

The Trine University Housing Haywire

By: Darcy Satkowiak

Trine University's housing dilemma creates issues with students when choosing their place to live for the upcoming school year.

ANGOLA, IN- On February 17, 2023, at 8:00 am, fear struck within hundreds of Trine University students when every golf course apartment appeared to be full on the housing portal. As one of those students, I accepted the fact that my only choice was to live in the traditional dorms on campus.

The morning of February 17, 2023, nearly every freshman student logged onto the housing portal to quickly reserve their place of residence. However, the website was unable to handle nearly 700 people attempting to logon and failed to load for most students. This stirred chaos when every modern place to live was already taken. Freshmen who currently live in the apartment hall or residence hall refused to downgrade to the traditional dorms.

Evan Gustin, the Associate Dean of Student Affairs at Trine University was getting flooded with emails from angry students who did not receive their preferred place of residence on Friday morning. He said, "the incoming class and the number of returning students have not exceeded the number of bed spaces available on campus." However, students who had no other choice but to live in the traditional dorms were angered that there was not any more room in the residence or apartment style dorms. At one-point, frustrated students were lined down the hallway and the staircase to speak with the staff members from the housing department. Faculty began filling dorms to the best of their ability to adhere to each of the student's requests.

Approximately 68% of students live on the campus of Trine University for the spring semester of 2023. Around 32% of students have an off-campus residence. There are numerous different housing options for students to choose to live in during the school year. Trine contains seven apartment-style buildings, three residence halls, five traditional dorm halls, and a campus village for eligible upper classmen. Incoming freshmen have the option to live in the traditional dorms, a residence dorm, and honors students can live in one of the apartment style buildings. Although Trine does have a lot of options for students, the institution continues to run into the fact that most students only wish to live in the modern dorms.

Trine University holds specific requirements for their students to live off campus grounds that they are fairly strict with. Students will not be permitted to live off campus unless they turn 21 before August 1st of that year, they are married, are responsible for a dependent child, or are living at home with their legal guardian(s). These strict guidelines have made students very unhappy especially when the updated housing options are full.



Trine University Traditional Dorms

The traditional dorms are two students per room with shared bathroom and laundry facilities. Additionally, only two traditional dorm buildings have installed air conditioning. Nicholas Jen, a freshman at Trine University, currently resides in Platt Hall on campus. He said, "I know the traditional dorms are not fancy. However, there are many other universities that only have traditional style housing options available for their students and many of them are not even as nice as Trine's dorms." The traditional dorms cost a

student approximately \$5,400 and that is \$1,600 cheaper than living in the apartments that Trine has. Jen said, “Living in Platt Hall has saved me so much money and I will be living there next year as the Resident Assistant.” The traditional dorms give students a cheaper living option but not every student wants the hassle of communal bathrooms.

Within the seven apartment style buildings, there are four person dorms and six person dorms. Similarly, the two residence halls houses two, three, and four people. In both buildings, each room also has its own bathroom.



Trine University Golf Course Apartments

Zara Powell, a first-year student with sophomore status at Trine University has lived in Widman Hall, the first-year student honors apartment style dorms. She was very frustrated when the housing portal only gave her the choice of a traditional dorm for next year. She said, “I think it is unfair for Trine to use higher level housing as a way to get students to apply here.” Many students attend Trine because they appreciate how comfortable the housing options are. Powell also said, “To only guarantee upper-level housing to first year students is unjust to the returning students who have previously put in the work and money to attend Trine.” Students want to have the opportunity to live where they wish without the fear of it being taken away from them.

Albion College, an undergraduate and liberal arts institution, has organized their housing options differently. Albion College is also in the MIAA Conference with the thunder and 44 miles north of Trine’s campus. Albion only allows first year students in two of their dorm buildings that share similar characteristics with Trine’s traditional dorms. Rather than providing first year students with updated housing, Albion College allows older students to choose to live where they prefer first. Although this strategy does make the upperclassmen content with their living status, fewer freshmen may choose to attend Albion because they are limited to two less modern dorm choices.

Trine University has managed to keep up with the growing number of students by adding more dorms that are favorable. Fabiani Hall is a residence dorm that gives the campus 96 more beds and was opened in the fall semester of 2021. Evan Gustin said, “universities typically build housing options desired by students when the opportunity occurs.” Because so many students enjoyed living in the apartment and residence dorms, Trine constructed another housing alternative and will most likely continue to respond students housing requests in the future.

In the meantime, Trine University students may need to think more about what makes their school so special instead of where they lay their head at night. It is also important that an institution with a growing attendance rate be prepared to accommodate every student’s needs. Nicholas Jen said, “Trine University is my home away from home and I care more about that than where I sleep.”