

UIS freshmen move into dorms

UIS lets new students settle in prior to classes on Monday

By PETE SHERMAN

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Dozens of University of Illinois Springfield freshmen moved into their dorms Wednesday — trying to beat the severe weather that arrived later — while unpacking their microwave ovens, refrigerators, video game consoles, computers, DVDs, favorite pillows and other comforts of home.

Most students had moved in before mid-afternoon tornado sirens began blaring, said UIS spokesman Derek Schnapp.

Roughly 1,079 students at UIS will live on campus this year, according to university officials, citing preliminary numbers. That's slightly up from last year's fall count of about 1,050. Maximum housing capacity at the university is 1,160.

Wednesday was reserved for freshmen, who arrived in pre-arranged time slots beginning at 9 a.m. Students were given 15 minutes to drive up to their dorms and get everything out of the car before settling in. Dozens of current UIS students provided assistance, lured by the offer to move in early if they helped Wednesday.

"I brought everything," said incoming freshman Jessica Miller, 18, of Edwardsville, when asked what her packing strategy was. "I really did. I brought all my clothes."

The only thing she said she was disappointed to leave behind was her boyfriend.

Miller, who is considering majoring in business administration, will live in the new Lincoln Residence Hall, which she and her mother, Meranda Scherer, compared favorably with dorms they visited at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign.

Jessica is Scherer's first child to go off to college. While many parents get weepy during move-in day, Scherer maintained her composure.

"I hope she grows up a lot," Scherer said. "That's why we're making her go away to school."

Jessica essentially concurred.

"I'm really excited about going to live somewhere new," she said.

Still, Scherer made sure to leave Jessica with a few portions of homemade beef stroganoff — Jessica's favorite meal.

News about the H1N1 flu virus that found its first confirmed case at UIS last week didn't appear to cast any fear over students Wednesday. Jessica said she was more concerned about meningitis and plans to get vaccinated by UIS, which charges \$95 for the service.

On the second floor of UIS's Lincoln Residence Hall, Suchin Lagaya walked backward, taking pictures of her daughter, Breanna, as she made her way down the hall toward her new room.

Breanna, who is from Belleville, plans to study biology on a pre-med track. She said she was a little anxious because she hadn't met her roommate yet. The photos were for her father, who serves in the U.S. Air Force and is deployed in Africa.

Her older brother, Brandon, also came along to help. He said he wished his little sister were a little closer, for "supervision" purposes.

"It's overwhelming. I'm very proud. I hope she's a success," Suchin Lagaya said.

UIS's fall term begins Monday. Freshmen will have lots to do before then. They were given a five-day schedule packed with events ranging from mandatory orientation sessions to fields trips, including free tickets and shuttle rides to the Illinois State Fair on Sunday.