

The Dean's Almanac

Cleaning Out the Questions File

May 8, 2006

Alright. I'm on to you. You should have been studying, but decided to procrastinate by playing "Stump the Dean" with a series of questions, some bizarre, some reasonable. So now it's my turn to procrastinate and share some answers, some accurate, some probably not.



Several of you have asked (I guess it's that time of year) why you can't roll over the points on your meal plan to the following semester. Dennis Pierce, Director of Dining Services, explains that the cost of a meal plan takes into account an anticipated number of missed meals and unused points. In other words, say for example that the actual cost of a meal is \$8.00, which would cost \$80. But assuming that you'll miss one meal out of ten, you're actually billed \$72. If you were billed the full amount for ten meals, then your meal plan would cost more, but it would also be a major hassle for Dining Services to roll over the points, or refund them, which would bump up the cost even more (to cover the administrative time necessary). So you get a break on the front end instead.

Haunted residence halls? Apparently these exist all over campus. I've heard of about five halls that supposedly have some sort of ghosts. Marissa even offered up a website (<http://theshadowlands.net/places/connecticut.htm>) that lists Eddy Hall on the official (?) list of Connecticut hot spots. Logan Trimble, from Housing Operations, says there are reports that Stella Sprague herself haunts Sprague Hall. Personally, I'm hoping the hauntings are caused by the ghosts of past CAs whose requests to turn down loud music were ignored. I like thinking of them keeping you up at night.

Did someone drive a truck into Mirror Lake? I haven't found anyone to confirm this, but in asking around, heard that a bulldozer once fell into Swan Lake while it was being dredged. If you decide to check out either rumor, make sure you have a tetanus shot and a high tolerance for rashes, because neither lake is fit for human enjoyment.

Why do we make you move out so quickly after commencement, Jordan wonders. Because we're tired of having you around!! No, that's not true at all. I actually miss you when you're gone. It's because May Session starts very quickly after commencement, and it's practically impossible to get the halls cleaned in time for students moving into them. We'd like to relax this schedule a bit but are at the mercy of the academic calendar, which is apparently controlled by God.

Was the ROTC building burned down? No, it was bulldozed. But apparently it did catch fire at one point in its history.

Jason asks, among other things, "Are they really breeding begoties (a cross between beagles and coyotes) over in the Farm Services area?" Yes, this is actually true. They have a unique howl, as you might imagine, which people often think is coming from Husky Village. Nope. It's our begoties. UCONN . . . BEGOTIES! UCONN . . . BEGOTIES! UCONN . . . BEGOTIES! BEGOTIES . . . UCONN! Hooowwwwl!

Thanks to all of you who shared info about the Yankees network being available on some cable packages. We're looking into what it would take to get it via our cable provider. And to you Mets fans, thanks for reminding us there's another team in NYC. We'll find out what we can about their network availability, too.

I've promised you an answer to the question, "Why don't we just admit fewer students as a way to eliminate our housing shortage?" As Dolan Evanovich and Sam Miller, VP for Enrollment Management and Associate VP for Student Affairs will tell you, we did both that (shrunk our enrollment) and increased our housing supply (by 4000 beds), and we still have a shortage. The problem is (if you consider this a problem), we have a much higher retention rate of our students, so even our smaller freshman class leads to more students overall. We also provide high-quality student housing, which means more of you want to stay in it. Why not just shrink our freshman class further? Remember that we are a land-grant institution with an obligation to educate the citizens of Connecticut. Who should we lock out? What if we admitted even fewer students, and you were one of the students who didn't get in? Would you be okay with that? So here's the question for you to grapple with: should we admit as many talented students as we can educate, given the size of our faculty and academic facilities, even if it means some of you have to move off campus at some point, or reduce even further the number of students we have so we can house you all, but in the process reduce the number of talented faculty and academic offerings (which would result from a smaller student body)? If you prefer the latter, you have to be willing to be one of the ones we might not have admitted.

Get back to me on that, okay? Keep in touch over the summer (Lee.Williams@uconn.edu). I'll post an Almanac now and then as questions come in and/or I feel the need to vent. Stay safe, and I'll see you in August.

More dangerous than an unanswered question is an unquestioned answer. - unknown