

## Res Life helps turn dorms into community

By Brandon Cortés  
Features Editor

When university students move into campus housing each fall, they are greeted not only by hall directors but also by business marketing majors Murielle Myrtil and Chakou Ouroman, juniors, the student managers of Residence Life's social media.

Together, the pair are redefining what campus community looks like, one Instagram Reel at a time.

The role itself almost did not exist.

After the pandemic, the media manager position was dissolved, leaving a gap in how Res Life connected with students

living on campus.

Ouroman was encouraged by a hall director to take on the challenge and bring the position back.

"She thought it would be nice to have someone running it again, and she believed I'd be a good fit," Ouroman said.

Not long after, Myrtil joined him after contributing creative ideas for the department's social media. What began as an experiment has grown into a vital piece of campus culture.

Their daily work goes far beyond posting on Instagram. They plan video shoots weeks in advance, coordinate with departments and make content designed to inform and entertain.

"Sometimes, it's hard to believe—like, are we really reaching people, or are they just swiping past our stuff?" Myrtil said. "But then, a student came up to me on move-in day, excited because they'd seen my countdown. That made it worth it."

Engagement, they said, is the biggest challenge Res Life faces. Orientation starts off strong, but many students retreat to their rooms within weeks, unsure how to get involved.

"It became a comfort thing," Ouroman said. "It was scary for them to try new things, so they stuck to what was comfortable—staying in their rooms—even if they didn't really want to."

By putting information on the platforms students already use every day, the team hopes to make involvement less intimidating.

For Myrtil, the biggest benefit of living on campus is the sense of connection it provides.

"Living on campus helped me build connections with my RAs, my hall directors and even roommates who started out as strangers but became like family," Myrtil said.

Both students said Res Life also works to promote inclusivity. They pointed to diverse staff hiring and programming as key ways students feel represented and supported.

Looking ahead, they hope to see Res Life expand its efforts. They want more funding, more building-wide events and new creative strategies to keep the "honeymoon phase" of community life from fading after the first few months.

"My freshman year, the honeymoon phase lasted all year," Myrtil said. "Now, it feels like it ends by October. I want to see that energy last until students move out."

The work already feels rewarding. Their videos not only resonate with students, but also with staff and parents. Ouroman recalled walking into the Res Life office after posting a video with a staff

member and hearing everyone laughing about it.

"It was the talk of the town for them," Ouroman said. "That was rewarding because it showed we weren't just reaching students, but the entire community."

At the heart of their work is a desire to make campus feel like home. Ouroman said he often reminds orientation students of the importance of growth during their college years.

"If you leave college the same person you came in, then you didn't do necessarily a good job," Ouroman said. "College should influence you, challenge you and help you grow."

## From page to people: Reading Club connects students

By Brandon Cortés  
Features Editor

For students at the university, Reading Club is not just about finishing chapters.

It is about swapping ideas, sharing stories and building connections over books in a space that did not exist on campus until last year.

"There was no club on campus that read books together, and I thought that was a missed opportunity," Vilenski said. "I spoke to many students who said they'd be interested in joining if it became a reality, so I decided to go forward with the process of creating a shared space for campus readers."

The club, founded in 2024 by marketing major Anna Vilenski, a senior, has quickly become a welcoming community for book lovers.

Vilenski said her goal was to motivate students to read more, while also

giving them a chance to "have fun with it, have engaging discussions about the books we choose and meet new friends along the way."

The group meets once a month to discuss a chosen book, giving members time to finish it without feeling rushed.

"We sit together and talk about the book, its themes, plot and our opinions," Vilenski said.

In addition to monthly gatherings, members often meet informally once a week for crafting or other activities.

That flexibility, Vilenski said, keeps students engaged even when the reading itself feels like a big commitment during a busy semester.

At first, the group tried meeting biweekly. But Vilenski said it quickly became clear that pace was not working.

"Many students were getting books spoiled," Vilenski said. "Giving

a month to read helps prevent that from happening."

The club's reading list is chosen by its members.

Students suggest titles, put them up for a vote and then select one, sometimes with a theme in mind for that month.

For this month, they started reading "Before the Coffee Gets Cold" by Toshikazu Kawaguchi.

The club has grown rapidly.

Their Instagram page has more than 400 followers, and 114 students are officially signed up on OwlConnect.

At its first meeting this semester, the turnout doubled from what they normally expect.

"We usually get about 15 students," Vilenski said. "But this time, 40 people showed up. It was unbelievable."

As attendance has grown, she has seen students become more comfortable and

confident with each meeting.

"Some might be shy in the beginning, but as we go on and do other activities, they start to open up little by little," Vilenski said.

Vilenski, who will graduate in December, admitted she worries about the future of the club once she leaves campus.

"One of my fears is what will happen to the club after I'm gone," Vilenski said. "My hope is that it keeps getting stronger and lasts long after I graduate."

Reading Club's next meeting is scheduled for Oct. 7 at 4 p.m. in the Honors College Lounge at Buley Library.

Vilenski said she hopes more students will stop by, even if they are unsure about joining.

"I would say students should definitely come," Vilenski said. "This is a place to be yourself and express who you are."



PHOTOS | SCSU READING CLUB

Students playing bingo during Reading Club's first semester meeting on Sept. 10.

## Owls Decide: Do you like pancakes or waffles?

By Jay'Mi Vazquez  
Managing Editor



PHOTOS | WILLIAM GAGNÉ

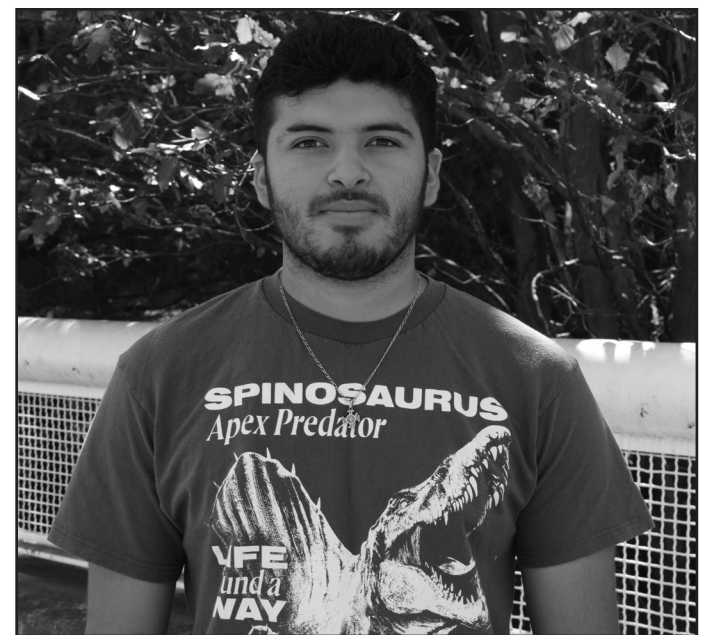
"Waffles because there's more to them than pancakes."

-Computer science major Victor Cora Quinones, a freshman



"Pancakes because to make waffles, you need a waffle maker."

-Business administration major Françoise Soropogui, a sophomore



"Pancakes because the satisfaction of making it yourself and tasting it is better"

-Business administration major Oscar Magana, a junior



"I think overall, I like pancakes more because there is more variety."

-Music therapy major Isabelle Danehy, a senior



"Pancakes because I hate waffles."

-Business administration major Nickolas Charles, a senior



"Waffles because they're crunchier than pancakes."

-General studies major Aizea Costa, a senior