Single Graduate Council Meeting
June 19, 2015, 9:15am | CLV Community Centre

Call to Order:
- Motion to call the meeting to order: Sharon, Jane (second). Motion was carried. All participants in attendance introduced themselves to the group.
  - Waterloo Residences Staff Members in Attendance: Glen Wepppler (Director of Housing and Meeting Chair), Pam De Leo (CLV-N RLC), Sheila Goodwin (Co-ordinator, External Services), Jane Kolb (Graduate Residence Admissions and Marketing Specialist), Jenny MacIntyre (Manager, External Services)
  - IST Staff Members in Attendance: Matthew Verlis (Network Support Specialist)
  - CLV-N Single Graduate Student Residents in Attendance: Sharon Choy, Jessica Lieffers, Najmeh Jaberi (Sonia), Sadeghi, Zahra, Adeli Parvin, Mohammadamin Jahanpour (Amin)

Approval of Agenda
- The agenda was posted online ahead of time.
- There was one change to the agenda (approval of minutes from Winter 2015 term, not Fall 2014 term).
- Motion to approve the agenda: Jessica. Sheila (second). Motion was carried.

Approval of Minutes from Winter 2015 SGCC meeting
- Motion to approve the minutes from the Winter 2015 SGCC meeting (January 15, 2015): Jenny, Jane (second). Motion was carried.

Business Arising from Previous Meetings
- Rationale behind decision to discontinue cable TV and improve Internet service
  - Waterloo Residences has had a Rogers cable contract for several years; this contract expired last year and it was extended for one more year to determine how to best discontinue this service. The decision to discontinue cable TV was made because it has been found that Canadians in general are ending their cable TV contracts (or “cord cutting”) because of Netflix, YouTube etc. Several Canadian organizations have done extensive analysis of cable TV use in Canada (e.g., CRTC (Let’s Talk TV), Bell, Rogers) and have found these results. Waterloo Residences realizes there are heavy cable TV users who will be disappointed with this decision, but they did not feel it was fair to have other residents who do not use the service subsidize those users.
  - With knowledge that Canadians are using more Internet-based television, Waterloo Residences invested $1.9 million in Wi-Fi and ResNet system upgrades just over a year ago for CLV-N. They have also set aside an additional $500,000 for another upgrade in 2019.
Currently there are 1,200 cable drops (mostly in suite and apartment style units) which will be cut to 120 this fall. Despite the drop in cable TV in these units, there will be enhancements to cable TV in community spaces (e.g., possibly more channels, better quality) as they have found residents have highest satisfaction when they are interacting with other residents. The service is not being completely cut, but resources are being redirected.

There is a blog post on this topic that will be made available on the Waterloo Residences website.

- **Research into reduced cable TV rates**
  - Following discontinuation of cable TV by Waterloo Residences, any resident will still be able to purchase this service if they still want it, however, they will have to make their own arrangements with Rogers. Rogers wants access to students; however, in order for Waterloo Residences to offer access, they want them to offer some type of discounted student rates (however, they are unsure what that will be and are not in control of it). Information about discounted cable TV rates will be passed onto residents when it becomes available from Rogers.

- **Rationale behind choosing Wi-Fi Internet over Ethernet cable**
  - When Waterloo Residences invested in Internet 15 years ago, computer systems were not always equipped to deal with Wi-Fi and the decision was made at that time to install wired Internet. However, this has changed since that time and now many devices only connect to Wi-Fi. Trends also suggest that Wi-Fi is generally more popular. Installing Ethernet is also more costly and challenging than providing Wi-Fi. Two years ago when conversations were taking place about improving Internet in CLV-N, a decision was made to improve the Wi-Fi service because more devices were only Wi-Fi compatible.

- **Review concerns raised by students about Internet service**
  - Over the winter 2015 term, eight formal complaints were received about Internet in CLV-N and were all addressed on an individual basis. In the past week, there have been two additional complaints. In general, surveys from Winter 2014 to Winter 2015 find that Internet satisfaction has generally stayed the same. Matt has been addressing some of the individual issues that residents have experienced with the Internet. Generally, concerns have been surrounding use of the Internet for gaming and BitTorrent; performance for web browsing and email has been satisfactory. Microwaves and baby monitors have been found to be impacting Wi-Fi service. More information about proper use of Wi-Fi will be provided to residents. They are aware that Internet is important for a positive learning and residence experience and there is still more to learn on how to enhance this service for residents.

- **Research into BBQ use by single graduate students**
  - The CLV-North operations committee reviewed this topic and decided that propane BBQs can be allowed for CLV-N single grads because they would be
stored on a patio (allowed by the Waterloo Fire Department) vs a balcony (not allowed by the Waterloo Fire Department). This change was made to the Terms and Conditions as of Fall 2015. However, single grads will be permitted to have a propane BBQ on their patio in the Spring 2015 term. Information about this change will go out in the newsletter.

- Research into programmable thermostat pilot program
  - A few CLV-N units will be chosen to pilot programmable thermostats to see if there are any maintenance problems or issues with different resident temperature preferences.

- Research into use of low flow shower heads
  - A couple of years ago, an external contractor had installed some low flow shower heads in the CLV-N community. After this installation, there were several residents who subsequently wanted them removed. The past maintenance requests were recently reviewed to determine the types of shower heads residents wanted; this review found that there were a number of different preferences.
  - Waterloo Residences will continue to provide basic shower head for CLV-N residents. If residents would like a different shower head installed, they can install one at their own expense provided the original shower head is properly put back in place when they vacate the unit.

**Topic Submissions from Single grads**

- Allowing BBQs for single grad housing
  - Please see above.

- CLV`s rent is already higher than what it should be and you are increasing it again. Why? We should pay extra for parking, we should buy our own A/C, we don`t have the cable anymore but we are going to pay about 1000$ per year more for the next year.
  - The budget was shown to students at the annual budget meeting in January 2015 and information can still be provided upon request. Waterloo Residences does not make money or give money to the University of Waterloo. They do not have to follow rent guidelines released by the government, but they use those as a guide. In summary, Waterloo Residences’ $34 million housing operation has costs that go up each year. They have been going through activities as staff to try to determine where efficiencies can be made. They try their best to keep rent increases to a minimum, but some costs are out of their control (e.g., staff salaries as they are university employees, utilities). They would like to drop rent prices, but they have costs to cover. They realize that price is important, but other factors are also important to students including cleanliness, location, and privacy which they also strive to provide.
  - Although residents understood those points, they still had concerns that as International students they receive the same amount of money over four
years of their program and have to deal with increases in housing costs. These residents felt that although they like living in CLV-N and would like to stay in this community for their entire program, they would not be able to live here the whole time because costs would become too much. There is a need for residence costs and university funding to align with each other, which they currently do not. These were determined to be concerns also relevant to the GSO and the GSA, and that perhaps they should be consulted in this matter. Waterloo Residences felt that someone from the GSA could attend this meeting in the future or a separate meeting could be set up with them.

- **Action Item:** Mohammadamin Jahanpour (Amin) will reach out to the GSA about these issues.

- Residents were concerned about the change in policy that there will no longer be refunds issued (i.e., if a student leaves part way through the term, they will lose their money (note: in previous terms, money used to be refunded quite easily)). Waterloo Residences said this new policy would better align them with other universities and off campus housing where tenants would lose all of their money if their lease is broken (they were an outlier in this case). They also mentioned that there were good and bad reasons for issuing a refund (e.g., good reasons: student revoked from an offer; bad reason: graduation as it is something that they know about in advance). They said that subletting (which would involve the departing student finding another student who meets eligibility requirements to live in CLV-N (subject to approval) who does not already have a Waterloo Residences contract) can be a possible solution in this case. There is also an appeals committee that will be set-up to handle refund requests. Residents asked whether students who are going to graduate part way through the term can stay in CLV-N until the end of the term even if they are finished and Waterloo Residences felt this was something they could consider.

- **Action Item:** The CLV-North Operations Committee will review the policy around when graduating students would have to move out of CLV-N.

- Residents suggested having a discount for people who are using less utilities which would be both good for costs as well as the environment. A few years ago, Waterloo Residences looked into the option of having residents pay their own utilities, but this was found to be unfavourable for residents due to high connection fees. Waterloo Residences can consult Plant Operation to determine the accessibility of utility use information; they were concerned this may seem like a good idea, but that the information may not be easily accessible.

- **Action Item:** Jenny MacIntyre will look into accessibility of utility use information from Plant Operations and will report back to the SGCC.

- Residents were concerned that projects such as the counter top replacement project are resulting in extra rent costs. They wanted to be asked for input before these types of projects are carried out to ensure they had no impact on their rent. Waterloo Residences mentioned that the counter top project took place using capital renewal funds which are a reserve for proactive maintenance improvement projects (rather than making replacements after
• The Director of Housing encouraged residents with any suggestions of services to change to approach him directly.

• About the internet connection. We were promised at the time of switching from Rogers that the connection would be faster. But now it feels like not only we're paying more, but the Eduroam connection is often pathetic and is extremely unreliable. So I hope there is some redressal on this issue. Added to that I also feel like every room should have provision for a wired connection. It's very unfortunate that if the wireless card is damaged or isn't a good one, it has to be changed just to get the internet working at home.
  o Residents mentioned that the current CLV-N Internet connects and then disconnects quite often. They also reported specific concerns (e.g., problems loading multiple pdf files for an application and not being sure if they were successfully submitted, poor picture quality when using Skype) which were not issues previously.
  o Residents also said they wanted access to a wired Internet connection in case the wireless connection was out of order.
  o Waterloo Residences mentioned that the addition of data ports would incur both financial and time expenses, however, this may be something to consider in the long term. They will continue to stay on top of the situation and will consider whether data ports need to be installed when planning the next Internet upgrade. IST also spoke about some solutions available for residents who use products that do not support eduroam (e.g., Apple TV) which ResNet can help to install. Bridging routers have also been trialed as well.
  o Residents were advised to report Internet problems to the ResNet Helpdesk who would then visit the affected unit to investigate. When reporting about Internet issues, it is important for residents to be as detailed as possible in their report including the time that the issue is occurring as some issues may be time specific. ResNet can be contacted at reshelp@uwaterloo.ca, ext. 33538, completing a form at the front desk, or online (https://uwaterloo.ca/housing/technology/internet). Information about ResNet can also be found in the CLV-N Single Graduate Student Terms and Conditions. ResNet usually tries to handle issues quickly within 24-48 business hours.
  o Students can also visit the following IST websites for more relevant information:
    Wi-Fi Charts: https://uwaterloo.ca/information-systems-technology/statistics/wifi-charts

• Why is only one air conditioner permitted per townhouse? If there are two single grads living in a townhouse who each want AC in their room, this would
not be permitted. Would it make more sense to allow 3 AC units/townhouse (1 in each bedroom and one in the living room).

- Currently, the fuse boxes in the CLV-N townhouses would not be able to handle more than one AC unit especially with some of the larger units. There would also be higher utility costs and possibly higher fees. In the next newsletter, residents will be provided with tips to keep their townhouse cool during the summer.

- **Is there a place where we can store our bikes in the winter other than locked to the bike rack outside?** Locking bikes to the bike rack during the winter can cause them to be damaged come spring.
  
  - Bikes can be stored in townhouses without any restrictions as long as they do not block entry and do not cause damage. A good place to store bikes in the winter is under the townhouse basement stairs. Bike storage has been an issue around campus, however this issue has centered on theft.
  
  - **Action item:** Glen Weppler will work with Mike Illey to look into different bike storage options that can be considered for CLV-N in future capital renewal projects.

**New Business**

- **TV being taken away from CLV-North while rent had increased without getting anything in return.** Quality of mattress so bad causes back ache. Shuttle not having a stop near CLV-North. Absence of pedestrian sign or path for crossing the very busy Columbia Rd. toward the bus stop across the street.
  
  - **Cable television:** see above.
  
  - **Mattress quality:** There is a standard mattress used in all residences which is bed bug proof (Ivory mattresses are bed-bug proof). If students have a functional issue with their mattress (e.g., ripped cover etc), they can email clvmaint@uwaterloo.ca and someone will address it; there are some new blue covers for these mattresses that are better than the beige ones. If residents are getting a back ache from their mattress, they are advised to visit a doctor and receive documentation that this is the case. Once they receive this documentation, they should meet with Pam De Leo (CLV-N RLC) to discuss bringing their own mattress that is better for them.
  
  - **CLV shuttle:** Residents mentioned a few reasons for wanting a shuttle stop in CLV-North which included slipping and falling on the sidewalks on the way to the shuttle and the Community Centre being a long walk for students living in the northern part of CLV-N. Waterloo Residences had this topic previously reviewed by UW Police who has the expertise to determine safe loading and unloading locations for the shuttle. UW Police has recommended that the best place for shuttle loading and unloading is the CLV Community Centre parking lot; concerns with shuttle pickup in the CLV-N community include community traffic, snow plows in the winter, and the shuttle taking more time to do the trip which may result in less trips to and from campus. They understand that the CLV-N parking lot may not be the most convenient location for CLV-N residents, but it is the safest location according to UW
Police. Waterloo Residences will ensure that the sidewalks are cleared from snow to decrease risk of falling on the way to the shuttle.

- **Crossing Columbia Street:** Columbia Street is not part of the responsibilities of Waterloo Residences, but rather a city responsibility. The best vehicle for advocating for change at this intersection is the GSA. There likely has to be a study done in this area. Glen Weppler is happy to help, but it is the city that needs to be advocated.

  *Action Item:* Jessica Lieffers will email Maya D'Alessio (GSA president) about this concern and will cc Glen Weppler.

- **Adjournment**