Demand for UO housing dwindles

Two halls close this fall as fewer students choose to return to student bousing

By Laura Baker Oregon Daily Emerald

Living in the residence halls is a long-standing freshmen tradition. This year, however, University Housing closed down two residence halls because of a lack of students.

The residence halls lack 350 students, causing a closure of Spiller and Moore Halls this fall, Housing Director Mike Eyster

The lack of interest in residence halls can be directly related to the "more than 2,000 apartments that have recently been built in the community" that target college students, Eyster said.

The growth of new apartments in the area has had a tremendous effect on the number of students Housing attracts to the residence halls each year, Eyster said.

Reasons for leaving the dorms vary. "It's kind of like 'been there, done that," transfer student Danielle Hathaway said. Living in the residence halls "is a good thing to do to meet people," she said, "but it will be nice to have a place of my own.'

This fall, the dorms opened with approximately 2,850 residents, compared to an average of more than 3,000 in years past, Eyster said.

Housing officials don't know whether the lack of residents is related to a shortage of incoming students, or if foreign students, who traditionally live in the residence halls, have found other ac-



Freshmen Devon Karr from Seattle and her roommate Bree Daystar from Ashland carry a box to their room in Caswell Friday.

commodations.

Part of the shortfall can be attributed to students who would have returned for a second year in the dorms but chose other living options for this year, Eyster said.

"It's a great way to meet new people and have a good time," said Jared Hager, a newcomer to the residence halls. "But next year, I'll probably move out. It's fun to be on your own."

Most students agree that the residence halls are a good place to make friends and get to know the campus, but few see the them as their place of residence beyond their first year of college.

Housing has made changes to make the residence halls more attractive to new residents.

"The biggest change is that we have greatly expanded the Grab n'

Go food program in Hamilton," Eyster said.

Grab n' Go is a two year-old program that provides students with a selection of "to go" food items to accommodate their schedules.

The expansion of the program was in response to students who said they didn't have time to eat during meal hours.

"What we had to recognize is that our schedule isn't the same as the students," Eyster said. The cafeteria will now be open 14 hours a day, from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m., which is longer than it's ever operated in the past, he said.

"The students are our customers, and they are a little different than the general public," Eyster said. "The dorms provide community, convenience and value.'



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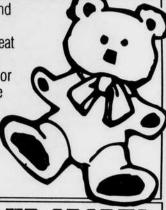
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