

The Good, the Expected, and the Incredible – A 52-Inch TV – That Students at UCSD Abandon on Campus at Year's End

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And the winner is ...

A student(s) who walked off with, or more likely carted off, a 52-inch flat screen TV freebee to celebrate and commemorate the end of the 2006-2007 academic year at the University of California, San Diego.

Not that this is a true award, mind you. More accurately, it's the spoils of the annual year-end evacuation of resident halls where students cram every possession possible into suitcases and boxes to fly or train home and cars to drive home. What doesn't fit, doesn't git.

"The large TV is probably the most outstanding item left behind this year," said Michelle Greenlee, assistant resident dean for Thurgood Marshall College. "The student(s) who owned it probably had no way to get it home."

Though undoubtedly the most outstanding item, the TV is but one item among tons of "stuff" left behind as 7,377 UCSD students in residence halls wrapped up the old year and break before tackling another academic year or a new life beyond.

And speaking of tons, the really big winner of this Spring's UCSD student evacuation is the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), whose bins located throughout the UCSD campus collected nine tons 600 pounds of usable items including clothes, shoes, working electronics, shelving units, furniture, cooking utensils and the like.

"The DAV made a daily pickup to their bins, except on the weekends," said Greenlee. This went on from Memorial Day through June 16 with UCSD handily topping last year's DAV donation which totaled six tons of usable items.

"Our nine tons 600 pounds also topped San Diego State University's DAV donation this year," Greenlee said. "Their total was six tons."

Typically each year, Greenlee says, students "leave all sorts of working things like couches, refrigerators, cameras, televisions, clothes, shoes, Ramen Noodles, macaroni and cheese, bikes, shelves, etc., and non-working things like toasters, grills, hammocks, etc.

"One year we had so much food collected that it took two U-Haul trucks to take it away from Marshall College alone."

To accommodate this mass exodus of students and proper handling of "stuff" left behind, each of UCSD's six colleges establishes a plan of action.

The Marshall plan, for example, is *Move Out - Responsibly: It is as Easy as 1,2,3,4,5*, according to Greenlee. Number One is the DAV. Number Two is ACT or Active Community at Thurgood which takes food,

cosmetics and "most anything you can get at a grocery store." Number Three is E-Waste where Environmental Health and Safety takes all non-working electronics, including batteries. Number Four is Recycle where the big blue bins gather cans, cardboard, boxes, bottles, paper and the like. And Number Five is *Last Resort*. This is for trash, such as used Kleenex, moldy food and other true trash, collected in the 40-foot-long dumpsters.

All five bin types were located in four areas on the Marshall campus.

Students were notified well in advance of these throw-away options via the web, fliers, e-mail, posters and a mandatory year end meeting hosted by each resident's Resident Advisor.

Yet no matter how thorough the planning, alerting and providing for leftovers, invariably there are items left in the resident hall rooms, according to Elva Colgan, assistant resident hall manager for UCSD Housing.

The Sunday after graduation the custodial staff goes through all of the individual rooms and collects such items as clothes, contact lenses, desk items, towels, a basketball, etc. The items for each room are inventoried in orange bags and stored in the Resident Life office of each college.

"Students can pick them up at the beginning of the school year with their ID and room number," Cogan said. Or they can pick them up sooner if on campus.

If usable items are not redeemed within 90 days, they may be donated to the campus police for auction.

Both Greenlee and Colgan said they and their staff make every effort to be thorough and inventory the items left in the rooms for student retrieval - but that life would certainly be easier if nothing was left in the rooms.

"The problem is that students get into such a rush at the end to get out of their room by 6 p.m. that final Saturday, that things are overlooked," Greenlee said. "Maybe some things even consciously. They run out of time and maybe energy."

As for leaving a 52-inch flat screen TV behind, aside a dumpster, that may be the real mystery, as well as the prize, of this spring's campus out flux. Couldn't get it home?

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