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# Housing Review: University Commons Suites



**Photo by Isaiah Johnson**

**By: Madison Wait**

It's no secret that the University Commons Suites are some of the most coveted living arrangements on Gardner-Webb's campus. The suites are in such high demand, the Department of Housing and Residence Education hosts a point based lottery every year to determine who gets first dibs. Yet, after all has been said and done, what makes the suites so special?

Out of nine students surveyed, an overwhelming majority said it was the tight community that drew them to them to the suites in first place. "The community at the suites is much better than the dorms," said senior Marc Wakefield. "We are all very close and very good friends."

While a strong sense of community is a common theme throughout every living arrangement, the suites offer a different communal environment than the regular dorms. Unlike standard dorm rooms, which only house two people, each unit houses eight people paired off into four rooms. For almost all of the participants, this aspect is major plus.

In addition to the comfort of living with your friends, the suites also offer their residents more luxuries than regular dorms. According to the majority of survey participants, one of the biggest upsides to their living arrangement is the spacious common-room area that each unit features.

This central open-faced room comes furnished with a couch, two armchairs, a full fridge and a kitchenette. "It's a nice living room," said junior Andy Bennett. "[And] we have more room to decorate with flags, Spider-Man clocks [and] Princess Leia cut outs."

However, similar to the dorms, the suites are not without their problems. Two of the biggest complaints that respondents voiced involved the state of the bathrooms and the issue of noise.

Despite the fact that the bathrooms scored an overall rating of *Decent* across the board, several residents shared some concerns about their cleanliness and functionality. "We have had a lot of issues with [the] fans and the toilet[s]," said sophomore DJ Helton. One respondent also mentioned that the individual sinks and showers don't have good water pressure.

Many survey participants also pointed out that the suites are often noisier than the dorms, due to the larger number of people living in each unit. Just like the dorms, the walls of the suite units are thin, so noise travels quickly and easily from one room to another. "It's hard to do homework and sleep in," said sophomore Amanda Steinmuller.

Other downsides mentioned included distance and parking issues. The suites are located on the outer edge of campus, and are the furthest housing arrangements from the quad and academic buildings. Although the suites share some of the largest parking lots on campus with the apartments, they fill up quickly. "The parking is really bad late at night," said junior Andy Bennett. "You can't find a spot past midnight."

Even still, despite the handful of complaints, the enticing idea of living with your friends is enough to keep suite residents coming back. The suites offer a unique, home-like living arrangement that fosters a strong sense of community and friendship. "We don't live in the suite, we are the suite," said Alex Bennett. "It lives in us."

The University Commons Suites consist of three buildings that have three floors, and twelve suites per building. The suites feature a kitchenette, two bathrooms, four bedrooms and a common room per unit. The suites also feature two communal kitchens and three laundry facilities.