

July is the month that a lot of soon-to-be college freshmen and their families spend a lot of time packing up for that first semester away from home. At NCCC, our Move-In Day, when a majority of our residence students come back to campus, is on August 18th. It's just around the corner!

While the majority of our 2,500 students are from our service area and commute to college every day from home, we do have upwards of 300 students who live in the residence halls on the Chanute Campus. These students are mostly from Kansas, but some are from other states and even a few from other countries.

When students arrive I can place most students and their families into two categories – the over prepared and the seasoned. The over prepared have all of the student's stuff in individual plastic tubs that are labeled with a label-maker. They have a detailed plan of the room – everything from where the desk is going to go, to what size storage bins fit best under the bed. They brought not only a year's supply of cleaning products, but also every piece of clothing the student owns, like a parka and winter clothes. It's August. I don't think he'll need that yet, and I'm betting he'll be home at least once before January. The move in goes smoothly and the finished room looks like a photo shoot from Southern Residence Hall Living magazine, if such a magazine actually existed.

The seasoned student often comes alone. They literally threw everything in the truck of the car in about 10 minutes then started driving. Some don't bother with grocery store boxes or even the cliché "garbage bag of clothes." They just pile individual items up in the back seat. These folks take a while to move in. You won't find winter clothes here, but you can believe the X-Box or PlayStation made the trip just fine. They didn't forget that or leave it for another trip home. These are the sophomores who have been through the year of over-prep and have learned one of the secrets of happiness – simplification. And they realize that we have a Wal-Mart here where you can get stuff as you need it, instead of packing and storing, say, nine months' worth of toilet paper.

As an educator I love bringing in students from all over to enrich the diversity of campus. Our Neosho, Franklin, and Anderson County service area students get to meet and interact with students from all over the state, country, and the world. They develop lasting friendships, learn how different folks live, and contribute to the free exchange of ideas which should be part of any institution of higher learning. Many are student athletes who get involved in community service and learn the importance of helping make their adopted home a better place.

That's the touchy-feely part of my educator side. There is also a pretty great pragmatic reason for these students. As President I've had to develop another side I like to call the Evil Blood-Sucking Administrator side, who is fixated on the bottom line. Bills have to get paid and the college needs to advance. Students from outside the area certainly help with that.

I greatly appreciate these students from outside our county, state, and our country. They pay significantly more per credit hour than our Neosho County students do, and they may pay to live in the residence hall generating a good deal of money for the college. We keep these out district fees and housing fees separate in our budget and use those dollars to move the college forward.

Each year the out district fee brings in more than \$350,000 depending on enrollment. In the past the out district fee has paid for the Ottawa Campus, the updated science and nursing labs at Chanute, and the baseball and softball complexes, just to name a few larger projects. It's also helped pay for smaller

items like classroom renovations. Most recently the fee paid for the facility we purchased on Ross Lane in Chanute that will be the future home of some career and technical education programs, as well as office space, an indoor athletic practice facility and storage.

The housing fee pays for the housing staff and the payment on the residence hall, plus all of the expenses of running a hall like utilities, security, and maintenance. But there is some left over. Those dollars most recently have been used to purchase a house for additional student housing. And the strategic plan calls for using that fund to expand the college's dining hall in the summer of 2019. If you have joined us for lunch on Thursday with the local seniors you know how crowded it can be.

I greatly appreciate these out district and international visitors to our area and the wonderful contribution they make to our campus. They enrich our diversity, our community support, and our educational environment. They also help with the bottom line and help move the college forward with resources we would not have otherwise.

My daughter is one of these new college freshmen, but she is one of our commuting students. She'll be staying home one more year to complete her associate's degree from NCCC before moving on. But next year she will be headed out for her junior year at a yet to-be-determined university. What kind of student will she be – over prepared or seasoned? If you ever saw her room you would know that she is not exactly an "everything in a plastic bin with an identifying label" kind of girl. We shall see. However, if she starts hoarding toilet paper I'll let you know.

If you have any questions about this article or anything else please contact me at binbody@neosho.edu.