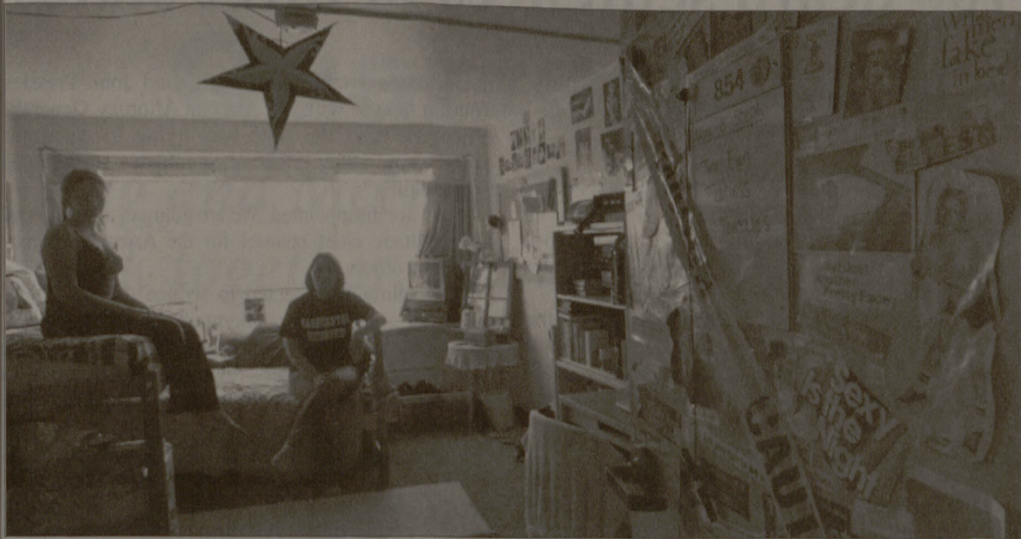


# Dorm decorating 101



TOM REESE • KRT CAMPUS

Aura Wade, left, and Stephanie Conn, University of Washington students, got creative when decorating their dorm room.

By Stephanie Dunnewind  
KRT CAMPUS

SEATTLE — When University of Washington roommates Aura Wade and Stephanie Conn first saw their Lander Hall dorm room, all the furniture was lined up along either side, "with no space in the middle at all," said Conn, 19, of Spokane, Wash.

That changed quickly. Wade raised her bed and Conn fitted hers underneath in an L shape. A mini-refrigerator and storage take up the rest of the area under the bed. The roommates added corner shelves, a small round table with a crocheted lace cover, throw pillows, Christmas lights around the window and an area rug.

"I hate when I go in a room and you can't really tell anything about their personality," said Wade, 18, of Kirkland, Wash.

As students settle into college, they'll be looking for inexpensive, space-saving ways to glam up rooms that are intentionally bland. Every year, student Jean Lee is amazed by how the UW's neutral, standard rooms become "lively and interesting."

Rather than just move everything from their home bedroom to school, experts advise students to carefully select items to fit into accommodations that are likely much smaller — and probably shared.

"Most people bring way too much stuff," said UW resident adviser Katie Handy. "You don't need to bring every pair of shoes you own."

At the University of Washington, residence-hall rooms range from 115 to 186 square feet for a shared room. Some universities even bunk three students to a room.

Universities try to accommodate students' desire for personalized use of space. "Traditionally, most furniture was bolted to the floor — what you see is what you get," Gould said. Now schools are moving to mobile, modular furniture "so students are able to be as creative with the small space as they can."

Many universities offer some rooms with beds that can be bunked. At the University of Washington, for example, beds in its three renovated residence halls (Terry, Lander and McCarty Halls), can be raised to different levels so students can lift individual beds and place storage or desks underneath. Or some students bunk both beds and then bring in a loveseat or small futon to fill the resulting space.

Students laugh at some of the typical decorating advice offered by adults, such as "transforming" a room through paint (absolutely not allowed) or talking with a roommate to coordinate bedspreads. Cara Carrubba, a UW junior who shared a Haggert Hall room her freshman year and now has a single room in Hansee Hall, said she's never seen matching bedspreads and thinks a "color scheme" is probably overstating most students' design intentions.

As for appliances, students should definitely check school rules, as they vary.

Though some companies market candles and incense to college students, many universities prohibit open flames (which also includes fondue pots).

In the end, Conn says, freshmen shouldn't worry if they forget something on moving-in day.

"Even if I remembered to bring a screwdriver, I might still go ask around for one," she confided. "It's how you meet people."

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