

To: ASU Housing Office
From: Jasper Lee
Subject: Water Station Proposal for Tempe Campus
Date: November 11, 2020

Dear ASU Housing Department,

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

This letter's intent is to shed light on a particular issue that Arizona State University (ASU) students living in the Tempe campus residence halls deal with on a daily basis. As a current employee for the University, I proudly carry the title of "Community Assistant" (CA) as I am given the exclusive opportunity to promote change in the ASU community. Many would consider this position as the 'face' of the housing department for the University as our staff of CA(s) interact and converse with the residents daily. While I have noticed and greatly appreciated many welcoming improvements in both available amenities and housing operations on the Tempe campus over the past 2 years of my employment, the **lack of water facilities** in the dormitories is one that can no longer be overlooked. After addressing the importance of this issue regarding the lack of water fountains that affects our on-campus students living in the residence halls, I will propose potential next steps that will provide a greater overall experience for both current and future residents of ASU housing in Tempe.

BACKGROUND

After living as a resident my freshmen year and working for housing my following sophomore and junior year at the University, I have recognized a significant trend under my experience in the dormitories. This observation, along with my first hand experience, has convinced me that there are other residence halls that are affected by this. The evidence presented below is apparent and Arizona State University housing should invest into more available water fountains throughout all the dorms. My prior experience regarding this situation are as follows:

- Tooker House (Resident Freshmen Year 2018):
 - Tooker House is one of the newest dorms located on the north end of the Tempe campus and it houses a majority of the freshmen engineering students. The resident hall has 7 total floors, yet there is only **one** water fountain found on the ground floor in the mini-gym.
- Adelphi Commons (Community Assistant Sophomore Year 2019)
 - It was not until my spring semester of 2020 that this dorm finally installed **a pair** of water stations. Adelphi is one of the older dorms and it is hard to fathom that there were no drinking fountains before this year.
- Vista Del Sol & Villas at Vista (Community Assistant Junior Year 2020)
 - Vista and Villas at Vista Del Sol houses a majority of upper division students and it is the most expensive option for choice of residence under ASU according to the semester rates found on the housing webpage. There are **no** water stations for either dorms and the only available water facility accessible is exclusive to staff and affiliates of housing.

Furthermore, I have also elected to reach out to fellow CAs at different dorms to hear about their experiences with the availability of water fountain facilities. The findings are as follows:

- University Towers
 - A former community assistant at University Towers informed me that this facility is a residence hall targeting upper division students located on the north side of the Tempe Campus. There is only **one** water fountain for the entire complex.
- Sonora Center
 - I have consulted with my former Lead Community Assistant from years past and I have been informed that there is only **one** drinking fountain facility from her experience at the Sonora Center Dorms. Sonora varies in residents but it currently carries upper division students south of the Tempe Campus.

The evidence provided has revealed that the lack of water facilities remains an area that the University has been unwilling to allocate appropriate resources to. This overdue situation has clearly been neglected. While it is beneficial to see that there are in fact, water facilities, the issue remains as there are **not enough!** The current problem and drawbacks of this reality must be addressed promptly!



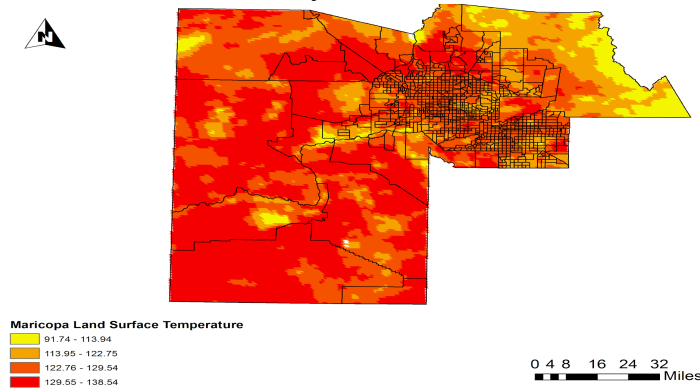
More of these stations must be installed throughout Tempe dorms

PROBLEM

Now that it has been established that the lack of water facilities is apparent, the following reasons listed will delve into why this reality is a growing concern. It is imperative to increase water fountains because the Arizona heat is incredibly intense well past the summer and into fall. Moreover, the 'overhead' of fees that students pay in their room & board charges should accommodate and include their hydration needs.

- Issue 1: Heat Exhaustion
 - It goes without question that the summer months of the Arizona heat is scorching. With temperatures at times in the 110's, the need for convenient and adequate hydration is imperative. The Mayo Clinic recommends that an average adult consumes from 11.5 to 15.5 cups of water daily, and this guideline is even more critical for warmer environments like Tempe, Arizona. With the University welcoming in residents as early as mid-August, it is critical that convenient

outlets for receiving hydration are available during the summer months as well as throughout the academic school year.



Graphic of Intense Heat in Maricopa County(including Tempe)

- Issue 2: Housing Charges Shortcomings
 - One of the benefits that Arizona State prides itself in their offering of residence halls is the convenience and peace of mind of being on campus. The goal is for the residents under the provided dormitories to have all their essential needs taken care of. This is dealt with under the University overhead of charges for a variety of different fees that are in relation to the student's housing experience. However, the overlooked issue of water facilities is one that is not sufficiently fulfilled. Oftentimes, from my personal observations, students will resort to their own funding to purchase a water filter (ex: Brita Filter) or use their ASU M&G allowance on water from the Provisions on Demand (P.O.D.) stores. Tuition along with room and board charges are already costly enough, and it would be of most convenience to the students living in the dorms if they had the peace of mind knowing that water stations could be found sparingly with ease.

SIGNIFICANCE

As a current Sun Devil Student, I am incredibly proud of the sustainability efforts brought forth by the University. The strides that have been made have been nothing short of spectacular, but there is definitely room for improvement. Particularly, an emphasis in the reduction of plastic water bottles would be a drastic shift in diminishing the reliance on these bottles by Sun Devil Residents. It has become increasingly important that this proposal to increase the availability of water stations be made. From a sustainability perspective, the future returns of this implementation will far exceed the initial planning and coordination needed for bringing this proposal into fruition. The stretch goal of this project would be able to convert current users of plastic water bottles to that of more environmental mediums for carrying water and other drinks. The popularity of plastic water bottles can be credited to their ease of use and disposability. However, by making available water stations more accessible, it would encourage greater participation from everyday residents to practice sustainable choices. ASU has proudly “talked the talk” in regards to their efforts and ambitions to bring more sustainable practices to everyday university operations, and this implementation would fulfill the significance of “walking the walk”.

Sustainability Goals and vision

When it comes to a sustainable and resilient future, ASU is committed to leading the world by example with the following initiatives and their associated commitments:

1. Circular Resource System: Promoting Zero Waste by adapting the goods we consume to maximize their use before sending them back into the economy for the most productive use possible.

ASU Sustainability Goals and Vision Official Page Excerpt

SOLUTIONS AND GUIDANCE FOR IMPLEMENTATIONS

While the solution of allocating a budget to producing more convenient water stations seems evident, the University should approach this project strategically. The challenge would be to optimize the impact of each water station allowing for the best return on investment for this project. As a CA myself, I would suggest sending out a survey to all current housing residents in the bi-weekly housing email. Moreover, from prior experience, the method in producing the highest response rate is to associate some sort of raffle prize of monetary value. An excellent example would be an Amazon gift card. The survey should poll information as to the location where students would deem fit for the water stations and using that data would allow for the next best course of action. Furthermore, the investment of constructing water fountains is not only going to benefit the current residents of the University at Tempe, but for future classes of Sun Devils to come.

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, the availability of water fountains found on the Tempe Campus can no longer be overlooked. Investing in projects that increase available water fountains will allow for healthier, more hydrated residents and improve the overall sustainability practices of our great university. Furthermore, it would ease the financial burden for Sun Devil residents as they will no longer need to resort to their own budget for water. I hope we can continue the conversation of expanding these water facilities and I would love to discuss the notion further of being inclusive and broadening this proposal to all four campuses under the institution of Arizona State.

If any questions arise or you would like to contact me further, please contact me at my email: jclee25@asu.edu or at my number 480-480-7777.