Chinese students get taste of coed residence halls and U.S. meals

By Lacey Korevec

There is nothing average about a day at Rider for students from Sanda University in China. From food to classes, residence halls to shopping malls, and everything in between, the Chinese students are constantly adapting to American culture and a country that is foreign to them.

Here it is likely that every student’s room has a television set. At Sanda, however, that is not the case, according to Iris Lie.

“We have a TV in our room now. We were having a difficult time working it at first,” she said. “There are so many advertisements, especially during football games.”

At Cookie Jiang’s former school, coed residence halls are unheard of. However, when Jiang was told that she would be living among both men and women, she said she was not concerned.

“I feel it is very good. They do not make a lot of noise,” she said. “My parents worry about me being in the same building as boys. They worry about my safety but when I arrived here they told us it is very safe.”

Jiang said she has been enjoying American food. But if she decides she wants a taste of what she’s used to, no Chinese takeout restaurant can be of any help.

“The Chinese food here is not really like Chinese food,” she said. “It’s totally different. It just has the same name.”

As far as health is concerned, Jiang admits that average, everyday meals in her country seem to be more nutritious than typical meals here.

“In China if we eat at home on normal days there’s a soup, a meat and one or two vegetables. It’s very healthy,” she said. “But I think we’re young people so we can adapt to everything.”

“A syllabus makes the course more ordered. They don’t have them at all in China,” she said. “The teamwork here is different. In Sanda we worked individually. Sometimes the class would have discussions, but it was very seldom. We always just listen to the teacher.”

“My roommate’s stomach was upset from the different food the first week we got here,” said Lie. The classroom houses many customs that are different from the lifestyle that the students are used to, according to Christina Zhao, who said she was surprised when she was handed a syllabus on the first day of class.

“Students from Sanda University in China to the Lawrenceville campus. These students are living in the residence halls and adjusting to life in the United States.

During this spring, Rider welcomed students of Sanda University in China to the Lawrenceville campus. These students were the first ones to enter the room. The door opens and the students are introduced to each other. They are given paper and are asked to write their name.

One of the most frustrating differences Zhao said she has encountered is the difference in cost.

“The price is more expensive than in China,” she said. “Here the price is times eight of what it would be there.”

Emma Lu said that she appreciates all of the activities that are available at Sanda.

“The activities don’t work very well,” she said. “Some are optimistic like Cantwell and Shimchick. They are out playing in the snow, while others choose to hibernate indoors.

Some say that the cold weather not only makes them unmotivated, but also the very thought of leaving their warm beds is enough to make them want to pull up their covers and roll over.

“The rooms usually stay pretty warm at night, so in the morning I don’t want to get out of bed,” said freshman Jena Cantwell. “But I’m glad there’s at least some snow on the ground."

Some are optimistic like Cantwell and Shimchick. They are out playing in the snow, while others choose to hibernate indoors.

“When my friends want to go out, I don’t because it’s so cold and miserable out that I have no motivation to leave,” said Feller.

It is hard enough getting back into homework mode at the start of a new semester after a nice and long relaxing vacation, but it’s even harder when students fear the discomfort of what they’re going to face when they leave their warm rooms.

For most, winter is not the most favored of the seasons. It is long and cold and loves to laugh at college students who have to cautiously walk over ice, step around high snow and avoid black slush on the way to class.

“Winter is so depressing,” said junior Rachael Feller. “The days are short and it gets dark too early. The weather affects your mood too.”

Feller is right in that the weather definitely affects students’ moods and how they may behave. It may even affect how students manage their schoolwork.

“I think cold weather causes students to be lazier,” said sophomore Morgan Levine. “I think students can perform better in warm weather.”

Winter affects some more than others. They will have to deal with mood disorder with seasonal pattern, formally known as seasonal depression.

According to psychology professor Dr. Alison Thomas-Cottingham, the disorder is when people have depression during a certain season, the most common ones being fall and winter.

“One person think the disorder has to do with genetics, while others think it may have to do with imbalances in neural transmitters in the brain,” said Thomas-Cottingham.

Not only is winter a bad time for students with this disorder, but it is also just as unpleasant a time for anyone in general. Psychology professor Dr. John Suler said he sees how winter would have an affect on students.

“Some people are not ‘cold weather people,’” said Suler. “They don’t feel well physically and their minds may not be as alert as in warmer weather.”

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Cold weather takes its toll

By Jordana Tusman

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