Off-Campus Housing Programs and Services

Contributed by Christina Medico, Off-Campus & Guest Housing Coordinator

Housing & Dining Programs is pleased to offer many services to help you in your search for off-campus housing and provide resources for living off-campus.

Our Commuter Student Newsletter, which is distributed at the start of every semester, provides students living off-campus with helpful tips for having successful experiences living off-campus.

If you have a car, be sure to check out important information about parking both on and off-campus on page 3 of this issue.

Maintaining positive neighborhood relations is a priority for American University. Also in this issue you will find “10 Tips to be a Better Neighbor” and as well as an article on tips for hosting a social gathering.

If your lease is ending soon, we recommend that you check out our off-campus posting site, which is a great resource for students to explore available housing in the metro DC area as well as connect with potential roommates or sublet opportunities.

On our off-campus housing website, students also have access to our off-campus housing guide and off-campus webinars, which are designed to help students in their search for off-campus living.

Our individual consultations give students an opportunity for more personalized guidance regarding housing options, budgeting, neighborhood analysis, and strategies.

We are looking forward to a Programming Series this Fall, planned specifically for off-campus students. Dates are still being finalized, but be on the lookout later this semester for a variety of events to help you find housing and thrive away from campus.

In addition to these programs, there will be information tables in MGC throughout the Fall semester. Dates and times will be advertised on Today@AU and on our website.

If you have any questions at any time, feel free to visit the Housing & Dining Office in Anderson Hall. You can also reach us via email at offcampushousing@american.edu.

The university is proud to welcome a variety of new on-campus dining choices this semester, including a revamped menu at the Terrace Dining Room. New dining locations include:

- **P.O.D.:** Provisions On Demand, blending quick “corner store” convenience with fresh produce and delicious prepared meals.
- **Elevation Burger:** 100% organic, free range, ground-on-premises beef burgers, fresh-cut fries, and hand-scooped shakes and malts.
- **Global Fresh:** A global flavor experience that changes cuisine throughout the semester.
- **Bene Pizzeria:** An authentic Italian kitchen featuring fresh pizzas and baked pasta dishes.
- **Red Mango:** Frozen yogurt, smoothies and parfaits made with all-natural ingredients.

For more information about these new locations, and all of AU’s dining services, please visit www.american.edu/dining.
A Message from the Associate Dean of Students

Welcome back to the 2013 – 2014 academic year! We are counting on students in the nearby community to demonstrate the maturity and basic consideration for others that form the foundation of off campus living. There are multiple tips and resources for off campus students on the Off-Campus Housing Website http://www.american.edu/offcampushousing. Please take time to review them and see what can be helpful to you.

My colleagues and I are available to provide support to you, but we also need your cooperation in this partnership. At a minimum, we want you to be aware of the expectations American University has for you and the guests you may choose to host at your place of residence. Remember that violations of the law are also violation of the AU Student Conduct Code, and will be adjudicated according to Code provisions.

We expect you to:
- know, understand and abide by local ordinances and laws;
- know, understand and abide by the terms of your lease;
- monitor and maintain the condition of your property;
- manage the behavior of your guests;
- when you choose to host friends at your residence, do so in a responsible and lawful manner.

Please familiarize yourself, your roommates, and your friends with the "Disorderly Conduct Amendment Act of 2010," which became effective on February 1, 2011. The amendments to DC law increase the specificity of prohibited conduct related to "preservation of the public peace and the protection of property" and impose serious penalties on convicted violators. While it is important for you to become familiar with all the provisions of the new act, one provision warrants your immediate attention:

"It is unlawful for a person to make an unreasonably loud noise between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. that is likely to annoy or disturb one or more other persons in their residences. [Sec. 211. Disorderly conduct. (d)] A person who violates this or any of the other provisions of this section will be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, will be fined up to $500, imprisoned up to 90 days, or both."

A copy of the act is available through this link: http://dcclims1.dccouncil.us/images/00001/20110128161004.pdf

The majority of our students living off-campus do so without causing disturbances to neighbors, but those who do cause disturbances create a negative reputation for their peers and the university as a whole. We want to prevent this from occurring. If you would like assistance in communicating with your neighbors, or if you want to discuss ways to effectively manage your off-campus residence, please call the Office of the Dean of Students at (202)885-3300 and schedule an appointment to meet with me. I would be glad to help you develop strategies for living successfully in the local community.

Street Smart Campaign Underway Across Campus

American University’s Office of Public Safety has launched a pedestrian safety plan in an effort to educate students and improve their safety on and around campus.

The Street Smart campaign uses media, public awareness efforts, and added law enforcement to respond to the challenges of pedestrian and bicyclist safety, emphasizing the education of motorists and pedestrians alike. The AU campaign, developed by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, focuses largely on Ward Circle and other locations with the greatest potential for pedestrian and automobile interaction.

The program’s current focus is on pedestrians on Massachusetts and Nebraska Avenues and Ward Circle. Those who cross illegally or display dangerous behavior will be approached by an AU student, public safety officer, or staff person and presented with information on the safe and proper way to cross.

Pedestrian safety also will be incorporated into student orientation and throughout the year in various AU-sponsored crime prevention events and activities.

For additional information on the Street Smart campaign, please visit www.bestreetsmart.net.
DC Law May Curb Parking Privileges For Students With Out-Of-State Vehicles

Rules may affect students living in Spring Valley, New Mexico/Cathedral and Wesley Heights

Contributed by Linda Argo, Assistant Vice President External Relations and Strategic Initiatives

Last year, the DC Council passed the “Residential Parking Protection Act of 2012” in response to area residents’ complaints about the increasing difficulty in finding on-street parking in the neighborhoods surrounding AU. The legislation disqualifies full-time students who reside temporarily in the District from obtaining Reciprocity Permits that allow them to park their out-of-state-registered vehicles in the neighborhood. Students who reside in the neighborhood and wish to park in the restricted areas for more than two hours will be required to register their vehicles in the District, and apply for a Residential Parking Permit (RPP).

Students who live and park in Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANC) districts 3D01, 3D02, 3D07, 3D08, and 3D10 – generally parts of Spring Valley, New Mexico/Cathedral, and Wesley Heights – will be affected by the legislation. To locate your ANC 3D district, click the link below.

Additional Resources:

- New DC Vehicle Registration information: [http://dmv.dc.gov/service/new-vehicle-registration](http://dmv.dc.gov/service/new-vehicle-registration)
- Vehicle Registration Fees: [http://dmv.dc.gov/node/155502](http://dmv.dc.gov/node/155502)
- Residential Parking Permit Application information: [http://dmv.dc.gov/service/obtain-residential-parking-permit-rpp](http://dmv.dc.gov/service/obtain-residential-parking-permit-rpp)
- AU’s Parking and Traffic Services website: [http://www.american.edu/finance/publicsafety/parking/index.cfm](http://www.american.edu/finance/publicsafety/parking/index.cfm)

Parking On-Campus

Contributed by Christina Medico, Off-Campus & Guest Housing Coordinator

In accordance with the University’s “Good Neighbor Policy”, all members of the University community (including students, faculty, staff, visitors and guests) are required to do one of the following while attending class, working, or visiting AU-owned property:

A. Park on campus and obtain a parking permit;
B. Purchase hourly/daily parking using the Pay-As-You-Go machines;
C. Use public transportation.

Compliance with the Good Neighbor Policy is a condition of enrollment and/or employment at American University.

American University offers two options for paying for parking:

1) Hourly Parking: For short term or irregular parking paid by the hour or day in our Pay-as-you-Go lots. Payment machines are located in the Nebraska Lot, Katzen Garage, and the SIS Garage. Payment options are VISA, Master Card, Discover, Eaglebucks, and Cash. Pay-as-you-Go is also available by using Verrus pay by phone. Simply call 1-888-450-7275, and follow the prompts.

2) Permit Parking: Students (by Semester and Academic Year) and Faculty/Staff permits are available. If you live in Washington, D.C. you must comply with the new DC Parking requirements before completing the Commuter Student’s permit application. Any D.C. commuter student not complying with the D.C. Parking Requirements will not be issued an AU Parking Permit.

No vehicles parking on American University property are exempt from the parking policy. Faculty/staff parking permit lots and Pay-As-You-Go Lots are enforced Mondays through Fridays from 8:00am until 5:00pm.

If you have any questions about on-campus parking—please contact Public Safety at 202-885-3111.

AU is now a Tobacco & Smoke-Free Campus

After years of campus discussion, American University officially became a tobacco and smoke-free campus on August 15, 2013.

For more information, visit [http://www.american.edu/tobaccofree](http://www.american.edu/tobaccofree)
Good Neighbor, Good Citizen—10 Tips To Be A Better Neighbor

Contributed by Off-Campus and Guest Housing Staff

As a student who lives off-campus, you are automatically a member of a neighborhood and community. Remaining in good standing with your community, and consequently with American University, is important for all students. Your neighbors in your new community might not be as accepting of college student behavior as peers in the residence halls. Consider the following top ten tips to help you be a successful off campus student:

1. **Be a representative of AU at all times.** Neighbors will assume that your behavior represents the behavior of all AU students. As an AU student, you can be held responsible for your behavior on or off campus.

2. **Know community and local rules.** Communities have different expectations for their residents. Get to know these rules by asking your landlord. This is especially important for getting information on parking, trash pickup, and quiet hours.

3. **Have social gatherings, not parties.** There is a clear difference between hanging out with a few friends and hanging out with 50 unknown people. If you are planning to have a social gathering, tell your neighbors and give them your number. This way they can come to you with complaints and not the police. And remember – clean up before sun up! Take a look around outside to make sure there are no party favors on your lawn, or the lawn of one of your neighbors.

4. **Your pet, your responsibility.** Keep your pets on your property or on a leash. Keep in mind that not all people enjoy your pets. Respect them by keeping your pets in your space.

5. **Keep noise within your unit.** Keep your music to a reasonable level, especially at night. If you are sharing walls with others also remember to vacuum, hang pictures, exercise, etc. during the day.

6. **Keep trash contained.** Having adequate trash and recycling containers is essential. Uncovered trash cans or bags can lead to unwanted pests. Know your trash pick-up days so that you can put your trash out on the evening before and bring your trash cans back onto your property the next day.

7. **Keep visible property clean.** While your landlord probably cares most about the inside of your property, your neighbors pay close attention to the exterior. It is important to know and understand your responsibilities around snow removal and keeping your sidewalks clear.

8. **Adjust your behavior around neighborhood children.** More than anyone else, children will be watching and repeating what you say and do; make sure your conversations and language in front of children are appropriate.

9. **If you see a crime in process, report it.** Sounds like a no-brainer, but it is always a good idea to look out for your neighbors – they will be more likely to look out for you. If something seems suspicious, call it in. It can’t hurt to have it reported.

10. **Get to know your neighbors.** Forming relationships with your neighbors will encourage them to engage with you about an issue before consulting landlords and/or other authorities.

An On-Campus Home for Commuter Students

Contributed by Christina Medico, Off-Campus & Guest Housing Coordinator

The Commuter Lounge serves as a place for off-campus students to store their belongings during the day, study, and socialize. The Lounge - located just inside the East Quad Building’s front entrance - offers commuter and transfer students 72 digital day lockers, charging stations for computers and phones, and plenty of comfortable seating.

Commuter students also can enjoy a special place reserved for them in Bender Library. Located in the sublevel of the library next to the Mud Box is the Commuter Corner, which provides lockers and comfortable seating.

The Commuter Lounge and its lockers are open to students Monday through Friday (6am to 11pm), Saturdays (8am to 8pm), and Sundays (8am to 8:30pm).

The Commuter Corner will follow library hours.

Photo by Patrick Bradley
Be a Smart Host!

Tips to Keep Your Neighbors Happy & NOT Have the Police Show Up

Contributed by Off-Campus and Guest Housing Staff

After you move into a new house or apartment, you may want to host a social gathering so friends can see your new place. Or maybe you’re celebrating the end of midterms or the Nationals winning the World Series? There are many good reasons to throw a “party.”

When you host your next gathering, here are some tips to help keep your neighbors happy and avoid having the police at your door:

1. Notify your neighbors of your plans. Provide them with a cell phone number to call should they have problems or concerns.
2. Keep your guests indoors with the doors and windows closed.
3. Monitor the noise level. Step outside occasionally to gauge your noise level.
4. Avoid social gatherings during the week. Remember—Thursdays and Sundays are weeknights. You might not have class on Friday morning but your neighbor is probably getting up early for work.
5. Clean up before sun up. Make sure your yard and your neighbors’ property do not show signs of your event from the night before.
6. Don’t let your guests leave with a drink in hand. Open containers of alcohol are illegal on public property.
7. Don’t encourage drinking games. They can get loud and they encourage dangerous behavior.
8. Provide non-alcoholic drinks and snacks.
9. Keep the party to a reasonable size. Too many people may create fire hazards and will certainly cause noise problems.
10. Know your guests.
11. Don’t serve underage guests. It is unlawful for anyone under the age of 21 to possess or consume alcohol in the District of Columbia. It also is unlawful for anyone to purchase alcoholic beverages and supply them to a minor or otherwise give, offer, provide, or make such beverages available to them. Similar laws apply in Maryland and Virginia.

If law enforcement shows up, be respectful and cooperative. Police usually stop for the following reasons:

- Loud music and noise.
- Outside beer pong tables, kegs and funnels.
- People peeing in the bushes.
- Open containers and crowds on the sidewalks.
- Complaint call received from 911.

Renting Licensed Spaces

Residential Housing licenses are required for all rental properties in the District of Columbia including Homes, Apartments, Condominiums, Basement Apartments and Apartment Buildings.

It is important to make sure that the person you are renting from has the appropriate license to rent. A licensed space is up-to-date with fire and safety codes. It also means that there are no structural issues with the space. If you currently reside in a space that does not have a rental license, it’s possible that you may be forced to leave.

We are currently working with Off-Campus Partners, the host of our off-campus posting site, to verify that all off-campus housing opportunities posted on the site have the proper license to rent.

You can find more information through the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs at dc.gov/DC/DCRA.

Conflict Resolution Services

GOT CONFLICT? We can help.

AU Conflict Resolution Services provides free services to all AU Students, including those living off-campus. We can help with roommate conflicts, landlord-tenant conflicts, and more.

Services provided include conflict coaching, mediation, and facilitated conversations. All services are free, voluntary, and confidential.

Don’t hesitate to contact us to see if we can help!

Our office is located in Butler Pavilion 409.

For more information, call (202) 885-3328 or email conflictresolution@american.edu
Greetings from Student Government President—Patrick Kelly

Welcome back everybody! My name is Patrick Kelly and I’m the newly elected President of Student Government. I’m a 19 year old Political Science and Secondary Education major from Chicago, Illinois (the greatest city in world). Like many of you, this will be my first year living off campus. While there are so many benefits that come from living off campus, this new found freedom comes with its share of responsibilities and challenges, including paying rent, leasing agreements, and living next to neighbors who are older than we are.

More than 2,000 of us will live off campus this year; however, we’re not in this alone. The American University Office of Housing and Dining has numerous off-campus housing resources. These resources range from an off campus housing posting site to find a roommate or a subletter, to a guide to plan your upcoming housing needs, to individual consultation from Housing and Dining employees. These resources are valuable whether you have already lived off campus or if you are embarking on your first year.

Additionally, when you get a new address, be sure to notify the university through the Registrar’s Office of your updated address and housing information. It is crucial AU has this updated information to send any notifications to the correct address!

American University is committed to improving relations with our neighbors and the community as a whole. Last year, we had two undergrads run for and win Advisory Neighborhood Commission seats. Joe Wisniewski, a member of the Class of 2014, represents a district that includes the Berkshire, Avalon, and Greenbriar. Rory Slatko, a member of the Class of 2015, has a seat that includes almost all on-campus students. And this summer, Kathryn Tinker of the Class of 2014 became an ANC Commissioner who represents residents in Tenleytown. All have fought for us and have already begun to foster a better conversation with those who live around American University.

While we strive for better relationships with our community, American University, along with Student Government, wants to ensure that students who live off campus have the best experience possible. Over the past couple years, controversial noise ordinance and D.C. parking laws have passed the D.C. Council. While these initiatives may have their merits to some, Student Government has worked with the necessary organizations to highlight the impact they have on our students. Student Government will continue a steadfast commitment to oppose any future measure that will negatively impact off campus students.

Over the summer, Student Government worked to advocate for students on a variety of issues ranging from financial aid to dining options and setting up programming for Welcome Week and beyond. It is our mission to make this your home away from home, no matter where you live in D.C. Please always feel free to stop by MGC 270 if you want to see us undertake an advocacy or programming project, or even to ask what your Student Government is doing for you. My door is always open and there is no idea that is too small or too big. I hope you enjoyed your time off this summer, and I look forward to seeing you soon!

Disorderly Conduct Amendment Act of 2010

It is unlawful for a person to make an unreasonable loud noise between 10:00pm and 7:00am that is likely to annoy or disturb one or more other persons in their residences. [Sec. 211. Disorderly conduct, (d)]

A copy of the act is available through this link: http://declims1.dccouncil.us/images/00001/20110128161004.pdf

Love using your AU ID for Student Discounts???

Want to know more uses for your AU ID???

Hear about student discounts & events first at:

www.facebook.com/auonecard
Service Opportunities Available through DC READS!

Interested in getting involved in the DC community? Have a passion for tutoring children? Apply to be a DC Reads Tutor for the fall!
There are several tutoring sites spanning different days, areas in DC, and ages of students. Students with FWS are encouraged to apply. To get involved, stop by our information sessions on September 10 (4:30-6:30 p.m., Hughes Formal Lounge), September 19 (4:30-6:30 p.m., MGC 203) and September 26 (4:30-6:30 p.m., MGC 203). Or check out the application at www.american.edu/volunteer.

If you have any questions, call us at 202-885-7378 or email us at DCReads@american.edu.

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Clawed’s Corner

By Clawed Eagle
AU Mascot & Housing Expert

**Clawed, Who should I contact if I have mold in my apartment?**

The Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs does not cite for mold. However, they do cite for damages caused by mold. If you have mold in your apartment it is important to contact www.mold.dc.gov.

**Clawed, am I required to have a lease?**

A written lease is not required to establish a tenancy. However, we strongly encourage all tenants to have a lease to establish a legal agreement. If there is one, the landlord must provide you with a copy of the lease and all addendums. Your landlord may not change the terms of your lease without your agreement. After the initial lease term expires, you have the right to continue your tenancy month-to-month, on the same terms, indefinitely.

**Clawed, what does it mean that my building is a “rent control” unit?**

Unless the unit is exempt from rent control, the landlord may not raise the rent: (a) unless owner and manager are properly licensed and registered; (b) unless the premises substantially complies with the housing code; (c) more frequently than once every 12 months; (d) by more than the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for an elderly or disabled tenant; (e) by more than the CPI + 2% for all other tenants. Any rent increase larger than (d) or (e) requires Rent Administrator approval of a landlord petition. You are entitled to receive a copy of, and you may challenge, any landlord rent increase petition. You may also challenge any rent increase implemented within the prior 3 years.

**Clawed, do you have any advice for visiting potential apartments or other properties?**

Always visit properties with another person. Not only is another set of eyes helpful when spotting potential problems with the space, but you also never want to be in a stranger’s house or apartment by yourself.

Have questions for Clawed??? Email him at offcampushousing@american.edu

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A Reminder about Embassy Park

We have been approached by our neighbors at Embassy Park with a request related to the privacy and residential environment they are trying to maintain. They have asked that when travelling between Massachusetts and New Mexico Avenues, you use public sidewalks and roadways. The sidewalk through Embassy Park is very close to private homes and intended as a private walkway for residents of that community, not a public throughway. Anyone using the sidewalk is easily heard by residents, which can be disturbing, especially during the evening and late night hours. We appreciate your cooperation.