Can my child live on campus all four years?

**Not necessarily!**

Gonzaga University focuses its on campus housing resources on students in their first two years of college. Left over housing on campus, which fluctuates in amount from year to year, is then rented to upper division students interested enough to apply, on a random basis, based upon who applied by a predetermined deadline each spring semester. When you combine the class sizes of the third, fourth, and post baccalaureate classes, which fluctuate in sizes from year to year, GU has on campus resources to house between 28% and 35% of those classes combined. So a clear majority of students in those years of college live off campus in privately owned rental facilities.

Gonzaga guarantees housing for students “required to live on campus” under the University Residency Requirement. Generally, that ends after four semesters in college, not including summers. Each of those semesters need not be taken at GU. So even a student transferring into GU as a second year college student and serving only two semesters at GU, would be exempt from the residency requirement at the end of the sophomore year at Gonzaga University.

After the residency requirement, Gonzaga University no longer guarantees on campus housing. Further, the University reserves the right to reassign upper division on campus housing to lower division if/when freshman class sizes increase, further reducing the availability of upper division housing options, occasionally.

Some parents ask why? Several competitor colleges have four year live on requirements and/or enough housing to house virtually all students who want to live on campus from year to year. So why is Gonzaga University different?

**First,** construction of upper division housing that appeals to juniors and seniors is the most expensive style of college housing construction and significantly affects the University in a variety of financially negative ways. So being modest in our approach to upper division housing keeps the University’s financial situation more stable, which can even affect the cost of attending GU (tuition) in positive ways. **Second,** the University philosophically embraces the off campus living experience as an important maturational learning experience during the last year or two of college. Learning to search for places to live, communicate with landlords, set up and pay utility bills, purchase groceries, and such are tough but necessary life lessons to learn, required of all humans, eventually. It is our belief that these are important experiences that can be accomplished and the associated stressors worked through prior to the stress of finding a job, moving to a new and unfamiliar city, purchasing and maintaining a car, and starting a full time career.

Not all students and parents are ready for this step when it arrives. And we understand that. Also, we need to fill our upper division spaces each year to make those properties operate well financially, so we do not wish to discourage students from applying. However, every year many students, to the dismay of their parents, try for and don’t get
some of the available on campus options for their third year. This can be a shock and can be very disappointing. It is for this reason that we strongly encourage each family hoping for on campus housing for a third year to spend Christmas Break of the sophomore year discussing and planning out two options:

1. Seek and secure on campus housing and
2. Create a plan for finding, securing and furnishing off campus housing should on campus housing not materialize: a back up plan ready to deploy if the situation presents itself.

**How the process works:**

In late January of each year, we invite interested students entering or already in their upper division years at college to apply for on campus housing. We give the students a limited time to go online and apply for housing. Once the deadline arrives, we randomly assign windows of time to go online a week or two later to pick available spaces. Anyone applying after the deadline, is invited into the process but given windows of time “after” all the windows of time granted to those who applied on time. The system works much the same way as signing up for classes. We DO NOT call this a “lottery system.” It is a “Spring Sign up system.” It is always interesting to us that students never refer to class sign ups as the “lottery” but they will refer to housing sign ups as the “lottery.” These two processes are more similar than dissimilar.

Every year we get a lot of calls from parents about why we don’t present their son or daughter some sort of priority for living on campus in relation to their peers. Let us list a few examples below:

- My daughter is planning on studying abroad one semester of next year and it’s impossible to find a private landlord willing to rent for only a few months so GU should guarantee housing to students needing only partial year housing.
- We can’t afford to send our son to Gonzaga AND buy him a car and parking pass to come and go from GU.
- You should give juniors priority over seniors because they are less ready to move off campus than someone in their fourth year of college.
- You should give seniors priority over juniors simply because they are seniors. Seniors deserve a stress free housing year because they have to look for a job and such.
- You should automatically make students living in upper division housing as juniors have to go through the sign up process again to live on campus a fourth year, but only after all incoming juniors first have the chance at the beds they would normally be able to stay in for the fourth year.
- Our family lives in Florida. How do you expect us to help our daughter find off campus housing and to help her purchase, move in furniture, and such? You should give priority to students from out of State.
- Our son is the fourth family member we’ve sent through GU. You should give parents of multiple GU students priority over others.
- My daughter consistently gets over 3.8 GPA. You should grant priority to students who are serious about their grades and let those less serious live off campus, especially so the campus environment can improve for those who are really serious about their academics.

- My son is struggling to maintain a 2.0 and you should give students struggling with grades priority over others who have already found a way to succeed well on their own.

- Our son has never been in trouble but lives surrounded by people who have. You should grant priority to students who have clean disciplinary records.

- My son is a student government leader. You should give him and others who are leaders priority for housing that keeps them close to the campus they are working hard to support.

- Our daughter is not behaviorally ready to live off campus. She has exhibited a lot of trouble following rules and we need you to give her priority to stay on campus so she can continue to learn how to behave in safer ways than she would face off campus if she got in trouble.

The subjectivity needed to create a priority system for all these demands would simply be labeled as capricious and ill informed by significant portions of our community. The fairest approach is “random.” And that is the approach we’ve always used and will continue to, with sincere understanding and empathy to the fact that many families are challenged worse than others, for a variety of reasons, when faced with this transition to off campus housing.

Lastly, our Department of Housing and Residence Life is committed, as part of its business, to assisting students through the process of locating and securing off campus housing. Professionals from our department host several workshops on campus throughout each year for students interested in exploring this option. We offer landlords bulletin boards in College Hall and in the Housing Office and we maintain a web based virtual bulletin board. We also host and maintain a Facebook page labeled Gonzaga University Landlord Connect where tech savvy landlords can get in touch with students needing assistance finding something off campus. We maintain a portion of our web site that provides important information such as the State Landlord Tenant Laws, and such. We offer renter’s insurance policies that can assist students off campus as well as on campus in insuring themselves against loss due to theft. We host a late night pizza social for landlords and students still looking for somewhere to live, maintain a Facebook page called Gonzaga University Roommate Connect to help students connect with a few others needing housemates or apartment mates off campus. And office administrators are willing to meet individually with students needing significant guidance and advice, or wishing us to help in reviewing Rental Agreements prior to signature, and to provide important information about living off campus. In addition, the Dean’s Office can assist with some of the troubling things that “might” occur off campus when they arise, like housemate or apartment mate conflict. Members of the Student Life division host and manage a campus and community coalition of University Administrators, local area business people, and local area landlords, which results in a unified approach to both
the demands and needs of students living in the neighborhood surrounding the University. The Housing Office is not only about students living on campus, but also committed to helping students ready to or having to move into the off campus living experience, which many will continue for the rest of their lives as the transition is made. We encourage students overwhelmed with this development to call the main office to get an appointment with one of our Residence Directors who have special roles with off campus housing or even to speak directly with the Director of the department. These folks are specially suited to work one on one with students needing or wanting guidance into this important next rite of passage into adulthood.