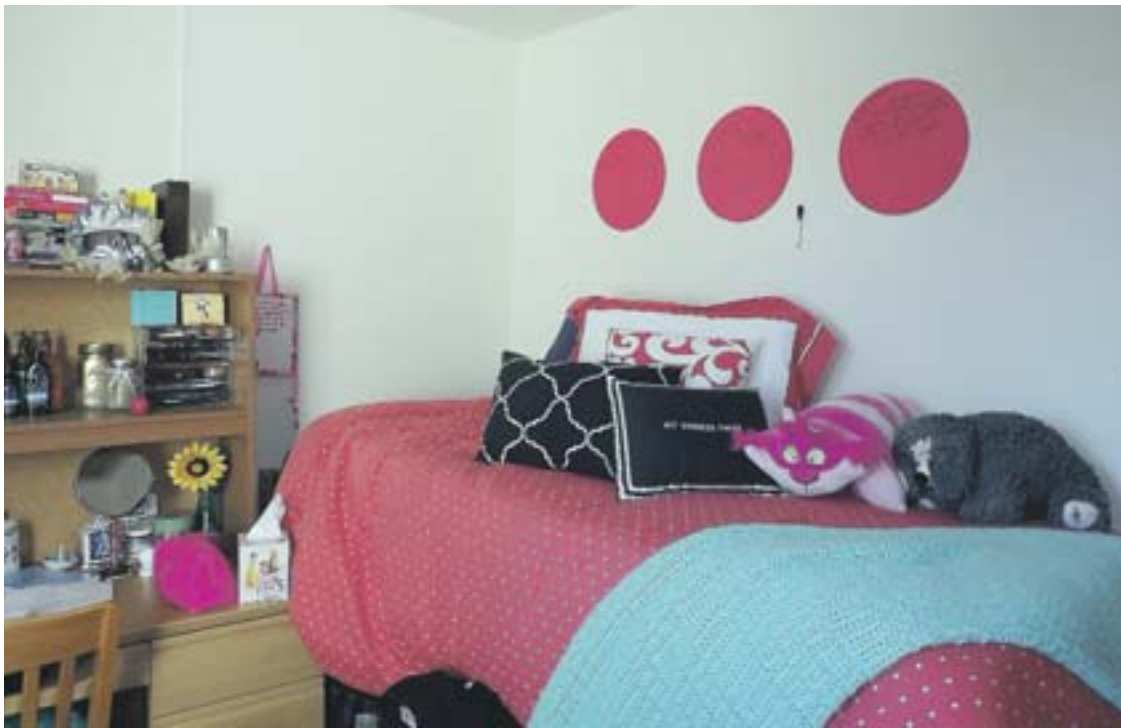


Lamorinda OUR HOMES

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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

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

dwelling 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 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.



The Home Designer Dreamy Empty Nest ...read on page D11

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.

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