

## **The Benefits of Change**

Throughout the past year, our campus has been under construction. I'm not complaining, though, because while this created some noise and some dust, mostly it created anticipation. Campus was buzzing with possibilities. As students, we understood that we got to be a part of something. The originators. The generation of students that would remember both where TU had been, and where it was going.

Witnessing growth is a pretty spectacular thing.

The campus you'll see when you come for Tulsa Time, or a tour, or moving in for your freshman year, is much different than the campus I first stepped foot on four years ago. Buildings have sprung up, dining options have been added, new colleges and programs have been created, clubs have been chartered. Change is happening all over campus. And we, as students, get to take on this growth as both a challenge, and an exciting opportunity.

I am a Resident Assistant (RA) in the brand new Hardesty Hall. I got a chance to walk through this building when it was nothing but bones and cement. And I got to walk by it every day and see it transform in front of my eyes into the astonishing building it is today. When I moved in early for training, the building was still being finished. I watched ceiling tiles go up in the halls, and handles being put on doors, and final touches being added from top to bottom. I know this building's story in a way that shapes my experience living in it.

Students on campus share a collective awe of this building. I saw it in faces of residents as they walked in on move-in day and it fully dawned on them that this beautiful place was their new home. I saw it on the first day of classes as people passed under the archway, straining their necks looking up and around. Even my parents, when they visit for the first time, couldn't stop expressing their amazement at this building and the many other improvements to campus.

The Hardesty Staff does not take lightly the gift that has been given to us. Opening a new building presents challenges that none of us could anticipate. There are so many things to take into account when creating a residence hall for students, but it is our responsibility to ensure that this building, this university, is home for them. We do that through programming, getting residents out of their rooms and meeting one another (often with food involved, because we get it). We do it through support, by being here for students when they need us and learning all of their names and really, truly caring if they are happy. We do it by ensuring student safety, but giving them more independence than they've likely known before. And for freshmen, we help introduce them to the campus, and the many things that they can be involved in here. And often, they surprise us by starting something brand new themselves, because the attitude of this place invites that.

I've loved this school since the first time I visited, but I had no idea how many more reasons to love it there would be once I got here. Embrace the changes that will come in your time at TU. With each new renovation, program of study, and club or organization, life as a student here gets better.