



TO: SJU Residents

FROM: SJU Student Affairs Residence Office Team, info@sju.ca

DATE: November 20, 2020

RE: Residence Memo

Dear SJU Residents,

We hope this email finds you well.

This memo is in follow-up to feedback received from the recent survey and community conversations (floor/pod meetings) with Dons, and our way to share what we learned and some of our next steps in responding to your feedback. Thanks to everyone who shared feedback on their experience in residence thus far.

Who received your feedback:

- Members of your Residence Office Team met last week to discuss the survey feedback in detail. This includes:
 - John Arnou, Acting Director Student Affairs
 - Melissa Carvalhal, Interim Manager Residence and Business Operations
 - Jamie Hall, Residence Life Coordinator
 - Michelle Metzger, Service Learning Coordinator (currently supporting Residence Life Coordination)
 - Emily Litster, Student Affairs Administrative Assistant
- Dana Hospitality Food Services Director, Derek Wright also received a copy of the food-related survey responses.
- Director of Facilities, Tom Slaby, also received a copy of the facilities and cleaning related feedback.

General Themes:

There were several clear themes that emerged from the feedback we received. The following represent common experiences, ideas, and sentiments expressed by more than half of those who responded to the survey and participated in floor meetings. Overall, residents of SJU find that:

- The residence building is clean, safe, and an overall nice space
- There is a high degree of buy-in for our COVID guidelines. Residents overall feel that precautions are taken seriously, which supports a general feeling of safety.

- As residents of SJU, you care about the wellbeing of the community and value keeping the space safe for your peers.
- There is a high degree of appreciation for the staff support in residence, especially Dons
- Most residents are enjoying the food, and many people have specific ideas about how to improve the availability and options of food in the cafeteria.
- Many of you are looking for more places to study
- Many of you are enjoying finding safe ways to interact with each other during this pandemic.
- At the same time, many of you lament or feel frustrated for the missed opportunities for social connection during a pandemic.
- You also have ideas about how to improve socializing opportunities and further build a sense of community in residence. The most common suggestion by far is to open up additional common areas.

Responses and next steps:

- **Don appreciation** - We offered your dons a little self-care gift of gratitude, but if you love your don don't be shy to let them know too!
- **Meals:** Your specific food suggestions were provided directly to the Food Services Director at Dana Hospitality.
- **Study Spaces:**
 - We have opened up the Residence study rooms as a first step. These are single occupancy because current gathering limits require 44 square feet per person.
 - Our next step is to open the cafeteria for studying. The cafeteria will be available in between mealtimes during the day next week with further information shared in a follow-up memo early next week.
- **Common Spaces:** To create more opportunities for small group socializing, we will be opening the games room next week. This requires some collaboration with IT to update your fobs for access, as well as arranging additional cleaning. More information, including safety protocols for this space will be shared in a follow-up memo early next week.
- **Community of Trust:** We place a high degree of trust in each member of this community, knowing that you also value safety while seeking to build meaningful connections. The availability of common spaces in SJU during this second wave of COVID-19 is entirely dependent on the maintenance of this trust.

Closing thoughts and much gratitude from your Residence Office Team:

- Thank you for your cooperation and efforts to keep our community safe.
- We understand how challenging it is to live in these times, to have so many limits, restrictions, and uncertainties over such an extended period of time.
- We really miss connecting with you in person, and feel deeply your frustrations and grief about missed opportunities.
- We really value the specific suggestions that you bring forward, and welcome ongoing feedback and cooperation as we all experiment and seek creative ideas to foster a sense of community and belonging in a time of pandemic.

- We thank you for your understanding as we seek to prioritize both student satisfaction and safety. We hope that you find comfort in knowing that we will always prioritize your safety above all.
- We know we cannot provide a silver bullet that will make your experience this year the same as years past. That said, we hope you feel heard. We hope you feel supported. We hope you know that you are not alone and that we are only a call or an email away.
- Our emails and phone extensions are found at www.sju.ca/meet-student-affairs-team, or email info@sju.ca.

Thanks again for sharing your feedback with us.

Best wishes,

Your Residence Office Team

- John, Melissa, Jamie, Michelle, & Emily

Needing to connect with SJU Student Affairs? Please visit our staff team directory [online](#)