

# OFF CAMPUS BUT ON THE CLOCK

By Rasheena Scott

Many students dream of living off campus and at FSU that dream is alive. There are as many as 3,000 commuters at FSU, according to Leland Davis the president of AUTOS, an organization geared to off campus students. While living off campus offers a plethora of benefits, it also presents several social, academic and financial challenges.

Approximately 86 percent of college and university students nationwide are defined as commuter students, according to stateuniversity.com. Commuter students may live with their parents, or share an apartment with a roommate off campus. Commuters often walk, ride bikes, take public transportation, or drive to campus to attend classes. Most spend little additional time outside of the classroom on campus.

There are many reasons why students chose to live off campus. Some commuter students chose to live off campus because, they may have competing responsibilities outside the academic classroom, such as family and work interests. For those students who are working full-time, raising a family, or caring for an elderly parent, campus residency is not a viable option. Also, commuting may be economically beneficial because many commuter students cannot afford to live on campus.

Despite residing off-campus, most commuter students have high academic aspirations and a strong commitment to learning according to stateuniversity.com.

"I love it, I have to pay bills but it's worth it", says Michelle Lowry a 23-year-old senior and Papa John's delivery driver, who made the transition as a junior.

On the flip side commuters often find it difficult to attend school functions and social engagements and, as a result, find it difficult to make friends. Commuter students often miss out on opportunities to "connect" to the university and other students.

"The disadvantage about staying off campus [is that] most of them are not knowledgeable of student activities that occur on campus. Even though there are email notifications sent out, students neglect to look at the information, and [don't] participate. There are so many opportunities on campus such as clubs and organization, which many off campus students don't know about," said Davis.

The benefits of off campus are tempting. "The cost of tuition is cheaper, and students can cook their own meals" explained Davis. "You [also] don't have to worry about having a roommate you don't know and you can't trust, [or having] to make sure you hide your belongings," Davis added.

Rent may range from \$500 to \$900 in the Fayetteville area. Gas can run a commuter up to 40 dollars a week or more depending on the car. In addition to rent and gas, groceries can cost more than \$150 every couple weeks. Although you don't have to pay room and board to the university or

pay for a meal plan, living off campus can be costly. Most students who live off campus have to find a job whether they like it or not, like Teniqua Smith, a 21-year old junior who lives off campus and has been a sales associate for two months.

Full-time employment may damage student performance, for example, 55 percent of those students working 35 or more hours per week reported that work has a negative effect on their studies, according to State University of New York at Brockport. Furthermore, 40 percent of students working full-time reported that their jobs limit their class schedule; 36 percent reported it reduces their class time choices; 30 percent reported their jobs limit the number of classes they take; and 26 percent reported it limits access to the library.

According to Smith and Lowery they both work 35 hours weekly, which make them full time workers. Smith said she feels like she is constantly traveling from home, to school, and to work. "Sometimes it can be quite a challenge. You have to learn how to manage everything," emphasized Smith.

Perks aside, students may want to consider all possibilities before they decide to make the big move.

"Have a plan first; don't just jump in on something because it sounds good. Also, make sure you will be able to manage it all," Smith said.

# AUTOS

By Dwayne Watson

Achieving + Understanding + Towards + Off-campus + Students=A.U. T. O. S! Always moving for the commuter student here at FSU, AUTOS is far from a car club! The purpose of AUTOS club is to assist the commuter student in achieving an authentic college experience. Just coming to school and going to class, then back home won't cut it! The AUTOS club hosts, plan, and organize free (that's right FREE!!) events for the commuter students' enjoyment, including frequent informative events happening on campus. They strive to encourage academic progress and promote leadership amongst the commuter students, who would usually miss such opportunities. The next meeting will be on Tuesday, Nov. 20 at 2pm in the RJSC room 235. Interested in joining AUTOS? There is a \$10 membership fee but it's well worth every penny!

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