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Dorm Room Décor

By Cathy Dausman



Polka dots and a pink spread enliven one co-ed's new living space. Photo Cathy Dausman

six freshman halls, all on the central campus." Four years ago, as incoming class sizes continued to increase, the college measured every dorm room. It will come as no surprise that space is at a premium.

Two students, or an occasional lone student (single room charge is more expensive) live in 15 by 12 feet of space; three students have a 21 by 12 foot space.

Identifying the larger rooms and redefining them as triple bedrooms allowed housing services to carve out space for an additional 35 students, Lucero said. Old-style built-in closets gave way to modular furniture in the triples. Now desks, dressers and lockable closets can be reconfigured to accommodate under-desk drawer preference (right or left side) with drawer space either stacked up or tucked under beds.

Three students to a room also means one roommate will be sleeping above a desk. The newer "suite" residences have four to six students sharing a semi-private bathroom.

Saint Mary's College designates its living space as single gender either by floor or suite. Only one on-campus resident unit is single gender, because of an extremely limited number of rooms (10), and that is not a freshman dorm.

Dorm decorating was still a work in progress when Lamorinda Weekly toured the campus during Weekend of Welcome. At least one sleepy student was using her room as a bedroom during the photo session. Needless to say, the lights remained off at that location, as did the camera.

The halls in each dorm were decorated by theme - Paris, for one, Pixar for another. Inside the rooms, students turned to color and wall space to personalize. Posters were a quick fix for institutional off-white wall colors, and Lucero said the more creative students cover their walls in geometric designs using wall-friendly painter's tape.

They also refer to a website called apartment therapy, she said. Surprisingly, "moms have a big say about how the beds are to be made up," said housing assistant Liz Graham.

Pink was the coeds' go-to color. Brittani Decloedt was just stepping out when Lamorinda Weekly reached her dorm room. "We're going to definitely add more to it," Decloedt said of their decorating project in progress. "My first impression of the room was that it was bigger than a lot of other dorms I've seen at different colleges. I also was excited to have my own closet and desk area.

"Since the day Lamorinda Weekly took pictures, I've added a collage of photos to my wall, a couple of posters, and have cleaned up the mess on my desk!"

Looking for Dorm Design Dos and Don'ts?

Finding creative ways to dress up a dorm room can be challenging. Visit these websites for decor and design tips perfect for tight spaces:

www.apartmenttherapy.com

www.designyourdorm.com

www.myhomeideas.com/decorating/before-after/cute-dorm-room-decorating-ideas-00415000069106

Sometimes ... just sometimes ... stack and pack housing is a reality. The challenge is to make it fun. That's what the class of 2017 is experimenting with as they move on campus at Saint Mary's College and decorate what is for some, their first home-away-from-home - the college dorm room.

Our Homes previously touched on downsizing and compact living when it toured a Lafayette in-law apartment featured on an East Bay Homes tour this summer. (<https://www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue0711/Two-Lafayette-Homes-on-AIA-Tours.html>). That project was a freestanding 750 square foot dwelling. But student spaces are one room dwellings designed to work as living, sleeping and study space, and they do it all in less than 300 square feet while housing two to three people!

"Saint Mary's has approximately 4,200 students, with 2,800 undergraduates and 1,400 graduate students," said Elizabeth Smith, assistant vice president for college communications. She estimates about 1,650 undergrads live on campus.

Marie Lucero, director of Campus Housing and Conference Services, explained, "Saint Mary's College has



Traditional on the outside, but holding all manner of modern amenities (rented refrigerator, or student-owned flat screen TVs), Aquinas Hall is one of six freshman halls on campus.



Modular furniture and bunk bed ladders ensure floor-to-ceiling use of space even in a tight-quarters triple. Photos Cathy Dausman



A sports fan first and foremost, this college freshman's room reflects a love of local sports teams.

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