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## Interview with Christina Broat, Dan Ficalora, and Nicole Stivers

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*Christina Broat*



*Dan Ficalora*



*Nicole Stivers*

## INTERVIEW WITH CHRISTINA BROAT, DAN FICALORA, AND NICOLE STIVERS

*Ashley Wolf*

“You have to live in the dorms your first year!” That was a phrase I heard more times than I can count when I was applying to colleges my senior year in high school. Almost everyone I knew that had gone through college or was currently a student in college said that the “dorm life” experience was one that you “needed to have.” According to campus statistics, other freshmen received the same advice I did. Cal Poly admitted 2,843 freshmen in fall quarter 2002. There are 2,758 beds in on-campus housing; all taken by the first day of school. Therefore, approximately 97 percent of incoming freshmen also decided to live the “college experience”: the dorms.

When we signed up to live in on-campus housing, moving in with a stranger, leaving our comforts behind, did we stop and think about how this would affect our privacy? Sure, those of who have had the privilege of having our own room probably thought that it was going to be an adjustment living with a roommate; and, most of us probably pondered the scenarios that can come with living with a stranger. Yet, most of us probably didn’t completely comprehend the complexity of it all: the quiet hours, the sleeping patterns, the boyfriends and girlfriends and the need for respect of personal property.

Dan Ficalora, a psychology freshman and resident of Trinity Hall defines his personal privacy situation in the residence halls as “a lack thereof.” Dan always had his own room and parents who gave him his independence. Now that he is

confined to an 11 by 13 foot space with another person, not including the other 215 residents, Dan has found it difficult to be alone. “I love my roommate, but sometimes you just need time to yourself. In the residence halls there is no place where you can totally be alone.” Nicole Stivers, a journalism freshman and a fellow resident of Trinity Hall faces the same problem. “You just have another person in close contact ALL the time. You can’t even get dressed without the possibility that someone might walk in.”

Residents aren’t the only ones who struggle with the issue of privacy in the residence halls. Resident Advisors (RAs) do have the privilege of their own rooms, in exchange for loss of their personal privacy. Christina Broat, a social science sophomore and RA for Trinity Hall explains it as “basically living in a fishbowl.” Although Christina admits that the perks to her “semi-private” room are wonderful, she admits that her personal privacy is “extraordinarily limited.” “As an RA everyone is somewhat forced to know you. Since I am in an authority position, my personal life has pretty much become public knowledge. People tend to make assumptions, whether they’re good or bad, because it is easier to do that with people that are in public view.”

Although most residents struggle living with another person who functions quite differently than they do, most see the perks of living with a roommate as well. “There is always someone to talk to. You are never lonely. You never don’t have someone to hang out with. It’s just that sometimes you are opposite of lonely and that can get hard,” said Dan. Christina has also found some perks in moving away from home and moving in with 215 strangers. “My parents were the ones to walk into my room without knocking and rummage through my stuff when I was out of town. My privacy situation as a whole has almost changed for the better since I moved out; it’s just a different kind of privacy.”

Nicole, Dan, and Christina have concluded that their “dorm life” experience was worth it and one that they will never forget. All three are planning to stay on-campus next year, with their own rooms. Christina and Nicole are both going to be living in the new apartments, which are supposed to be completed by fall, and Dan is going to be an RA.

I think most people who have lived through the “dorm experience” would agree that it was beneficial and something that all freshmen should try. I also think most would agree that one year in the residence halls is enough for the experience, but come June your own room sounds pretty perfect! 🍷