



HRL may implement roommate-matching program

Housing and Residence Life might start hooking up students through a matchmaker.

HRL will decide in the next two weeks if Western will pay for a roommate-matching service offered by Lifetopia, said HRL Director Brian Kuster.

Lifetopia is a company that offers roommate-matching services, said company spokesperson Bonnie Poindexter.

The service would allow people to create profiles and search for roommates, Kuster said.

"It's kinda like eHarmony," he said.

Lifetopia would be an optional service for on-campus students, Kuster said.

If HRL pays for the service, students would be able to use it to find roommates for next fall, he said.

Lifetopia and HRL would have to negotiate a price for the service, but it would cost around \$10,000, Kuster said.

Lifetopia integrates the service into universities' Web sites, Poindexter said.

Students would be able to access the service by using a special ID, such as their e-mail address or a code provided by HRL, Kuster said. They would then create a login ID and a profile.

Students would fill out a questionnaire including topics such as major and music, sleeping and smoking preferences, Kuster said.

Universities choose which items make it on the roommate questionnaire, Poindexter said.

"We really let the university decide how they wanna do it, which is really important because schools do have a lot of rules," she said.

Students won't be able to see other students' real names unless they want to exchange that information, Kuster said.

Students would tell HRL who they want to live with through the service, Kuster said.

Poindexter said students already look for roommates on social networking sites, but a student could end up talking to someone who isn't really a student on other sites.

Lifetopia provides a legitimate roommate-matching service, she said.

"They can pick who they want to live with," Poindexter said. "Ultimately, that creates a much better overall college experience."

Radcliffe freshman David Gray said he had a random roommate assignment this year.

(more)

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"It can go either way, I guess," he said about relationships with random roommates.

Gray said he would probably use the service.

Rocky Hill freshman Steven Guntle also said he would probably use the service.

It could benefit students by letting them know what their roommates are like before they move in together, Guntle said.

Some students at the University of Arizona this semester, have roommates which they found through the service, said Steve Gilmore, assistant director of residence life at the University of Arizona.

Students at the University of Arizona have to pay \$20 a year to use the service, he said.

More than 1,000 students created profiles for the service, Gilmore said. About 5,600 students live on campus.

"For a student who doesn't know somebody, it gives them a little bit more control over who they get assigned with," Gilmore said.