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### What not to pack for college

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Lead photo by Sarah Dean

For immediate release

### **What not to pack for college**

By Kaelin Clay

June 30, 2023

For more information, contact Ouachita's Office of Communications & Marketing at [comm-mark@obu.edu](mailto:comm-mark@obu.edu) or (870) 245-5206.

"Welcome to Ouachita," they'll say. You'll drive through the parking lot of Francis Crawford Hall or Flippen-Perrin Hall or O.C. Bailey Hall; your car will be loaded down, and perhaps your parents' cars will be loaded down, too. Or you might be planning to be greeted from the passenger seat of a U-Haul that your family insisted on renting.

But I promise there's an easier way. I'll help you make your load a little bit lighter with a list of what *not* to pack for college:

1. **Extra furniture.** I know it's tempting to loft your bed and create a small living space, but you're probably just going to sit on your bed to watch TV anyway. So you may as well save the space that a couch would take up, and enjoy a little extra breathing room. You'll learn very quickly that few students actually host in their room, and social life happens in the student center or in the lobby of your dorm.
2. **Your entire closet.** "What if I need this later in the semester or for \_\_\_?" If you're like me, you always have a back-up plan, and that might turn you into an over-packer. I'm right there with you. However, it's no secret that dorm closets are small, and you're not going to need everything you've owned since the eighth grade. Instead, pack your favorite tops, jeans and church clothes, and don't forget a rain jacket! It might get chilly in JPAC during Chapel, so bring a sweater or a jacket ... even in August.

3. **A TV bigger than your dresser.** I don't think I would use all 10 fingers if I tried to count how many times I've watched TV this semester. Binging *Friends* for hours always sounds fun, but at a place like Ouachita, college gets busy. Once you're acquainted with what Ouachita has to offer, it suddenly sounds more appealing to go to events in the Tiger Den, play board games in the student center, go rock climbing in the CRAG or leave your heart on the intramural field. You might have a few movie nights here and there, but a smaller TV will do the trick.
4. **Fancy hangers that hang multiple pairs of pants.** From experience, it sounds like an innovative idea at first, but those fancy hangers you Amazon Primed to yourself will more than likely fall apart and destroy your closet with an avalanche of jeans that originated from only two hangers. It creates a much bigger mess than the perfectly organized picture online, and honestly, the plastic drawers from Walmart hold more.
5. **A water pitcher.** I think we all love a crisp sip of water from a Brita, but the pitcher will take up about 95% of your mini refrigerator, and the amount of water you need between walking to classes will likely be more than the pitcher can hold. Besides, when you're out on campus, you'll find bottle filling stations in nearly every building. Instead, there are similar filtering water dispensers. If you purchase one, you'll be grateful that you don't have to refill a pitcher five times a day.
6. **An iron/ironing board.** Again, I speak from experience on this one. I vividly remember sitting on my floor in Frances Crawford Hall while ironing sweatshirts and jeans on my mini ironing board. The idea of an ironing board in the dorm room is similar to your mom dragging out an ironing board that takes up half of the hotel room space while your family maneuvers around it. A regular ironing board will create a roadblock for you and your roommate, and the mini one isn't quite big enough. Instead, a handheld steamer will be your lifesaver.
7. **Nerves.** Lastly, don't bring your nerves. I know that reading this won't fully convince you to not be nervous, but let me offer you some peace of mind. You will quickly learn your way around campus, and your semester routine will become second nature. Eventually, your people will come into your life, and you'll meet many more along the way. Your advisor will help you tackle the overwhelming battle of schedules, and the classes you take will guide you to the right major, minor or emphasis. Your core classes may be boring at times, but soon enough, you'll be learning about the thing you want to spend the rest of your life doing. Somehow, it all comes together. It may be confusing, but the nerves aren't needed. Everything is constantly shifting, but the nerves settle down when you embrace that college is a special season of God's orchestration, and you'll have plenty of Ouachitonians around you to figure things out alongside you as you go.



*Kaelin Clay is a junior communications & media/multimedia and political science double major from Idabel, Okla.*