

FEATURES

Seniors Celebrate 101 Days to Commencement



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First-Year Housing Changes for 2018-2019 Spark Controversy

Evan Harris
Staff Writer

As Manchester approaches the halfway mark of the second semester, the Office of Residential Life released plans for changes that will occur on campus for the fall.

Residential life sent out an email in early February describing plans to make a majority of Garver Hall and all of East Hall first-year residence halls, and many students, current first-years, sophomores and juniors, will have to make the move to Schwalm, Oakwood or Helman Halls. This plan has received significant scrutiny, with some students threatening to transfer schools or move off campus. Last week, town hall-style meetings were held in Garver and East Halls, and students expressed their opinions on this issue.

Director of Residential Life, Melanie Lawson, discussed the plans in further detail, as well as why Garver and East will become first-year residence halls. "East and Garver were chosen because of their location and size," she said. "A single class of first years could not fit into just one of our residence halls, so we needed to use two."

Lawson also shared her thoughts on how this change could potentially affect the retention rate of upper-class students for this coming fall. "I know we will have unhappy upper-class students with this decision, but the residence halls are not the only thing that motivates a student to stay or leave Manchester," she said. "Hopefully, they will focus on all the other things that they love about Manchester that keeps them here—their classes, faculty, classmates and other factors."

Dean of Student Experience, Allen Machielson, spotlights when plans for this change began and why Garver and East were the



Starting in 2018-2019, East Hall will strictly be a first-year dormitory.

top choices. "Initial planning for this started in August to discuss the first-year experience, and we looked into potential first-year residence halls," he said. "We never considered Oakwood or Helman, but the ground floor and first floor of Garver (female's side), and all of East was the best decision so we could keep all first-years closer to their classes and access other places easier."

Aside from the major residence hall changes, Machielson shed light on other changes to enhance the first-year experience for this fall's incoming class. "We are changing orientation days by doing pre-registration for classes in the spring," he said. "The first six weeks are the most critical for first-year students and within that time period, many will determine if they will stay a particular university. We plan to do specialized programing to help students during those first 6 weeks of transition to Manchester. We also want to work intensely with the Success Center so first-years could not just have social success, but academic success as well."

Even though Residential Life has confidence that this plan will work out and will increase community and retention, students still scrutinize it. "I do not support



Director of Residential Life, Melanie Lawson.

this decision because I think first-years should be mixed with upper-classmen who actually know the ropes," said first-year and Garver resident Alexis Underhill. "I have met a lot of friends in Garver that are not other first-years, and I think they'll miss out that having that exposure."

Senior East Hall Resident Mary Powell said: "I fear that there will be many students who will be displaced, and retention will actually decrease because the first-years will have no upper-class students to look up in these dorms but their Resident Assistants. There are also many traditions that will die off in the affected dorms because of this transition."

Though many students have negative feelings toward these changes, many others can see the possible good. "I think in the long run, this will help in building community among classmates, regardless of their major," said Courtney Douglas, a sophomore Schwalm Hall resident assistant. "What I would have done differently is housed out the dorms instead of an immediate change. I would have also allowed juniors and seniors that have lived in East and Garver since their first year to squat their rooms and move the first years and



Dean of Student Experience, Allen Machielson.

sophomores to other dorms and allow juniors who meet certain criteria to have the privilege to move off campus."

Although students debate the merits of this upcoming transition, Machielson believes this plan has a bright future. "The primary question we are trying to answer is, 'What can we do to make improvements on campus?'" he said. "Hopefully we can make great improvements to the first-year experience."

Lawson said: "Making those improvements is the first stepping stone. I think this is a good change that will benefit our students. There will be unhappy folks, but overall, we will see a lot of good things come from this change and the other changes to the first-year experience at Manchester."

"We will have to shift some of our perceptions on traditions within the residence halls," she continued, "because those change every year even without this change. The hall's community is built by the people within, not the bricks and mortar."

Crisman, Smith Rewarded for Psychology Research

Kaity Collins
Staff Writer

Two undergraduates in the psychology department's Cognition and Emotion Lab experienced what it feels like to be winners. Seniors Leah Smith and Taylor Crisman, together with Dr. David Johnson, assistant professor of psychology, organized an experiment on emotional fear learning that earned them financial awards to continue their work.

Both Smith and Crisman received undergraduate research awards of \$1500 from Psi Chi to defray the cost of conducting research, awards given to only 39% of applicants. Further, Crisman's application placed in the top 11 of all those received, garnering Johnson a faculty advisor award of \$1500 as well.

A \$4500 total was awarded to extend Smith and Crisman's data by helping them speed up the research process and allowing them to recruit research subjects from outside the Intro to Psychology classes to which they are restricted without additional funds. "With the grant money, we can recruit from a wider pool of students and potentially pull in participants from outside the MU community, providing us with a more diverse sample," Smith said.

Johnson agrees that the grants will benefit their research. "We're very grateful that Psi Chi provides these funds to student researchers," he said. "The grants will certainly help move the projects along more quickly."

Smith, Crisman and Johnson described their research in as much detail as confidentiality would allow, being careful not to disrupt any of the data by revealing too much information. "We're studying factors that impact fear learning and regulation," Johnson said. "The primary goal of this research is to contribute to the effort to better diagnose and treat anxiety disorders."



Photo by Hermela Mebrahtu

From left to right: Taylor Crisman, Dr. David Johnson and Leah Smith. Both Crisman and Smith received undergraduate awards of \$1500 from Psi Chi. An additional \$4500 was awarded to the two students to further their research.

And it builds on previous work. "Last year, we did a study on how different emotional states impact learning," Crisman said. "This year, we're doing a study on reconsolidation update effect, which is basically when you learn something and later change the remembrance of it by interfering with the memory."

Smith added: "We track participants' learning and memory by measuring their sweat responses to various stimuli."

Significant time and effort goes into carrying out this research. "We started working on

these two studies last September," Johnson said. "And we'll probably be collecting data through the end of the year."

Smith and Taylor are not working on these projects alone (students Ji Woo Park and Abby McVay are also involved). "Each study will require testing upwards of 100 participants," Johnson said. "Each participant takes about 4 hours of lab time and 2-3 hours for data analysis. Then there's recruitment, scheduling, programming the experiments and lots of other little tasks that need to be completed. All in all, these two studies

will represent hundreds of hours of labor when done."

The team has big plans in store for their research. Both Smith and Crisman are hoping to get their studies published after graduation, and Crisman added that she plans to use her research for her honors thesis. "We plan to present at the Chicago hosted MPA in April," Johnson said. "Manchester will also hold the Student Research Symposium on April 27."

Johnson elaborated on how important their teamwork was in conducting their study: "Experimental science is very collabora-

tive; we all work together," he said.

Crisman and Smith are still conducting their own research, but are proud of their achievements thus far. "Our research has the potential to help improve cognitive behavioral therapy methods for individuals experiencing stress and anxiety disorders," Crisman said. "Additionally, our data have been used in grant applications that have the capability to help the lab continue to grow and open doors for future student researchers here."



STUDENT CONCERNS COLUMN

Contact Student Senate with your concerns!

This column will be used as a way to address student concerns. Student Senate is working hard to tackle several concerns and this is a way to show that they are making progress. This is also a way for you to know who your Senators are and who you can tell your concerns to.

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Have a student concern?

Send an email to tawooding2018@manchester.edu or contact one of your senators.



Photo provided

From left to right: Andrea Hernandez, Delanie Jones, Kitt Hersick, Courtney Hersick and Abbey Krupp.



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Seniors Celebrate 101 Days to Commencement

Avis McGovern
 Staff Writer

Manchester University put on its 101 Days to Commencement on Wednesday, Feb. 7, 2018. The event was held for seniors intending to graduate in Spring 2018. This formal celebration allowed senior students to gather and meet with some of their first friends on campus and reflect on their years at MU as they dine together.

Students dressed in their best business apparel with most women wearing dresses, and men wearing suits and ties. As they arrived, students checked in their coats and headed up the stairwell to be greeted at a table where they were given a name tag. "It's really nice to have all of my peers in the same room," said senior Mitchell Oskam. "Everyone really came out dressed in their best."

Students gathered in Beauchamp Lounge at 5 p.m. to enjoy a cocktail hour that served spanakopita, tomato basil bruschetta, drunken shrimp, sushi rolls and a cheese display with crackers. There was also fountains serving Cosmopolitans (cranberry juice and 7-Up) and Mimosas (orange juice and Sprite). The room was filled with laughter and excitement as seniors grouped together to talk with old friends, have their pictures taken and reminisce. "It's crazy to think how quickly this came upon us," said senior Jared Bourff. "I'm happy to be here and while I have enjoyed my time at MU, I can't wait to see what comes next."

Jack Kay agreed. "Most of my best memories at Manchester are with some of these people in the room. Being able to play football from my first year to my last year with some of my best



Photo provided
 From left to right: Chris Eubank, Nick Eubank, Mitch Oskam, Jared Bourff, Justin Fidnarik and Wayne Smith. This event is an annual celebration countdown for seniors as they quickly approach graduation.

friends has been one of my highlights here at MU. Although I won't be playing on the field anymore, I know I will still keep in touch with my teammates and best friends as we embark on a new journey."

For dinner, students were seated at round tables decorated with black and gold plate settings and centerpieces. The event's first speaker and host was Kylee Rosenbaum, a '11 MU graduate and the new director of Alumni Relations. Her introduction was followed by alumni Aaron Cripe '08 and Margaret Squires '12, who shared stories and experiences they had while attending MU.

After an invocation from senior Peter Shepherd, the lights were dimmed and the song "Be Our Guest" played while servers, who were current faculty members, formally walked out to serve the first plates. The students dined on

caesar salad and bread followed by a choice of creamy-ranch chicken breast, gorgonzola-crusted filet of beef or a vegetarian entree of gluten-free breaded cauliflower steak over quinoa topped with a dairy free ranch drizzle. All entrees were accompanied with a twice baked potato and fresh green beans prepared by Chartwells. The meal was topped off with an array of cheesecakes for dessert.

President Dave McFadden concluded the event with a speech; he shared his student experience at Manchester University, and, to help motivate donations from the senior class, he announced he would be matching the amount of donations they made. Seniors were able to take home a Manchester University engraved champagne glass and folder as their night ended.



Photo provided
 From left to right: Spencer Thomas, Kyler Love and Hunter Gaerte.

Theatrical Performance Presents Poets of Harlem Renaissance

Teresa Masteller
 Staff Writer

Manchester University's College of Art and Humanities presented "Of Ebony Embers: Vignettes of the Harlem Renaissance" as a VIA on Feb. 15, at 7 p.m. in Cordier Auditorium.

This 70-minute chamber-music theatrical performance set in the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s focused on the works of African American poets Claude McKay, Countee Cullen and Langston Hughes as seen through the eyes of artist Aaron Douglas.

Actor and member of Actor's Equity Association, Dracyn Blount, shared the stage with the Core Ensemble which consisted of Ju-Young Lee on cello, Mikael Darmanie on piano, and Michael Parola on percussion.

The musicians of the Core Ensemble presented themselves as the musical entertainment at a party held by Douglas, who Blount first portrayed. They interacted minimally with him, aside from the occasional reaction to his words through facial expressions and common gestures, but the musicians almost never spoke themselves. Instead, they stayed focused on the story of the music, which was slow and calm at some times, but harsh and fast at others.

Blount performed five scenes and an epilogue from the

voices of Douglas, McKay, Cullen and Hughes. The Core Ensemble played famous works by Duke Ellington, Thelonius Monk, Billy Strayhorn, Charles Mingus, Jeffrey Mumford, Jelly Roll Morton and George Walker.

"This piece takes place on an evening in January 1935 following the deaths of Wallace Thurman and Rudolf Fisher," the program stated. "Aaron Douglas has engaged a chamber music ensemble to perform at a Memorial Dinner Party in their honor." In the play, Douglas hired the ensemble to provide music for an experience that would show the hope that "our poetry, our art, our music would transcend the boundaries of race and culture."

Shifting from character to character, Blount made distinctions between each role using different attire, mannerisms, accents and moods. Each character recollected historical moments of the Harlem Renaissance, recited pieces of poetry and paid remembrance to figures of that time period.

McKay, portrayed as irritable and proud, was a character that wished to pay his respects toward Thurman and Fisher in his own way. He mentioned that words are his weapon, and that he is "not angry" as declared angrily in one scene. "Just a warrior for justice," he said.

Cullen was portrayed

as outgoing and quite cheerful, but his hidden anger came out as he turned a poem into a song and dance. "I have never been a Negro poet," he powerfully proclaimed. "I am a poet who is a Negro."

Douglas' character was respectful and calm. He watched and interacted with the lively Harlem city through his window before reflecting on the memorial party that no one attended.

One of the most notable scenes was Blount as Hughes. He was seen passing time in a Mexican cemetery where he had come to see his father's grave after settling his estate. After struggling to come to terms with his father's distance in his life, Hughes started defending his life choices against his father's expectations and doubt. He spoke to a grave, giving an emotional and passionate speech on doubt and expectation. "Of Ebony Embers" presented an emotional and entertaining performance while at the same time was exposing the audience to creative individuals who flourished during the Harlem Renaissance.

The Chamber Music Theatre work was produced by the Core Ensemble, written by Akin Babatunde, directed by Rosa Radrigez and was originally adapted on stage by Sandra McClain.

Additional information on the actor, the Core Ensemble, the music, and the performance can be found at coreensemble.com.