 or DS-2019 document, then you can apply for your respective F-1 or J-1 visa. The same information is also contained in the pre-arrival checklist in our iHawk portal, which is ihawk.uiowa.edu. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our orientation team at their email address, which is isss-orientation@uiowa.edu.

Andrea: Let's review some important dates. November 15th will be a deadline for acceptance of undergraduate admission. December 19th, 2020 is the earliest day you can arrive to United States. January 18th, 2021 is the latest day to arrive in-person to Iowa City. We would like to remind you to be careful about self-isolation period that may delay the class attendance, should you be attending in-person, so please plan accordingly. Then, the mandatory orientation, and this year it's going to be an online orientation, it will take place on January 19th through the 22nd. Again, it's mandatory. January 25th is the first day of our spring 2021 semester.

Andrea: Let's do quick presenter introductions.
Breann: Hi everyone, my name is Breann Fredrickson. I work in University Housing and Dining as a Contracts and Assignments Specialist and I help our students get housing and their meal plans.

Kendal: Hello everyone and my name is Kendal Arthur. My pronouns of reference are he/him/his. I'm a former international student here in the United States, originally from the Caribbean and I'm right now here at Iowa. I'm a Residence Hall Coordinator with University Housing and Dining in that role I run one of our residence halls, supervise RA’s and work with our residents directly.

Alyssa: Hello everyone, my name is Alyssa Pomponio. I'm one of the attorneys at Student Legal Services here at the University. We assist students with a variety of different legal issues, including related to renting and landlord tenant and I'll be talking more about Student Legal Services and those issues later on in this presentation.

Andrea: And my name is Andrea Siebenmann and I'm one of the ISSS advisors and I'm also the webinar coordinator and today, a moderator as well.

Andrea: Let's review quickly goals of today's presentation. We will provide an overview of University Housing and Dining services for undergraduate students, including application timeline, dining options, facilities and much more. Then, you will learn about the advantages and disadvantages of living in privately owned housing located off-campus, as well as you will learn about the best practices for obtaining off-campus housing, things to consider before signing a rental agreement and ways to avoid potential pitfalls in the process. At the end of the webinar, we will save some time to answer any questions you may have about the presentation. And now the presentation.

Breann: Hi, everyone. I will be talking to you about all things on-campus housing. We currently have roughly 5,000 students living in our residence halls. 153 resident assistants within our 14 living learning communities. We have 10 residence halls that our students can live in and we have three marketplaces and seven retail dining locations that students can grab snacks and food at.

Breann: Our housing application for the spring semester is open, it opened on October 28th. We ask all of our students to complete their application by December 15th and also have any ADA accommodation requests submitted by that time as well. In early January, we will send room assignments to all of our students to their uiowa email account. Students can start arriving on campus on January 18th into the residence halls, we do charge a $35 per day early arrival fee. Your housing contract will start on January 23rd and as of January 23rd, there will not be any additional fees associated with arriving. And all of our students can stay in the residence halls until May 15th, which is when the residence halls closed for the semester.

Kendal: Now, on our website and you’ve probably seen us talk about living learning communities but what are they? Living learning committees, or LLCs, are designated floors of our buildings where students live together based on academic interests or identity. LLC participants are enrolled in a course in common and special events are planned to bridge academic and social connections between students.
and faculty. Now, you might be wondering why do we even have LLCs or what's their purpose. This is because of research and what it shows, it shows that, you know, students in LLC’s are more likely to stay in college, they're more likely to earn a higher GPA as well as to experience a greater degree of satisfaction with the overall college experience.

Kendal: Now, as you can tell we have quite a few residence hall options on-campus and even within those halls, you have a variety of options as well, catering to different interests, as well as to different budgets, all right. And so here on this slide we have a few of those options, in case you're curious. We have here as number one, a double room. In that situation, you would have one roommate and you typically have a community or individual bathroom down the hall. We have some halls that have double rooms but with pod configurations or pod style bathrooms. What that is that you will have one roommate but there would be an individual-use bathroom down the hall and that's a situation or setup you find mostly in our renovated buildings or in some of our newest buildings. And lastly, we have our suite-style housing with a shared bath and kitchen. That's particularly the setup you find in Mayflower hall and students in that living option are eligible for our Hawkeye meal plan. Alright, we also we recognize that you know, it can be a little awkward or unsettling having a roommate, especially if you've never had one before but please know that single rooms are, because they're so popular, we don't anticipate having many of them in the spring semester and so we just want to make sure that you know, you're aware of that, that you are not blindsided before you arrive at Iowa.

Breann: We have three different meal plans that students can choose from, depending on where they live. We have our gold meal plan which is our unlimited plan that includes 75 flex meals and eight guest meals at the cost of 1,925 dollars for the semester. We also have the black meal plan, which is probably our most popular, this caters more to students that don't necessarily eat three meals a day and they prefer just two meals a day, is what it averages out to be. So, it's 145 meal plans, 75 flex meals and eight guest meals at 1,735 dollars for the semester. Any student that is living in a room that has a University-supplied kitchen or off-campus students are eligible for our Hawkeye meal plan, which is just 75 flex meals at the cost of $745. Any students living off-campus can purchase any of our meal plans, but most of them typically go with the Hawkeye meal plan, if they want one. Flex meals can be used at either a marketplace or a retail location. Students have until February 5th to make any adjustments to their spring semester meal plan. Students that are living off-campus that choose to purchase a meal plan have five days after their purchase to make any changes as well.

Breann: Here, we'll see the prices for our housing for the entire year. So, our traditional double room is what is the lowest cost point for students. It is about 3,500 dollars per semester. Living in Mayflower, you have a little bit more, it’s more of an apartment style living and so that cost is a little bit more than what it is for the traditional double and then Peterson and Catlett, their rates are a little bit more, they’re newer buildings, they have a little more amenities available. You can see all of our prices for each room type per building on our housing website at housing.uiowa.edu.

Kendal: Yeah, so we recognize that we’re still very much in a pandemic state and you might be wondering, what’s it like dining on-campus while COVID-19 is still a rampant. So, one thing we can share is that the campus dining is still available for our students who live on-campus and have meal plans.
However, whereas normally you are able to actually sit in the dining halls to have a meal, during this pandemic for spring 2021, we’ll not be offering a dining option at any of our marketplaces. However, if you do have a dining plan or meal plan, there are two ways in which you will be able to get your meals on a daily basis. The first option is called our express dining option, in that option what you do is, for every meal period, breakfast, lunch and dinner, what you do is you go online you make a reservation and then once you get that reservation confirmation, you go over to the marketplace or the dining hall that you selected, you choose your meal and the meal is basically placed in containers for you, which you use to leave the dining hall and head back to your room. If, let’s say you’d want a faster option, we have what’s called the online ordering option. On-campus, our students call it the GrubHub option. So, what that is is that you’ll need to download the GrubHub app, all right, attach your meal plan to the GrubHub app and once you order through the GrubHub app, you will be able to then go to that marketplace to grab the meal that you ordered and then you could easily head on out, all right? In case you want a little more information on what that looks like, etc. feel free to check out the website listed, we’re more than happy to advise you, as well as to provide you support.

Kendal: We also recognize that in the pandemic, it can be a little nerve-wracking, we'll figure it out, like what living on-campus might look like, all right? And so our hearts are very much open and we are accepting applications for students to live on-campus in this spring. However, one thing we’d like to make you be aware of are the additional policies we have in place just for your health and safety during this pandemic, all right. We require now that masks be worn by all students and visitors in all public spaces. If, let’s say, you do have a mask and we have dispensers in our lobbies that are replenished every day and so you are able to get masks free of charge that way. We also are telling our students that they’re only allowed one visitor or guest at any one time, just where you know, we reduce crowding in the halls. And lastly, if let’s say you believed you might have been exposed to COVID-19 or you tested positive, we are able to support you and we do have isolation housing on-campus, that way you are able to continue living on-campus despite being COVID-19 positive and so, just let us know what that diagnosis is and will be more happy to let you know what that process will look like. Similar to the dining option on the previous slide, feel free to click on the link listed below, in case you would like to know a little more information on what housing looks like during this pandemic here at Iowa.

Breann: University Housing and Dining staff will work one-on-one with students for documented disabilities and medical equipment accommodations. We know that some of our folks coming on campus may need a special room arrangement, given their medical need. We ask that your initial request come in through the housing application, which is in the check box, step number six is where it is within the application. Once you select that, if it is necessary, you will receive an email with instructions and then I will also follow up with you. That process includes a student statement stating their need, as well as medical provider documentation supporting your request. We ask that information is provided by December 15th, so we can work to get you the proper accommodations for the spring semester. If you have any questions about disability accommodations, please let us know, you can email us at housing@uiowa.edu. Something to note is our process is separate than the student disability services for in-classroom accommodations. We will often refer to the other process to make sure that you are working with them if needed as well. So we’ll get you on the same page there.
Kendal: Yes, so you might be wondering, okay I live in the residence hall but what if, let's see, I have a question, what if let's see, there's an emergency where I need support. Who is there for me, or what is there to assist me? And so we'll probably say that we have quite a few of housing and dining resources. That way, you know, and we are able to support you, regardless of what your situation is, all right. I will start first by talking about our resident assistants, commonly known as RA’s. Every school hall has at least one RA on every single floor. For the most part, RA’s are undergraduate students, while carefully selected and trained, their job is also to assist residents in adjusting to the halls and to life at Iowa. We are proud to say also that we have quite a few international students who are RA’s and so many of them are able to assist you as well, being that they’re international similar to you, all right. Next, we have hall coordinators like myself, and these are masters level professionals that live in every single hall on-campus and are there to support the RA’s as well as students like you in success and engagement. Lastly, we have embedded counselors, so they don’t live on-campus in the halls but they offer free confidential therapy and supports to our students who are going through crises or will need another list of support that's more clinical in nature.

Kendal: Now, our embedded counselors are also called embedded therapists. We recognize that it’s not something that's commonly found in college housing departments, but it's a resource that we very proud to offer here at Iowa, simply because of the challenges that some students face, all right. And so in case you not familiar with them, this is not the rules or responsibilities that they have here at Iowa and they provide individual psychotherapy, if you believe that that's something that might be better for you and your situation. They also provide general process group therapy, so that you know you can get the better sense of yourself, as well as you know, getting to know others in a more group setting. If, let's say, you're going through an emergency right now, they are able to provide same-day crisis and problem-solving counseling, depending on the situation and we recognize that, you know, life happens and so sometimes, you know, there might be a loved one of yours that died or you know, there might be like, you know a case of like let's see, bias, etc. They are able to provide support to you to help you cope through those situations. One thing I'm proud to say is that the work and support of our embedded therapists, it is free of charge and so on don't worry about the money pieces or like, let’s say, insurance because they are free and they're there to help you. All you need to do is to just set up an appointment to speak with them and they'll be more than happy to support you.

Kendal: We also recognize that, you know, coming from abroad, it can be challenging or even nerve-wracking, like living with a roommate for the first time and I know as a former international student, that was one of my concerns and when I came to America many years ago. And so one thing we can say is that, to be very honest with you, because single rooms are so limited on-campus, most students, especially students starting in spring 2021, they will have a roommate, alright. And so, that's totally fine but these are some of the tips we would like to give you so that, you know, you can have the best relationship as possible with your new roommate. It's always helpful that you get to know them because it's possible that you might not know them before, they might be very different to you, that's okay. Talk to them, find out about them, you know who they are, where they from, their interests, etc. so that way you can develop a relationship with them. Take your roommate agreements seriously. Here on campus, we have what's called roommate agreements. What that is is that, as a RA, your RA will send out a link
to you and your roommate on a number of topics. So, you guys will be able to talk about your interests, what you have in common and you know, who likes the lights on early morning, who doesn’t like the lights on early morning so that way you could determine exactly how you could have the best living situation. So, we always encourage people to take that seriously because that is the main way in which you get to know your roommate and how they live and so as always, if let’s say, you need any support in that, feel free to reach out to your RA, all right. Also, assume goodwill and positive intentions and last, but not least, communication is important. We recognize that people communicate differently, but if there are challenges in the room, unless you don’t communicate to your roommate or to your RA or myself as a coordinator, that's the only way someone will know that there is an issue that has to be fixed, alright. And as always, if let’s say there are other things that are going on, or if you have questions or concerns, feel free to talk to your RA or even to coordinators like myself in the building. We’re more than happy to support you and to help mediate the conflict.

Breann: All of our residence halls are open to students of any gender. Within our buildings, we have a few that have single gender floors or wings. Burge, Currier, Hillcrest and Rienow have floors that are just one gender or just one wing. Our buildings that have mixed gender floors, where your neighbor, person across the hall from you, they may be of a different gender. Those buildings are Catlett, Daum, Mayflower, Peterson, Stanley and Slater Halls.

Breann: We also have several different bathroom types. So, we have our community style bathroom, which when you walk into the bathroom, there is a row of toilets, a row of sinks, a row of showers. It’s locked access within each of those spaces, aside from the sinks. They are single gender bathrooms and it’s typically shared between 12 and 15 people on your floor. The community style bathrooms are found in Burge, Currier, Hillcrest and Rienow. Our single user bathrooms, which are often called our pod style bathrooms, they are also locked access but they’re for any gender. You use them one at a time, it is also shared on your hall, so there’s between 12 and 15 students will use these. When you enter the bathroom, you will see just one sink, shower and toilet in that space and these single user bathrooms can be found in Catlett, Daum, Peterson, Slater and Stanley Halls. At Mayflower, we have suite-style living and so between two and 4 students will share the bathroom, which has two sinks, one shower and one toilet.

Kendal: We understand that coming to the United States can be nerve-wracking, especially if you’re living on-campus for the very first time. It’s also very common for students to wonder, what does the room come with, all right? And so, here is a list of items that you typically find in our residence halls. Although, we have a few differences based on halls, but in general, these are the things you will find, alright. You will have like recycling and trash containers, you will have a pre-lofted bed or a raised bed. You will have a telephone jack, in case you’d like to have a landline. But note that phones and cords are not provided, you need to get those yourself. In case, you know, you would like an ethernet jack or you’d like ethernet access, we provide that in our rooms, however, ethernet cord is not provided. Our rooms also come with desks and chairs, an extra-long twin bed, drawers, as well as a cable TV jack, in case you’d like to bring your TV, however, a TV and cord are not provided. The things we have here that we don’t provide, there are many ways in which you can get them. You can either buy them online and have them shipped to the hall for you. Or, we have many stores in the area like Walmart, Target, etc.
that you could easily go to get all the items that you think you'll need for your room. Using the link at the bottom, you can also go there to see other items we recommend that you have, just to make sure that you know, you're comfortable and you have the things that you need.

**Breann**: Some tips to consider. Something to note is our rooms are selected first come, first serve, based on when we receive your application. So, as we make our assignments, we will go through them in order that they are received. So, people that have applied before will get their assignments first. So, in that process, we encourage you to be flexible and open to multiple room options and building options. You know, some folks have it in their head that they're gonna live in this one particular building, which may be very popular with other students and if you apply later, you may not get that. So, we just ask that you be open to your options and there's always opportunities for room changes later in this semester after you move in. As Kendal mentioned, all roommate relationships take time and communication with them, so be willing to have those conversations with them and be open and honest with them as you're navigating the roommate field. Students should be the primary person submitting their applications in communicating with us in our Housing and Dining Office. Since you are the folks that have the contracts and you are living here, it's best for us to talk to you to navigate your situation.

**Breann**: As always, we are willing and able to take phone calls and emails at any time. We are open eight to five, Monday through Friday for your phone calls and if you have any other questions for us, please just let us know and we'll get back to you as soon as we can.

**Andrea**: Ok, we are starting the next presentation, which is going to be on off-campus living and student support.

**Alyssa**: My name is Alyssa Pomponio, the other name that you saw on the screen was Amanda Elkins. She's the other attorney at Student Legal Services. Student Legal Services is an office on-campus that offers free legal advice and low-cost representation to students. We, as I said, we have two licensed attorneys, myself and Amanda Elkins at our office, and we are 100% confidential. So, what that means is that you can come talk to us about a variety of different legal issues and we're not going to share that information with anybody, unless you consent. So, we're not going to tell your family, we're not going to tell you roommates, we're not going to tell ISSS, we're not going to tell your professors. It's a confidential relationship that you have with Student Legal Services. We practice in several different areas of law including tenants’ rights, which is what the presentation is going to focus on today, but we also practice in criminal law, we do small claims, contract review, notarization to get important signatures done, family law issues, employment, consumer issues and traffic tickets. There’s, you know, if you ever have any kind of legal issue or question, you can contact us, and we can assist you.

**Alyssa**: So, there are definitely advantages to living off-campus. There are more options for types of housing. There is, you know, there's large houses where, you know, seven people can live in one house. There's you know, two bedroom apartments or three bedroom apartments or you know, single apartments, so one bedroom apartment or studios, or efficiency units where it is sort-of dorm like or similar to a residence hall in that you're renting a room and then you may share bathroom and kitchen with other people who are also renting that space. So, there’s a variety of different types of options. And
there's more options for privacy because most of the rental units off-campus and the Iowa City area are, you know, do offer private bathrooms and kitchens. If not just for you, but also for a small number of roommates. You also, you know, don't have a lot, you know, in a residence hall, there's lots of people who are living there and so if you're looking for a quieter atmosphere, off-campus living could be good for you. There's also the potential to save money. You know that you are obligated to pay your rent and there's a security deposit that you pay upfront that we're gonna talk about in a little bit later, but you know, other than that, you know, there's the potential to save money. There's also the potential for some hidden fees and so I want to just qualify that that it may be cheaper than living on-campus, but there's no guarantees to that. There's also increased availability for parking in off-campus living situations, sometimes you do have to pay for that parking but there are more parking spots available. And given that there are different types of housing situations available off-campus, a lot of the off-campus housing is more appropriate for families, than you know, what's available in the residence halls.

Alyssa: So, of course there are disadvantages to living off-campus as well. You run the risk of low quality housing. You know, some of the housing that we have here in the Iowa City area isn't very nice and some of it is, you know, definitely okay and then unfortunately, some of it is not the best quality and so there is that risk as well. You also have the risk of having a non-responsive landlord, so if you report maintenance issues things, that need to be fixed, you run the risk that your landlord is not going to fix them. Of course, there may be remedies for that, ways to get that changed but that is something to know on the front end. Oftentimes, tenants are also responsible for paying utilities, things like electricity, gas, internet, water, garbage; things like that, and so there are those added costs as well. Depending on where your rental unit is located, there may be some transportation difficulties. Certainly, you know, some things are, you know, maybe walkable but if you don't have a car then, you know, your potentially relying on public transportation. So, is there public transportation that's near your rental unit? That's a question that you should be asking. You know, that may prove difficult as well. Also, roommate problems, you know, if you are living with roommates, you know, there's always the possibility that there could be issues that arise, problems whether you know the person in advance or if you don't. So, one option is to consider living alone.

Alyssa: So, what are some tips for obtaining an apartment. So, first just be aware that there are hidden costs to renting. So, I mentioned the rents which is typically paid monthly but there's also the security deposit which is a sum of money that can be up to two months of rents that you pay in advance that will cover certain types of charges that may come at the end of your lease, including any damage to the apartment. Utilities, I mentioned, transportation and sometimes you have to pay for parking or if you have to pay for a bus pass or maybe you're needing to get, you know, get a ride share like Uber or Lyft to go places. Those all maybe hidden costs of renting to consider in addition to what your actual monthly rent is. It's really important that you read the entire lease. A lot of times a lease can be, you know, several pages long. I've seen leases that are you know up to 12 pages long and it can be a lot to read but it's really important that you read through it because lease’s have a lot of rules and it's really important that tenants follow the rules that are in their lease otherwise they can risk being evicted. An eviction is where there's a court process where you're basically told that you don't have the right to live in the unit anymore. So, it's really important to read your lease and it's also important to look at the actual units.
So, I know that many of you may not be here in the United States right now and so there are ways to do that before you come to the United States. You can ask for a virtual showing of the unit that you're going to rent so that you can see what it actually looks like. Try to avoid looking at what's called a model unit, sometimes you're shown a unit that may be similar to the unit that you'd be renting but it's not the actual unit. This this way you avoid scams and disappointment if the unit that you arrive to doesn't actually look like the unit you saw. We highly recommend that you schedule an appointment with Student Legal Services for at lease review so that we can read through your entire lease and talk about it with you. We can talk about your lease in specific terms but also provide you with some information that's general information to rent that you should be aware of as, you know, as the year goes on. We really recommend that you talk to current tenants who are renting in that unit or renting with that landlord and also checking online reviews for the landlord and the student government renters guide. All of these things will give you an idea about how your landlord may stack up compared to other landlords in the Iowa City area. Iowa City has a lot of corporate landlords as opposed to singular people who are renting out their, you know, extra properties. There are those people but there's a lot of corporate landlords which means that a lot of students have had experienced renting with these landlords before. So, we really recommend that you look into their reputations before you sign a lease. Next slide, please.

**Alyssa:** So, when you're ready to sign a lease it's important to remember that a lease is a legally binding contract and so what that means is it can be difficult to get out of that lease once it's signed. So, it's really important that you are sure that you want to live at that specific place for the lease term. There may be various reasons why people may want to get out of a contract but we know from, you know, what's happened this past year that the uncertainty related to COVID-19 is a reason that some students have wanted to get out of their contract and it can be difficult once the lease is signed. So, if you have concerns that may be you won't actually come to the United States or you know, or you're just concerned about what the future looks like and you’re nervous about renting off-campus, it’s just important to remember that a lease is legally binding and if you have questions about that, you should come talk to us as Student Legal Services. If you do have roommates, we recommend that all the roommates sign at the same time, even if you’re in different locations, that you just all agree we’re gonna sign at this one time so that in case anybody does decide to back out, the other roommates haven't signed that contract yet. It's really important that once it's signed you keep a copy of it for your records. This way, you have it in case you ever need it, in case you want to reference it to look at some of the rules that are in your lease or in case there’s a problem in the future. We highly recommend that you never sign an incomplete lease. If there are blanks, things that should be written in but are not written in or if there's pages missing or if the lease mentions an addendum, something that should be attached to the lease, but it's not actually attached, do not sign. You want to make sure that you know exactly what you're signing and you have all that information in advance of signing it.

**Alyssa:** So, before you move-in, once you have signed a lease and you’re ready to live off-campus, we recommend that you purchase renters insurance. Renters insurance will cover the costs of any damage that happens to your unit because of let's say, flooding or fire or if somebody steals or vandalizes your property inside your unit, renters insurance can help cover the cost of it. It can be as little as $10 a month and you can get it through a variety of different insurance companies, similar to car insurance.
So, if you were to just google renters insurance, a lot of different places would come up, but you know, there are places like Geico, All-State, Progressive, all of those types of places will sell you renters insurance. You should set up any utilities that are in your name beforehand. So, sometimes landlords, the landlord will be in charge of the utilities and sometimes the tenant will be in charge of the utilities. You’ll need to check your lease to know if you are in charge of them, and if you are, you'll need to set them up in advance of your arriving so that you know, let's say the electricity works when you arrive. If you do have roommates, we recommend that you consider having a roommate agreement. This is a written agreement between the roommates about certain things: how rent will be paid, you know, how the security deposit will be paid or divided back up once it's returned to you at the conclusion of the lease, thing like, you know, you can develop a cleaning schedule or you know, a guest policy, you can put anything you want to a roommate agreement. We do have a sample of one on our website but you can edit it however you'd like.

Alyssa: So, once you're ready to move-in, it's important that you notify the landlord immediately if the unit is not in the condition that you thought it was going to be or if something is broken or needs to be repaired. Sometimes, what happens is students move-in and they're very surprised at the condition of the unit, that it's not at all what they were expected. If that's the case, you need to notify the landlord immediately and you should also contact Student Legal Services so we can talk about what your options are. But if you notice something that is just broken or needs to be repaired, you should also notify the landlord. We recommend that you complete a move-in checklist when you move-in. A move-in checklist is basically a list of all the rooms in the house and then you can document if there's any issues. So, for example if there's a stain on the carpet or if there's damage to the wall, or if you know, the kitchen is not clean, you can note all of that on the checklist. Sometimes, the landlord provides you with a checklist that you then give back to them, but if they don't, we still recommend that you do it and we have an example of one on our website. You should then email the checklist back to the landlord. We recommend email because this means that you have a copy of it saved in your email. If you don't email it, then keep a copy some other way, take a picture of it before you give it to your landlord. This way you have it, as well as your landlord. We also recommend that even before you move any furniture in, you take pictures and video to document the overall condition of the unit. You want to, as I mentioned before, document any stains, rips, tears, damage, uncleanliness, anything like that so that you have proof of that, in case later on your landlord tries to say that you caused that damage. You want to be sure to back up those pictures and videos on your computer or on the cloud, you know, sometimes people take pictures on their phone and then they get a new phone and then they don't have access to those prior pictures, so it's really important to back them up somehow, so that you have access to them when you move out, in case you need it.

Alyssa: So, while you're living in the unit you should clean regularly. Part of what's going to be required of you is that you return the unit back to the condition it was at move-in. So, assuming that it was clean when you moved in, it will be easier to do that if you clean it on a regular basis. You should pay your rent on time. It's typically by the first of the month, but this will depend on the specifics of what your lease agreement says, so, be sure to check your lease. If you don't pay your rent on time, you run the risk of late fees or potentially being evicted from the unit. You should tell your landlord right away if there's any leaks or any conditions that could cause damage to the unit. Sometimes, if let’s say you have mold
Growing in the bathroom and you don't tell your landlord it could get worse and then your landlord can charge you for not telling them. So, it's really important that you communicate with your landlord about any issues that need to be fixed or repaired in the unit. You should contact Student Legal Services if your landlord charges you unexpected fees during your lease. So, something other than your rent would be potentially an unexpected fee. So, if you ever get charged something, contact us before you pay it. This way, we can give you advice about whether we think that you should pay it. If you pay it before you talk to us, it can be difficult to get that money back. And it's really important to never turn your heat off all the way during the cold months in Iowa, which are typically from November to March, even if you’re traveling, even if you leave, you know, leave the Iowa City area, or leave the country even, it's important to keep your heat on because the pipes can freeze and that can cause a lot of damage.

When you're ready to move out of your unit, it's important to clean it. When you leave the unit, you've got to bring it back to the condition it was at the beginning of your lease and so that’s why cleaning while you're living there is so important because if you clean a little bit all the time, it will be less to clean at the end and you’re more likely to keep it in the condition it was like when you moved in. When you’re ready to move out, it’s really important that you also take pictures and video of what your unit looks like when you’re moving out. So, it’s the same, taking pictures of any damage, stains, you know, tears or things that aren’t clean, nicks in the paint, anything like that, so that you can document what it looks like when you move out. You should also ask for a walk through. A walk through is a meeting with your landlord to discuss the condition of the apartment when you’re moving out. The purpose of a walk through is so that your landlord can tell you, you know, this needs to be cleaned more or, you know, work on this a little bit more so that this way you have an opportunity to keep cleaning and this will hopefully allow you to get more money from your security deposit back. So, we really recommend that you have that walk through and that you’re there for it, that you and your landlord are there together.

You also need to leave a forwarding address with your landlord so that they know where to return your security deposit money to. It’s not enough to have provided them with a permanent address at the beginning of your tenancy, you have to leave a new address with them, even if it’s the same one that they might already have. And then when you get your security deposit back, your landlord might take money out of it for certain things and it’s important that you know that you understand what purpose the money can come out. So, if you have unpaid rent, your landlord can take money out of your security deposit for that. If you have fees that haven’t been paid like, a utility bill or late fees, your landlord can take money out of your security deposit to cover the costs and if your landlord feels that you’ve damaged the unit or it’s not in the condition it was like when you moved in, your landlord can take money out of your security deposit to bring it back to the condition it was at move-in. So, that’s where the pictures from move-in and move-out become so important so if you disagree with any of the deductions that your landlord took from your security deposit, we recommend that you come talk to us at Student Legal Services and we can talk with you about what your options are, to try to get that money back from your landlord.

Alyssa: Student Legal Services is located on the ground floor of the Iowa Memorial Union, but our offices are currently closed because of COVID-19. We’re working remotely and holding appointments via zoom but you can contact us by email or by phone or our offices open, you know, our virtual office is open Monday through Friday 8:00 to 4:30 p.m., you can also follow us on social media. And we offer,
you know, a variety of tips about different things including renting on social media, so we recommend that you check us out there as well.

Q&A

Andrea: Thank you very much to all of our presenters for providing lots of details regarding both on-campus and off-campus housing. And this is a Q&A portion of our webinar. We have about 5-7 minutes left for Q&A, and we do have a few questions that we perhaps can ask our presenters to help answer. The first question is if a student needs to quarantine after their arrival to the University and can they quarantine in their own dorm room or should they do it somewhere else?

Breann: That’s a really good question. Students are able to quarantine in their own room. We would ask if you’ve been in contact with somebody, there is a self-report form for you to complete, so we just ask that you do that and then we will follow up with instructions but you would be able to quarantine, you’d likely be able to quarantine in your own room.

Andrea: Thank you very much. The next question would be probably for both off-campus and on-campus housing, so will the students be somehow notified that there are others in their building who were tested positive for COVID?

Breann: So, for on-campus housing, if students we do not send out an alert if your neighbors or your floor or even your building have individuals that have COVID. The university is sending out a report every Friday to everyone on-campus of our campus numbers, but in order to keep their students identities private and confidential, we do not send out individual information to the halls.

Alyssa: Yes, similarly it’s probably unlikely that you would get that information living off-campus. First, you have you know, no obligation to share your private medical information with your landlord or with your neighbors and so therefore, you know, if that information is shared, it’s you know, it's unlikely that you know, your neighbors or landlord would then share it out, you know, more broadly. So, you’d probably wouldn’t get any information about whether anybody in your building was quarantined due to COVID-19.

Andrea: Thank you so much. I appreciate that. Then, there is a question about the lease. So, since students may be coming in January, they wonder if they have to sign a lease that lasts until July or would it be at least for an entire new year until the next January?

Alyssa: Yeah, that’s a really good question. Most of the leases in Iowa City go from about August to July. So, probably if you’re coming in January, you would sign a lease that starts in January and ends in July and then if you were staying in Iowa City, you would then sign a new lease for the following year. However, a lease is a contract that can be negotiated and so if you were looking to sign a January to January lease, that’s of course something that you could talk with your landlord about but my guess is that the lease that you’d be looking at would be January to July.
Andrea: Thank you very much for clarifying that. The next question is about how can students identify an off-campus apartment or where they would go to look for off-campus housing?

Alyssa: Yeah, this is a really good question. We have an office on-campus that offers off-campus housing and so they have a really great website that offers a lot of information about available units. Sometimes, landlords post there often, students post there when they're looking for people to take over their lease or they're looking for roommates. So, that's a really great place to start and I'm happy to find that website and put it in the chat. Another option would be, you know, Craigslist or social media, Facebook Marketplace, things like that, but I would definitely start with the University's off-campus housing website and I'll find that website and put it in the chat.

Andrea: Thank you so much, again. The last question or the next one would be about the on-campus housing and it would be on the question whether a student, if they arrived and if they don't have any bedding or any type of sheets for their bedding, how they could obtain something like that, would the Dining and Housing department be able to help them with this?

Kendal: Yeah, and so when it comes to bedding, typically we don't provide those in the residence halls. However, if depending on when a student arrives, they might be able to get those items from any of the locals stores, whether it be Walmart, Target, etc. A lesson we shared before is that if you're concerned that you might be arriving late when those stores are not open, you are also able to buy items online and mail those to yourself in advance. When you get your room assignments, typically we give you your mailing address for the hall and so, we are able to accept packages for you in anticipation of your arrival. When you arrive, our desk will be open and we can give you the items you sent that way, you have your bedding peoples or whatever you mailed to yourself.

Andrea: Thank you so much and one more question that just came on is whether the on-campus housing is available for graduate students too?

Breann: Residence Hall living is a for undergraduate students only, unfortunately.

Andrea: But there are, I believe, it's not a campus housing but it's called… can you remind me?

Alyssa: Aspire apartments.

Andrea: Aspire apartments, yeah! They're very close to campus but they're not really, they don't belong to the University but they're the closest sort-of off-campus housing that's available for students and for graduates students, specifically, am I correct?

Breann: Yes, you're correct. And we often times... we will refer graduate students that are looking for housing, we will refer them to Aspire and I can put that link in the chat as well.
**Andrea:** That would be perfect, thank you so much, Breann. I believe that closes our Q&A portion of the webinar and I will be sending a very quick message here in the chat function that is about a survey. We would like you to please complete a quick and brief survey and hear your feedback on today’s webinar on the topic, and whether you would like to hear something else. If you have any more questions and please you can contact us. Next slide, please. Next slide.

**Andrea:** You can contact us at the orientation email address which is isss-orientation@uiowa and then I would like to also bring to your attention a good resource for you as a new international student, which you may have already seen and visited but again it can answer a lot of your questions and that’s a website, international.uiowa.edu/new-students.

**Andrea:** And the last slide is a reminder about the upcoming webinars. The next one is going to take place on December 4th and will be focusing strictly on the orientation and what to expect. We will also discuss different placement tests, including the English proficiency placement test. So, if you are interested to learn more about this topic, please make sure to register for this webinar and attend it. And the last webinar that we are preparing to air in January, just before students may be arriving or planning to travel to the US, that will be on January 8th. And this webinar will be specifically focusing on COVID-19 and the preparations for travel and living on the University of Iowa campus. Again, thank you to our presenters today for providing a lot of good information. And also, we would like to thank you students for attending the webinar. Please again, if you have a moment, provide feedback to the webinar today. And thank you so much for attending. Good-bye!