

# Letters to the Editor

Dear friends,

Greetings from Texas! I feel compelled to write to you concerning an issue that is of great importance to me - transferring to another institution versus staying at Salem.

Let me tell you about the pros and cons. After nearly a semester at the University of Texas at Austin, I have learned many things. Going to school with 52,000 other students makes one learn very quickly to appreciate a friendly environment in such a beautiful setting as Salem.

I'm a junior here. And, although all of my courses from Salem transferred, many of them transferred as "lower division." This means that they can be counted as electives. Although I was close to fulfilling my BDR's at Salem, I still have many credits to complete here at U.T.

If I wish to graduate on time, by 1992, I can plan on a few semesters of summer school sessions, or I can opt for an extra semester or two in undergraduate studies. Let me assure you that neither option appeals to me.

My name is Anna Katherine Harris, not 466-71-2598! Although I have a name, it is rarely used. In classes the professors do not know you personally unless you visit them during their somewhat inaccessible office hours. I have done this many times, but it is still always amazing to me that most students do not

mind this system. They are, for the most part, not against being "processed by the system" and do not mind having the autonomy of a robot.

Unfortunately for me, I find the impersonality incredibly strange and unsettling. I am always amazed by the blank faces and scowls as I walk to class instead of the friendly "Hey Ya'll" that I was once used to.

My class schedule is not so awful, but I do not have the luxury of self-scheduled exams anymore. If any of you ever doubt the efficiency or luxury of Salem's self-scheduled exams and Honor Code, please reconsider! I enjoyed taking three exams this week, all of which counted as one-quarter of my grade. None of the test dates could be changed, and I am positive that my grades have suffered because of this system.

And for those of you who are wondering about the social opportunities at a large campus, let me enlighten you.

I have a theory that the only real way to meet people who you can become truly friendly with (like the wonderful friends I found at Salem) is to join a sorority or a social club of this sort. Classes are for work and learning, and students are basically interested in their grade in the class, the test schedule and what they missed when they skipped class the time before. People will get your phone number to find out missed

assignments, but are typically not interested in striking up a social conversation.

I have found that the upperclassmen I interact with are pretty comfortable with their own social groups and are more reluctant to make friends than one would think. It takes a great deal of effort to break through to people and to forge friendships.

Dorm life is, for the most part, dim. I live in a dorm with 3,000 other people. It is a co-ed and so is the floor I am on. This is not as blissful as one might think. In fact, it can be a bit of a pain - as far as being able to totally relax. I am very glad to have two bathrobes in my room (because of the fact that my roommate is practically married to her boyfriend, having a bathrobe in the vicinity can come in very handy at all times, if you get my drift).

The majority of students, however, live off-campus. This situation makes it even harder to meet people because the student body is scattered around Austin, Texas. Contrary to what one might think, all 52,000 do not live on campus!

I like to think of my experience at U.T. as a sort of "junior year abroad." I have certainly used the semester to my advantage and am trying to view it as a learning experience.

These insights are but a few of the many I have to share. I will be glad to share all of my experiences with you when I return to Salem in February.

Yes, I am overjoyed, - I cannot fully express my total euphoria- about returning home to Salem. My last month

here in Austin is difficult - because I so eagerly anticipate my return.

For those of you who are wondering "Well, if she was so happy, why did she leave?" I'll tell you. I was happy at Salem ... incredibly happy. But because of family reasons, I felt that it would be more financially feasible and easier on my parents for me to attend the Univ. of Texas. With the knowledge that I want to attend graduate school, the thought of taking out extensive student loans for undergraduate work scared me. I now realize that my happiness and my contentment with the institution that I receive my undergraduate degree from is paramount to any loan that can easily be paid off in 10 years. After all, I will only receive one undergraduate degree!

So, for those of you who are considering a change in schools, please remember what I have said. Think about and weigh the pros and cons carefully. Consider your personal happiness as well as your goals and try to keep your financial considerations in perspective.

For those who are happy with Salem, please take the time to enjoy your time there. Try to experience everything at Salem with the fullest of intensity and think less about little annoyances.

I can assure you that I will "take time to smell the roses" upon my return.

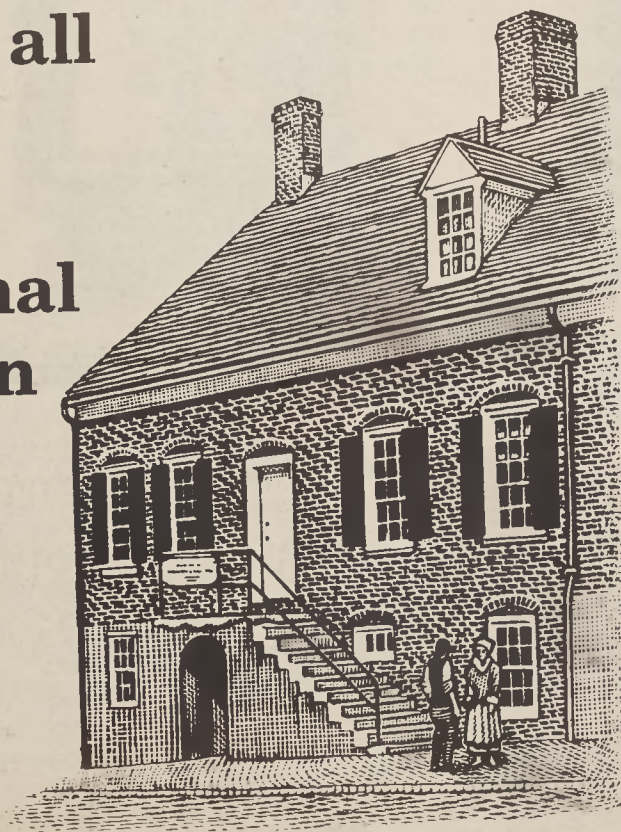
Salem is so incomparable and I miss her, my friends, the staff and my professors greatly!

I look forward to seeing you all in February!

Sincerely,  
Anna Katherine Harris

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