

As some of you may be aware, a media conference was held yesterday to bring greater awareness to the effects of the current housing shortage on post-secondary students studying and living in our city.

What does this mean for U of S students?

The primary issue for our students is the availability of quality housing that is affordable and in close proximity to the campus. Our University Residence facilities can accommodate approximately 1500 students, but they have been full for several weeks and the waiting list is also full. As many as 70 new International students are currently without appropriate housing. We do not have a clear sense of the scale of the potential housing shortage for domestic students, but are hearing anecdotally that many students are finding it difficult to find reasonably priced accommodation in the city.

What can you do to help?

Recent discussions with the City of Saskatoon, the University of Saskatchewan, SIAST and the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT) have centered on a united approach to addressing the student housing need. At yesterday's media conference, the Mayor and Saskatoon's post-secondary leaders urged Saskatoon residents to consider taking in student boarders.

I would like to reiterate this request on behalf of University of Saskatchewan students and ask that all members of our campus community consider taking in a student boarder for the 2007-08 term. Anyone interested in offering a boarding situation may do so online through the USSU's new Boarding Registry available at <http://online.ussu.ca/boarders/>. There is no charge for this service.

What is the University doing now to help students in this situation?

The University is committed to doing all that it can to find viable short-term solutions and to pursuing appropriate and responsible long-term solutions to address housing needs on behalf of our students.

Current initiatives related to student housing and transportation to campus include the following:

- The USSU Housing Registry is available online at <http://www.ussu.ca/services/housingregistry.shtml> or by calling 1-900-451-3390. There is a listing fee for this service.
- The USSU Boarding Registry is a new service available online at <http://online.ussu.ca/boarders/>. There are no fees associated with this service.
- The International Students Office (ISO) has hired a housing coordinator who is actively looking for temporary and long-term accommodation for these students. In addition the ISO has extended the hours of the Global commons to assist International students with finding appropriate housing.
- The University is looking into the possibility of making arrangements for "emergency"/short-term accommodations in local hotels/motels, (though eventually more permanent accommodations for students will need to be found in the community).

- PAWS: online at <http://paws.usask.ca>, the Classified Ads channel in the Campus Life tab, allows for free housing postings.
- Services related to City Transit include: Click & Go, an interactive trip planner available online at <http://www.saskatoon.ca:83>. New City Transit routes and the new UPASS system provide access for students to the University from most areas of the City.
- Consumer Services is offering a range of various nutritious and cost-effective meal plans through its Food Services Division, so students will have the option of renting a room without kitchen facilities.

What is the University planning for housing in the long term?

Longer-term solutions to address student housing, such as the University's College Quarter project, are in the planning stages (more information on the College Quarter project at <http://www.usask.ca/communications/ocn/07-feb-02/11.php>). Other longer-term possibilities under consideration include the establishment of a University Housing Office to coordinate all student housing issues, holding "Rent Workshops" to coach students on how to search for housing, and the conversion of hotels to permanent student housing.

To summarize, I would ask U of S students to please continue exploring the options noted above. In particular, please take advantage of the USSU's new Boarding Registry available online at <http://online.ussu.ca/boarders/>.

To U of S Faculty and Staff, once again, I ask you to please consider taking in a student boarder for the 2007-08 term. Please pass this message along to others in the City who may be in a position to help.

Sincerely,

Dr. David Hannah, Associate Vice-President Student & Enrolment Services Division