By Randy Townsend
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Students will soon be able to plant themselves into Rider’s new three and four bedroom pods, specifically designed to provide another level of independence.

After extensive research, it became clear that students wanted more options that would deviate from the traditional dorm-style rooms and double-loaded corridors with community bathrooms.

According to Cindy Threatt, director of Residence Life, there was a large majority of students that would rather have hall lounges converted into bed space right away, rather than wait until fall ’05 when the new construction between Ziegler and Hill is scheduled for completion.

“We polled students about how they feel about us taking down the lounges and there were definitely mixed feelings,” said Threatt. “But we had twice as many requests for the spaces than we have actual spaces. I think that’s a good sign that we made the right decision. There was an opportunity and we seized it.”

The selection process to determine who gets to live in the pods is based on the lottery where students put in applications in order to get suites. The process favors upperclassmen because applications get approved based on how many credits you have.

“I look at it like with a business sense,” said Threatt. “These are our premium spaces. A company should honor its longest-standing customer. If you’re a junior or senior, you should have the opportunity to live in the pods.”

The pods and the new construction will serve both to aid in the recruitment of new students and in the retention of students already living on campus.

“The new construction was devised not only to get our spaces up to date and to be competitive with other institutions, but also to reward our students who are already here and to keep our students here,” said Threatt. “What we have is juniors and seniors who move off [campus]. They’re tired of the double-loaded corridors. They want something that offers more independence and more autonomy.”

Students should be aware that the campus will be messy during the construction phase, particularly between Ziegler and Hall.

“There’s going to be noise and dust,” said Stephanie Polak, associate director of Residence Life. “Nobody will be able to walk between Ziegler and Hill. They’ll have to walk around to get to Daly’s.”

Despite the necessary inconveniences involved in the project, both Threatt and Polak look forward to its completion and are extremely satisfied with all of the steps they have been a part of in the process.

“I feel confident that when the building goes up, I can say we didn’t come up with it on our own,” Threatt said. “We asked a lot of people right up to the original survey.”