Cook campus provides pastoral paradise

BY KATE STATTON
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Cook campus, home to the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences, radiates a passion for the environment.

Named after George H. Cook, the first head of the Rutgers Scientific School, Cook campus has often been identified by its country-like feel.

"The isolation of the campus creates a very tight community," said Cook campus Dean Rick Ludescher. "Because Cook residents are separated, they have generated this self-sufficient core of support."

The campus paper, The Green Print, publishes articles dealing not just with campus news but also features on health and well-being.

"It's nice for students to be able to walk around campus and recognize faces," Ludescher said. "You go to class and think 'There's the person who rides their bike, or there's the girl who has a puppy.' There is comfort in routine; other campuses don't have that. They are more anonymous."

The location of Cook does more than provide a sense of community. With the proximity to Mason Gross, it is just a short walk for students to go to a play or music concert, Ludescher said.

Separate from the activities on Douglass, there is a lot going on at Cook, Ludescher said.

The clubs are active and there is a lot of programming at the Cook Campus Center, Ludescher said. There is at least one major event planned at the campus center each week, along with the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences academic seminars and outside speakers.

Cook residents also benefit from the campuses isolation.

"Cook is unique from the other campuses because like on College Avenue, we know how to party and live it up," Cook College junior Justin Gala said. "But when it comes time to crack down and study, I feel like I can get my work done without worrying about being woken up by the buses or sirens."

Gala said he chose to live on Cook rather than any other campus because he felt at home there during his tour of the college.

The campus felt familiar and friendly, he said.

"I went to camp as a kid and worked at a camp all my life and Cook made me feel as if I was going to camp again just with school work," Gala said.

Cook also houses Neilson Dining Hall, often considered the best dining hall at the University for both the food and ambiance.

Students across New Brunswick travel to Cook just to dine at Neilson.

"The atmosphere of Neilson is better than any other dining hall," said School of Arts and Sciences sophomore Joanna Cirillo, a College Avenue resident. "It has a nicer setup and look, and the selection and quality of the food is better not only inside the dining hall but also at takeout."

Ludescher said the small town atmosphere of Cook helped add to its appeal.

"Some students want to be part of the hustle and bustle. For them, College Avenue is the right place," he said. "But if they want that small town comfort and atmosphere, then Cook is the place for them."