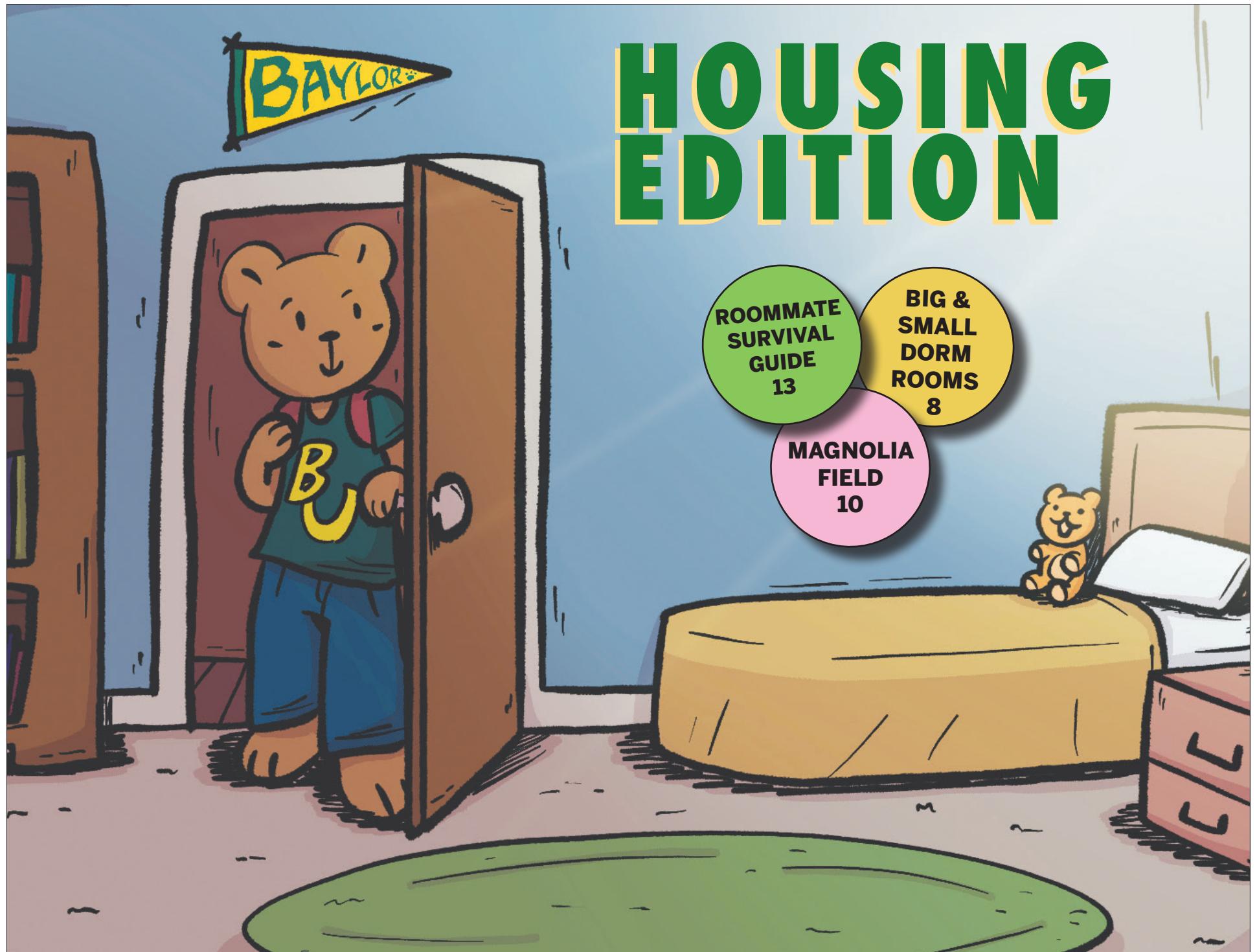


# B. BAYLOR LARIAT

*News for the students by the students*



## EDITORIAL

## Finding the perfect roommate is hard; Baylor can help

Freshman year is a year of change. Moving away from home, learning how to manage your time, feeding yourself, but the most direct change by far is living with someone new.

We have all heard the nightmare roommate stories — that roommate that never turns the lights off, can't clean up a mess, always has people over or constantly plays loud music at all hours of the day. But Baylor offers a solution.

Within the housing application, Baylor offers a lifestyle-based roommate quiz to pair incoming freshmen in the residence halls. This quiz includes prompts that cover everything from how early your roommate goes to bed to how clean they are, but it's not without its faults. With mental health at an all-time low among college students, it is essential to consider this when determining a roommate.

The easiest way to factor that decision-making process into the quiz would be to integrate targeted questions about mental health preferences and needs, while also ensuring privacy.

In 2019, Baylor University's Active Minds chapter conducted a mental health survey, which found that 73% of students with mental health conditions developed them on campus. Imagine if this number could begin trending in the right direction. Currently, Baylor's system focuses on surface-level compatibility, such as study habits and tidiness. Of course, these factors are important; mismatched lifestyles can lead to minor daily frustrations that inevitably boil over into larger-scale conflict.

However, the questionnaire still overlooks a crucial aspect of well-being, mental health. A

roommate who is insensitive to their counterpart's potential triggers, like loud arguments that might trigger anxiety, or a roommate who might not respect boundaries, could turn the shared space into a source of constant stress.

Reforming the system doesn't require a complete rebuild; instead, it requires building onto the current foundation. Baylor could start by adding elective sections to the quiz that allow students to elaborate on their mental health preferences. For example, there could be additional questions regarding noise sensitivity, willingness to accommodate quiet hours or roommates who would be willing to discuss mental health issues.

Students should be given the option to match with others who have similar experiences to foster mutual respect or



James Ellis | Cartoonist

understanding without forcing them to disclose personal information to one another. By prioritizing mental health in roommate matching, Baylor has the unique opportunity to transform nightmare roommate situations into

partnerships that support and uplift roommates. This simple change could improve student retention rates, reduce overcrowding in Baylor's current mental health infrastructure and help freshman communities on

campus become more positive than they already are.

By making this change, Baylor can be a trendsetter and make the university a more accommodating and safe place for those with mental illness.

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Hudson Ross  
Maryn Small  
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## LARIAT RADIO

Jeffrey Cohen  
Aidan O'Connor  
Jackson Posey

## Contact Us

## General Questions:

Lariat@baylor.edu

254-710-1712

## Sports:

LariatSports@baylor.edu

## Arts:

LariatArts@baylor.edu

## Opinion:

Lariat-Letters@baylor.edu

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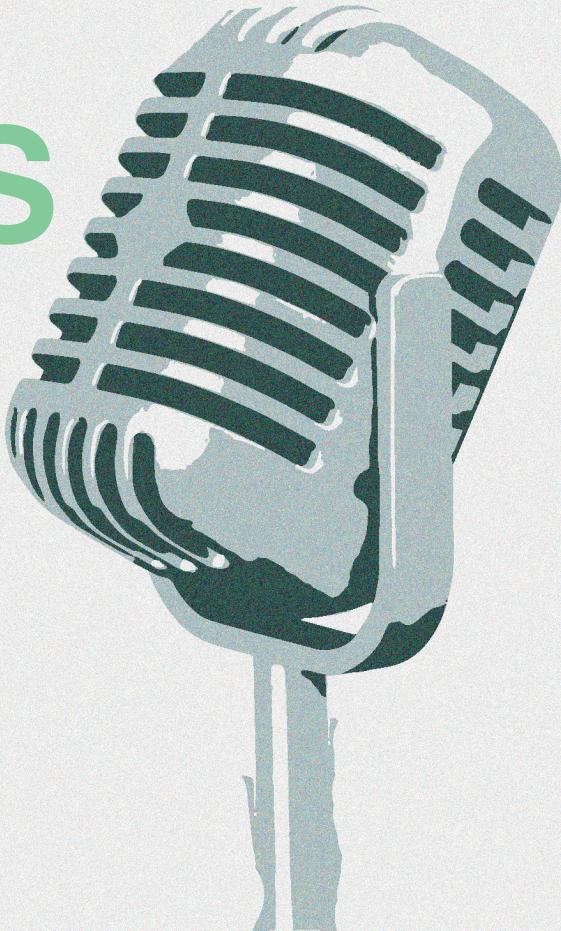
To submit a Lariat Letter, email Lariat-Letters@baylor.edu. Letters should be a maximum of 400 words. The letter is not guaranteed to be published.

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# PODCASTS PODCASTS PODCASTS

Every Wednesday and Friday



## BEAR NEWSCESSITIES

Bear Newscessities is your new go-to for quick, easy rundowns of what's happening on the Baylor campus each week.



## DON'T FEED THE BEARS

Don't Feed the Bears gives you all the hot takes, highlights, and behind-the-scenes talk on Baylor sports.



Brady Harris | Photographer

**THE PLACE TO BE** Students walk outside Park Place apartments, a popular living place due to it being located just steps from campus on the corner of 9th Street and Baylor Avenue.

# Students face highs, lows in Waco housing market

**JULIANA VASQUEZ**

Staff Writer

From amenities to leases, many students in college house hunt unprepared.

Potential renters face some interesting obstacles this upcoming housing season as they guess when prices will be lowest and weigh factors like distance from campus, amenities and square footage. Aside from the more exciting aspects of imagining your future home, slowly rising prices are creeping up to spoil students' fun.

Clinical Associate Professor of Economics and Graduate Program Director Dr. Finley Edwards said increasing housing prices can be attributed to supply and demand.

"The increase in housing prices is largely a function of the supply side," Edwards said. "The

amount of housing available has not increased as fast as the amount of people looking for housing."

This issue is only more prominent in college towns, with the housing closer to campus being more attractive to potential renters — and more expensive. Baylor provides a unique example of this demand slowly rising since its student population has grown approximately 23% over the last decade.

W. H. Smith Professor of Economics Dr. James West said that as developers invest in student housing around Waco, citizens often assume rent prices will rise.

"It is a general perception that if a developer comes in and builds new houses, that's going to raise the value of homes," West said.

But according to West, that's not the case, and new developments around Waco will likely

have a positive effect on renter's pockets.

"As new stock is added, it does tend to drive existing rents down, but it's a slow process," he said.

As renters wait for the prices to fall, they must either prepare to play the renting game or start saving their dollars now.

"A prospective renter could try to game the system by saying, 'I'm not going to rent a unit right away, I'm going to wait for those prices to drop,'" Edwards said. "The challenge there is that the prices may not drop depending on factors outside your control."

For students who pay their own rent, like Fort Worth sophomore Caden Clack, it's imperative to lock in a savings plan as soon as possible.

Clack works at Dutch Bros. during the school

year and over the summer to pay for his rent, tuition and other living expenses. He knew he would be providing for himself as he apartment hunted last year, and valued affordability wherever he would rent.

"I live at the Alamo Apartments," Clack said. "Me and my roommate had friends there last year, and they recommended it to us just because it's cheap [and] has its own dedicated parking," Clack said. "It's pretty dingy, but it's cheap and that's what really mattered."

For students looking for next year's housing right now, Clack advised them to do their research and ask upperclassmen advice.

"Talk to people who come before you," Clack said. "Make sure you're very prepared, and don't settle for the first thing."

# International students find home away from home

**GISELLE LEE**  
Staff Writer

While many crossed city or state lines to get to Baylor, others crossed oceans and looked for ways to make Baylor home thousands of miles away.

Nairobi, Kenya, freshman Kesa White said coming back to Baylor was difficult because of the abrupt disconnect when leaving after the fall semester.

"It was hard coming back because I had adjusted to being here," White said. "I had kind of stopped missing home and things that were comfortable about my culture. When I went back, I was kind of annoyed with it."

However, White found that lifestyle differences were also factors that made the transition back to Baylor a challenge.

"I missed African culture and foods from back home," White said. "I missed struggling to get around town on buses or having to call Ubers that were \$2 instead of \$15."

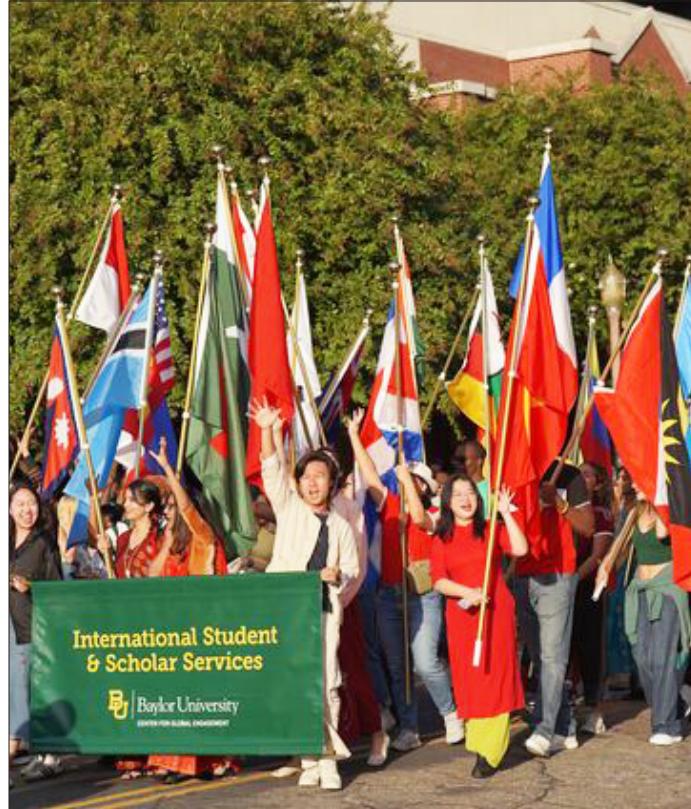
White also explained how she is more familiar with how to communicate with people in her home country than at Baylor.

"I feel like there's lots of misunderstandings because I can't bring up something from back home," White said.

Similarly, Bogota, Colombia, freshman Juan Soto said people's behaviors and communication are different at Baylor compared to his hometown.

"[We're] a bit noisy and a little bit disorganized," Soto said. "Something that's similar in both places is the people are really nice, so that's a good thing."

Soto added that despite being able to understand academic



Lariat file photo

**GOING GLOBAL** International Student and Scholar services volunteers walk in the annual Homecoming Parade.

language in English during classes, socializing in English was something new to get used to.

Plainview senior Mason Gregory, a global ambassador in the International Student and Scholar Services, acknowledged that both the educational and social environment is vastly different in America, which makes it harder for international students to acclimatize.

"This might be their first time living independently in an English-speaking country, so [homesickness] includes language barriers [and] time differences where they can't speak with their families often [and] going years without seeing family

members," Gregory said. "Not having access to the food they're used to eating or their typical cuisine might make it feel harder for a student to be connected and brew more of that homesickness."

However, international students said Baylor's environment was easy to adapt to regardless of where they came from because of all the resources available to students.

The Center for Global Engagement acts as the bridge between international students and Baylor's campus resources. Last semester, students noted various events and programs

**HOMESICK** >> Page 23



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Sam Gassaway | Photo Editor

**NEW PLACE** Exterior of the renovated Allen Residence Hall, completed in August of 2025.



Sam Gassaway | Photo Editor

**UNDER CONSTRUCTION** Construction at Kokernot Hall is expected to finish in July 2026.

# What projects are next? *Construction at residence halls is wrapping up*

**JOSH SIATKOWSKI**  
Staff Writer

This summer, Baylor's plan to renovate 10 residence halls around campus will be complete. With over a decade of work and \$200 million of investment, the projects have brought new life to a number of living communities, many of which were constructed before 1960.

The consecutive renovations began with the 2015 update of North and South Russell Halls, followed by work on the nearby Penland Hall the following year. Renovations continued in the all-men's Martin Hall in 2017, with the all-women's counterpart of Collins being completed in 2023. The Historic Memorial and Alexander Halls of the

Honors Residential College finished their facelift in 2024. Dawson and Allen, both built in the 1950s, are the most recent to be upgraded, reopening last fall.

And finally, upon Kokernot Hall's anticipated completion this July, the university will finish the plans it set back in 2013. With part of the construction budget now freed up for other projects, it opens up the question of what's coming next for projects across campus. While there is no confirmed plan for a similarly connected string of renovations, Vice President for Student Life Dr. Sharra Hynes alluded to future projects in a September interview.

"All of the halls that were built before 1960, after this cycle of refurbishment, will have been

renovated," Hynes said. "And we have somewhat jokingly and somewhat realistically said that once we finish, all things will likely begin anew again."

Hynes also said that although it's very early, there has been conversation about updating the SUB.

"Specifically with regard to the Bill Daniel Student Center, we have worked with our facility colleagues to do some scoping of what renovations might look like," Hynes said. "And as opportunities become available for donor support and for capacity within the institutional budget and our debt capacity, we'll keep entertaining that amid every other institutional priority."

While she didn't connect potential SUB plans to any larger plan for upgrading other non-academic buildings, like Moody Library or the McLane Student Life Center, Hynes also said academic buildings are being watched.

"Our academic facilities also need attention," Hynes said. "Classrooms need to be improved. So we're trying to be mindful of all of the spaces and places on campus where our students and our faculty and staff spend time."

For students reaping the benefits of the residence hall renovations, thankfully none of the current campus spots seem as in need of attention as their recently completed living spaces. Weatherford junior Kaili Norris, who has lived in the

70-year-old Dawson Hall before and after its renovation, said that although older buildings like Carroll Science could use "cleaning up," their charm still seems to outweigh the issues.

"I like the character in the old buildings," Norris said. "I would hate to see something knocked down for something brand new."

What Norris and her friends would like to see, however, is parking. Often a pain point for students, Norris said there are times that even with her parking pass, she is unable to find a spot.

"I would like to see more parking garages," Norris said. "Everyone I talk to, whether they live off campus or on campus, is always like, 'Parking is so hard.'"

# Look before you sign

*Students give leasing advice*

**ALEXANDRA BREWER**  
Arts & Life Writer

Apartment hunting can feel rushed for Baylor students, especially with pressure to sign early and secure roommates. While every Waco apartment comes with its own set of perks, it can be difficult to pick a place to live for the first time.

As you begin the search for your new abode, here is a list of things to avoid, be aware of and things that are often overlooked.

## LOCATION ONLY WORKS IF TRANSPORTATION DOES

Living close to campus can eliminate the need for a car. Fort Worth junior Mollie Elder, living at The View on 10th, said walkability was key.

"I think it's really important ... to have a place to live that's close to college, so that you can get that proximity to campus without having the need to have a car," Elder said. "Especially if you can't find parking on campus, it's really nice to be able to be a five minute walk."

Purcellville, Va., junior Reagan Rogers, who lived at Ursula, said distance became an issue without reliable transportation.



Jake Schroeder | Photographer

**PRACTICALITY** Students moving off campus should focus on the less-considered matters they take for granted on campus rather than flashy, fun amenities.

"I didn't have a car that year I lived there, and so it was a little bit difficult to do stuff that was on campus, because they had a shuttle ... that only ran until 5 p.m., so that was kind of a struggle to be able to find someone who would drive me," Rogers said.

## PRACTICAL AMENITIES MATTER MORE THAN LUXURY

Students said convenience often outweighs luxury once the semester begins. Waco junior Morgan Lacy, who lives at The View on 10th, said having separate bathrooms made shared living easier.

"I live with three roommates, so I'm in a four-person apartment, and this apartment comes with four bedrooms and four bathrooms, so each bedroom has its own bathroom, which is pretty cool and pretty convenient," Lacy said.

## MANAGEMENT, SAFETY AND TIMING

Rogers said students often overlook how a complex is run.

"I would say people are not realizing how the facility is managed, whether that's like lots of alarms or maintenance going around stuff like that, so just to make sure that they don't interrupt too much when they need to do maintenance or things like that, like before you choose to stay there," Rogers said.

Students also warned against rushing leases. Lacy said price and pressure can lead to regret.

"I know there's other places that are close to campus that may be cheaper, but they also have rumors of things like ants and stuff, and so I think that's a big mistake that a lot of students make," she said.

Elder said waiting can be worth it.

"I didn't end up getting an apartment or even signing my lease until May. So it's really okay to wait and figure out who you want to live with," she said. For students moving off campus, slowing down, asking questions and planning transportation ahead of time can make all the difference. Finding the right apartment can be difficult; knowing your priorities and needs can make the process easier and more enjoyable.



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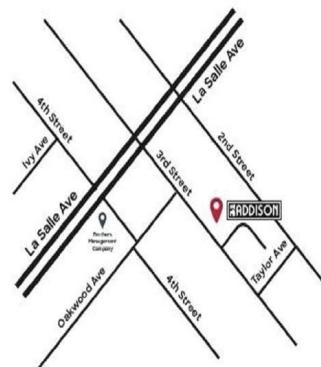
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# Students create cozy spaces in dorm rooms

ARDEN BERRY

Staff Writer

First-year Baylor students are required to live on campus in one of Baylor's dorm communities, meaning all these students will inevitably have to manage living with limited space. However, not all dorm spaces are created equal.

According to the websites for Teal Hall and Earle Hall, suite-style double rooms are 11 feet by 19.5 feet, which gives them the largest area of any of the most common room types in each dorm at 214 square feet and 6 square inches.

Woodway junior Lauren Myers said she thought Earle Hall was "pretty spacious" when she lived there her freshman year.

"The ceilings are really high in Earle and I just feel like the rooms are bigger, so there is more space," Myers said. "I lofted my bed and I thought that was really helpful just to store my desk underneath it. My roommate did the same thing ... So that was more of a storage thing and so that helped it be more spacey."

Despite the space, Myers still said she felt like she brought too much with her. She knew she was only going to stay in the dorm for one year and said she could have saved money by bypassing some of the decor.

"I think a lot of stuff online makes you think that you need all this fancy stuff," Myers said. "When you're looking for stuff, get stuff that you think you would use for multiple years and for multiple different structures."

The other most common room types in each dorm on campus are significantly smaller. According to the Campus Living and Learning website, Penland Hall, for example, has double rooms with community bathrooms that are 12 feet by 13 feet — slightly longer than Earle, but not as wide — for an area of 156 square feet.

Arlington sophomore Victoria Nguyen said she lived in Penland Residence Hall her freshman year and currently lives in Texana House.

"[Penland] was really small," Nguyen said. "I feel like even with Texana's two people per room, Texana's room is just so much bigger than Penland, and you can see that in the prices as well. It took a while to get used to Penland."

To survive the small space, she said she and her parents watched videos on how to pack luggage and bought containers.

"That helped with how to roll up your clothes

## THE MOST COMMON ROOM TYPE IN EACH DORM, RANKED BY FLOOR AREA:

**EARLE AND TEAL HALLS** (214 square feet and 6 square inches)

**BROOKS FLATS** (180 square feet)

**HERITAGE, TEXANA AND UNIVERSITY HOUSES** (168 square feet)

**NORTH AND SOUTH RUSSELL HALL** (165 square feet)

**ALEXANDER AND MEMORIAL HALL** (157 square feet and 6 square inches average)

**PENLAND HALL** (156 square feet)

**COLLINS HALL** (about 144 square feet average)

**MARTIN HALL** (143 square feet)

**BROOKS RESIDENTIAL COLLEGE** (140 square feet)

**UNIVERSITY PARKS** (100 square feet)

to fit more in the drawers," Nguyen said. "And also, we could use these Costco-sized containers ... Those are pretty nice."



Sam Gassaway | Photo Editor

**HOME** Students at Baylor are required to live on campus during their first year, so students must adapt to living in limited spaces such as the dorms in Alexander Hall.

Nguyen said she would advise incoming freshmen to contact their roommates early on, tour the dorm moving in and not to bring certain large furniture.

"Don't bring sofas, please," Nguyen said. "Or drawers or anything. Just check, tour the dorms first. Or we have a website that shows you."

Friendswood freshman Pearl Senter lives in Memorial Hall, which, according to the CL&L website, has suite-style double rooms with shared baths sized at an average area of 157 square feet and 6 square inches as its most common room type. However, the room sizes vary, and Senter said some rooms on the second floor are below this average and "very shoebox."

"Me and my roommate really match styles and we're very — I guess you could say maximalist," Senter said. "So we have a lot of posters up and a lot of cool lights and stuff hanging and everything. But it is really, really small. But it's still really cozy."

Despite the limitations, she said she and her roommate handle the space they do have well.

"It is tough at times trying to figure out

having to rearrange every little thing trying to fit in new stuff," Senter said. "I have to tell my parents not to send me stuff because there's nowhere to put it."

The CL&L website includes the current room rates for each hall. The list below shows the area of the most common room type for each dorm with dimensions available online.

Lead Coordinator for Housing Assignments Bethany Faulknor said via email that the information regarding room sizes posted on the CL&L website is the most up-to-date available. However, this information excludes the double room shared bath sizes for Allen and Dawson Halls, as well as specific measurements for the double room shared bath sizes for Memorial and Alexander Halls and double room pod bath sizes for Collins Hall. And so the list does not include Allen or Dawson and considers only the average sizes for Memorial Hall, Alexander Hall and Collins Hall. Additionally, since Kokernot Hall is under renovation, it is not considered either, as measurements and room rates may change.

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Brady Harris | Photographer

**BRANDED FOR SUCCESS** Magnolia gave Baylor baseball its largest gift in program history, leading to a rebranded field and increased efforts to find success in the Big 12.

## Baseball renames field after record gift from Magnolia

**DYLAN FINK**  
Sports Writer

Baylor Ballpark will see a new name emblazoned on the historic grass this spring.

Baylor will christen "Magnolia Field" at Baylor Ballpark after receiving a gift from alumni Chip and Joanna Gaines, co-founders of Waco-based home and furnishing company Magnolia, the university announced Jan. 12. An athletics department spokesperson declines to disclose the amount but confirmed it was the largest donation in program history.

Magnolia Field will make conference history as the first Big 12 baseball field to be named after a company.

"Today is a historic day for Baylor baseball and Baylor University," Athletic Director Doug McNamee said in a statement. "Our hometown-based Magnolia and its founders, Chip and Joanna Gaines, have been passionate supporters of Baylor for decades. Through their family's special connection to baseball, this transformational gift will benefit not only Baylor Baseball, but all student-athletes and coaches across Baylor Athletics."

Chip (BBA '98) and Joanna Gaines (BA '01) attended Baylor University and have been an active presence in the Waco and Baylor communities for over a decade. In 2013, the

couple became household names following the launch of their hit HGTV show "Fixer Upper."

"The consistent presence and generosity of Chip and Joanna through their time and resources have been invaluable to Baylor University over these past 12 years," President Linda Livingstone said. "We celebrate this gift, which will help us to widen our welcome and offer unique experiences for fans of all ages. We look forward to cheering for Baylor Baseball at Magnolia Field this spring."

The baseball program is entering this season on a high note after finishing 2025 with its first winning record (33-22) since 2021.

The Bears set their sights high this season, with hopes of making their first College World Series appearance since 2019. That team succeeded in part because of three current major league players: Kansas City Royals left fielder Nick Loftin, Athletics catcher Shea Langeliers and Texas Rangers pitcher Cody Bradford.

Head coach Mitch Thompson said Magnolia's gift to the program could be a step in the right direction toward what he hopes to create in Waco.

"This gift strengthens what we are building here and will help us to continue developing our players at the highest levels



Photo courtesy of Baylor Athletics

**HOME OF THE BEARS** Baylor Ballpark is the home ballpark of Baylor Bears baseball. Work on the stadium began following the 1998 season and opened to the public in 1999.

both on and off the field," Thompson said. "We are excited and honored to compete at Magnolia Field at Baylor Ballpark this spring and beyond. Together, we look forward to future projects that will enhance the

student-athlete experience and further elevate our program."

The Bears season will kick off at 4 p.m. Feb. 13 against New Mexico State at 4 p.m. presenting the newly named Magnolia Field.

# Leasing companies should have discounts for students

**CHARLIE COLE**  
Broadcast Reporter

Amid continually rising inflation and sky-high living costs, college students are struggling to afford

off-campus housing. With tuition and grocery prices not getting any cheaper, it is time for Waco apartments and leasing companies to make a change and begin offering discounts to Baylor students.

Rent prices are increasing in Waco and nationwide. As of Jan. 20, the average monthly rent in Waco is \$1,525. While

that is lower than the national average, it is still on the rise. According to ZillowRents data, Waco has seen a \$0 month-over-month change in house rental prices. Pair that with a 3% increase in grocery prices and a nearly \$12,000 increase in tuition over the last three years, and a clear problem arises for Baylor students.

Before we know it, leases for the 2026-27 school year will start to open up, and students will struggle to find affordable housing. Most students don't have a full-time income and many are experiencing living on their own or supporting themselves financially for the first time. This is where leasing companies can step in and make a massive difference for both the student and resident population in Waco.

Brothers Management and Campus Realtors own and lease many of the off-campus housing units students typically seek. I believe that these and other companies should offer rent discounts for Baylor students, specifically for properties in the area and neighborhoods adjacent to campus.

Not only would this change help students manage some of their rising costs, but it would also reduce competition for housing between students and Waco residents. This change could also create a safer, more secure area for students to live in, serving as an extension of the campus. Residents could then search for places to live farther from campus, which should have less competition, since students will not be trying to live there as well.

The same goes for apartment complexes in the area, such as Park Place and U Pointe on Speight. They would very likely see an overwhelmingly positive response from students if they offered a reduced rate.

There is only so much leasing companies and

apartment complexes can do, however, since they are also facing rising property and insurance costs. To offset this, Baylor could step in and arrange a partnership to cover some of the income lost from offering a student discount. This investment would be worthwhile as it would allow the school to build a strong, reliable community and keep its students safe and close to campus.



Not only would this change help students manage some of their rising costs, but it would also reduce competition for housing between students and Waco residents. This change could also create a safer, more secure area for students to live in, serving as an extension of the campus.

As a whole, this discount would be a welcome change that could benefit all parties involved. I don't know if this discount would be a realistic possibility, but I would love to see companies at least give it a shot. It would help students manage their finances and take some added stress off their shoulders.



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# Room tidiness makes or breaks mental well-being

**GISELLE LEE**  
Staff Writer

When the temperature outside drops, your room becomes a safe haven. But studies show that how tidy you keep it has noticeable impacts on your mental health.

Data from the National Association of Professional Organizers shows that disorganization can lead to a 20% loss in productivity. According to Mental Health America, a clean living space helps promote a daily sense of calmness and control in your life.

With a cold and busy semester up ahead, students might be impacted in various ways. For Colorado Springs, Colo., sophomore Ronnie Hughes, despite having a clean room, he said his management of time is not properly optimized, spending more time in common areas instead.

"Because I spend so little time in my room, when I'm in my room, I don't usually use my time well," Hughes said. "I feel like the state of my room — it's on the cleaner side usually — whenever that starts to drop, I do feel a hiccup in my mental health. I feel like it starts to drop because I can see that reflected in a space I don't use often."

For Hughes, it helps to have a dorm space that's clean, even if it is not being used often.

"The cleaner it is when I come back, normally the better I feel about it," Hughes said.

On the other hand, Gidget Rodriguez-Smith, a freshman from South Korea, said her dorm room and mental health work in a cyclical fashion.

"I spend at least an hour in my dorm room — personal leisure time, playing video games, reading every day," Rodriguez-Smith said.

"I think my room is on the messiest side of the spectrum. I do think it is both a reflection of my mental health, and I think my mental health is affected by the state of my room."

Ebenezer Anene, a freshman from the United Kingdom, shared the sentiment. Anene works as a videographer for Baylor Athletics and said his room tidiness is essential for balancing long hours of video editing with personal time.

"The cleanliness affects me," Anene said. "If it's not clean, then I don't feel comfortable, but if it's clean, I feel comfortable."

In regard to the weather, the forecasts predict students will be greeted by a chilly and wet Texas over the course of January and February, with snow as early as Jan. 23.

According to the Honor Society, poor weather makes it hard for students to stay motivated, and the lack of sunlight may contribute to negative feelings of isolation, loneliness and depression.

However, Hughes, Rodriguez-Smith, and Anene agreed that despite an increase in their time indoors, all of them have added personal touches to their rooms, keeping a homey feeling inside and the dreary weather outside.

For Hughes, organization is of the utmost value. "I separate my spaces very clearly, so that I can have my space for relaxation or leisure time," Hughes said. "I have my space if I need to work in my room, and I have my space to sleep. I'd say it's laid out pretty well now."

Similarly, Rodriguez-Smith adopts a visual approach in personalizing her room.

"My wall is plastered in Sesame Street posters, band posts and dinosaurs," Rodriguez-Smith said. "Honestly, that's what makes it feel more like a home than just a room."

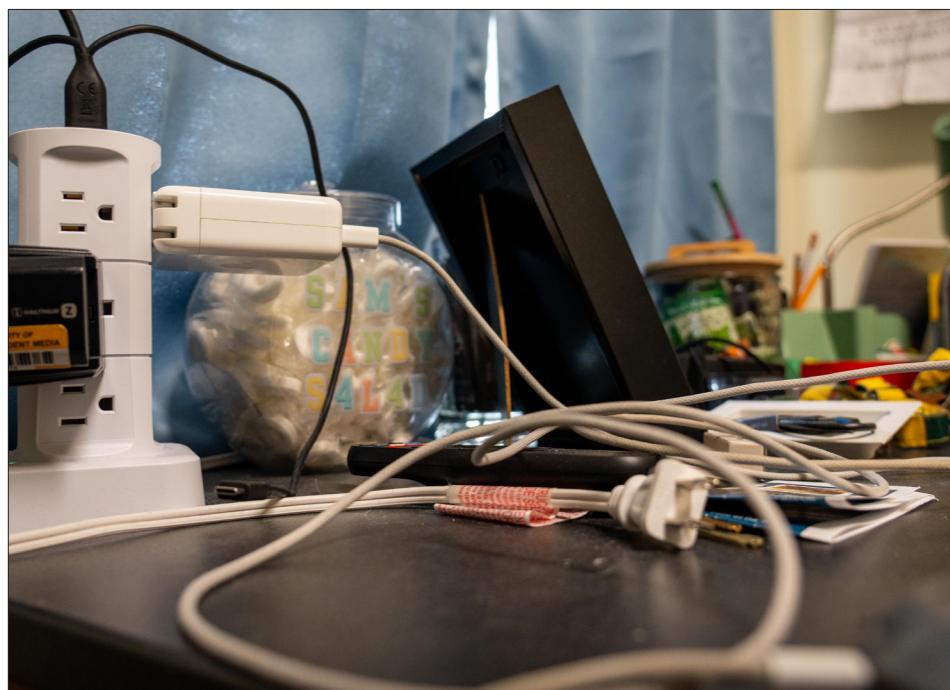
**“**  
My wall is plastered in Sesame Street posters, band posts and dinosaurs. Honestly, that's what makes it feel more like a home than just a room.

**GIDGET RODRIGUEZ-SMITH**  
SOUTH KOREA FRESHMAN



Sam Gassaway | Photo Editor

**KEEP AWAY CLUTTER** Instead of stacking books and throwing down useless objects, Baylor students are improving mental well-being by keeping their safe spaces organized.



Sam Gassaway | Photo Editor

**TIME FOR A DEEP CLEAN** With a cold semester coming up, now is a perfect time to get ahead on spring cleaning.

# Roommate survival guide



James Ellis | Cartoonist

## MACKENZIE GRIZZARD

Assistant News Editor

For some, sharing living spaces with siblings and family was the norm. Yelling at a sibling to stop hogging the bathroom, touching your clothes or stealing your personal items is a part of life for some, but for many, living in a communal space is a foreign concept that is difficult to adjust to.

Although some students moved into brand-new residence halls with state-of-the-art amenities, living in a community with others is often a difficult adjustment, said Dr. Sharra Hynes, Vice President for Student Life.

"When you all live in community together, it puts a little wear and tear on those buildings that you live in," Hynes said.

Despite new buildings and community spaces, often the biggest adjustment for students is navigating life with a roommate while sharing a smaller-than-usual space.

A study published by the Journal of Public Health Student Capstones found that in a sample of 31,000 students, over half reported

frequent disagreements or conflict with their roommates, ranging from a host of different issues.

Forney junior Benjamin Lopez is a Community Leader at Heritage House in North Village. According to Lopez, community living is the best and "most challenging" part of living in a residence hall.

"I definitely think community living can be advantageous," Lopez said. "There are very few other times where you get to meet so many new people. It's a wonderful way to gain perspective on the world beyond where a resident is first from."

Lopez said conflict often brews from all the differences that come with living with someone new, ranging from cultural, socioeconomic, geographical and emotional differences.

"Our residents come from a vast variety of backgrounds," Lopez said. "Simply taking the time to learn who we are doing life with usually solves conflicts I've seen."

Baylor takes pride in its first-year living experience, which has been recognized

**LIVE & LEARN** >> Page 23

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# From house to home

*Here's 5 renter-friendly renovations to make your college housing home*

**STACIE BOYLES**  
Arts & Life Writer

With the excitement of a new living space comes the dread of decoration and personalization. No one is more familiar with this conundrum than the modern college student, as pressures mount to make the space your own while also getting your security deposit back.

Between strict housing rules, tight budgets and limited square footage, decorating can feel more stressful than exciting. Still, your living space plays a huge role in your comfort, productivity and overall happiness, making personalization worth the effort. No one wants damage fees or a lame dorm or apartment, so check out this curated list of renter- and dorm-friendly renovation ideas that will personalize your space without breaking the bank.

## ROOM DIVIDER

Adding a room divider to your space can add a touch of personality based on what you choose, while providing separation in smaller spaces. You can use them to create distinguished spaces within your dorm or apartment, or use them to hide the clutter of your room. No matter what you choose, a room divider provides a great solution for awkward spacing or barren walls alike.

While Walmart, Wayfair and Home Depot all offer affordable options for room dividers, it's important to know the dimensions of your space and the size of the room divider you want.

## OPEN COAT RACK

If your living space lacks a coat closet, winter wardrobe storage can feel overwhelming and clutter your own closet. If that's the case, get an open closet rack and showcase your best coats. Bonus points if you add extra hangers so guests can hang up their own coats.

Open closet racks can also double as hat and backpack racks. Plus, they serve as a fun way to showcase any clothing pieces that might help strike up conversations with guests.

Your mom's old leather jacket collecting

dust? Throw that on the coat rack. That suit or ballgown you only wear to a formal twice a year? Display that for guests on the rack.

## CONTACT PAPER

If your appliances and countertops are looking bleak, try adding contact paper for a personal touch. Contact paper can be made into any design you'd like and is easy to apply and remove, leaving no damage to the surface. Show off your style and get creative; you can't go wrong with this one.

Full warning, contact paper can be tricky; you should recruit the help of a roommate or friend to assist you in the process.

Etsy is a great place to find budget-friendly, unique contact paper for any project. While some people use contact paper on their handles, others use it to transform their walls. Anything from solid colors to eclectic designs is a great way to easily spice up an otherwise dull dorm room.

## WINDOW FILM

Window film provides both privacy and design, making it a perfect solution for renters and dorm dwellers. The light shining through provides fun coloring and pattern for inside your room while blocking outsider vision into your room or space. There are hundreds of designs, and it is super easy to apply and remove.

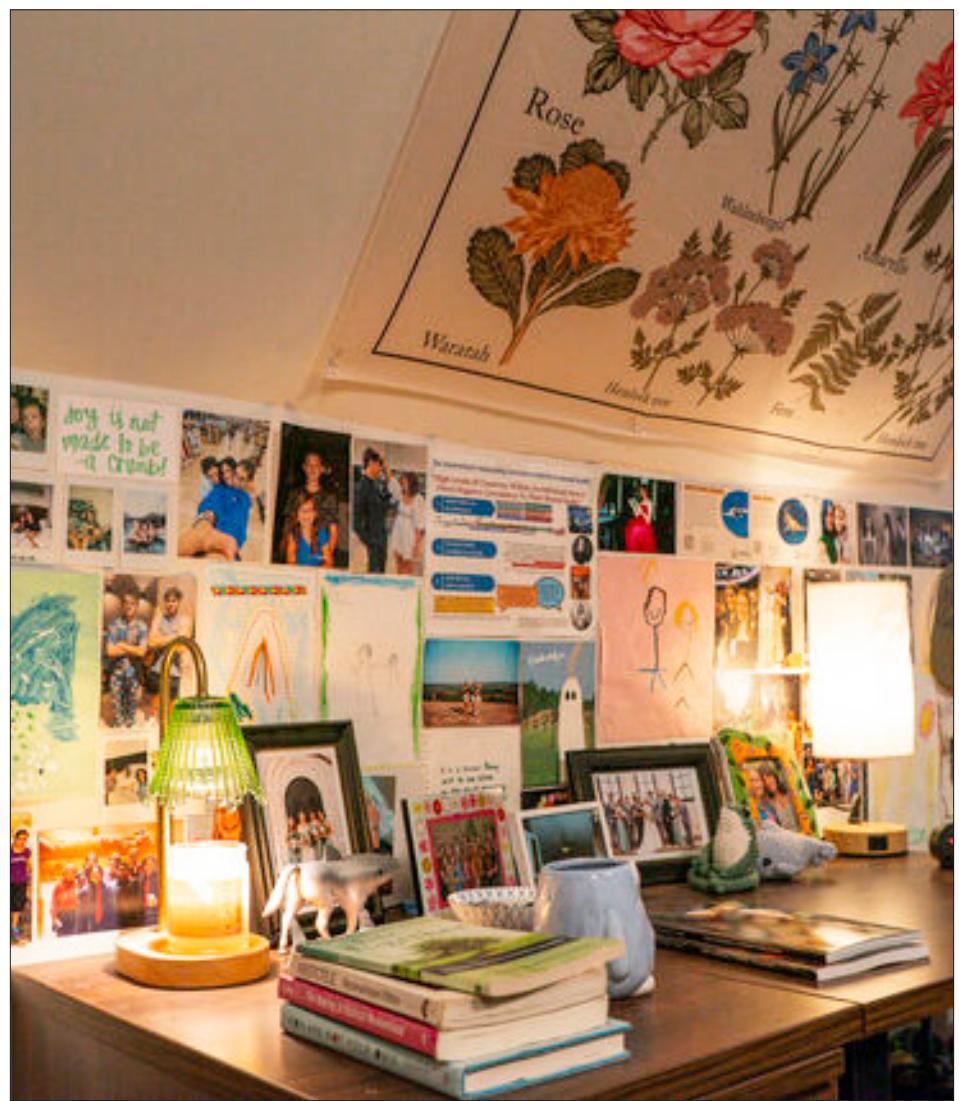
While many people go with a mosaic-style window film, it's completely possible to find fun floral designs that create kaleidoscope reflections in the light.

## PERSONALIZED DOORKNOBS OR LIGHT SWITCHES

If your living space has doorknobs or light switches that aren't your style, switch them out. The process is simple, only requiring a screwdriver at most. There are thousands of options on websites like Etsy that can get as custom and unique as you desire. Just don't forget to replace them back to the original when you move out.

When decorating a rental or dorm, the key is focusing on temporary, reversible changes that make a big visual impact. Items like rugs, throw pillows, lamps and wall-safe hooks can further elevate your space without risking permanent damage. Mixing textures and colors can help even the most generic room feel intentional

and cozy. Above all, remember that your space should reflect you — your interests, your style and your routines. With a little creativity and planning, you can turn any dorm or apartment into a space you're proud to call home, all while keeping your landlord and your wallet happy.



Jake Schroeder | Photographer

**STYLED UP** Personalization is a great way to make your living space unique; the key is focusing on temporary, reversible changes.

# Housing is temporary; your habits are not

**HANNAH WEBB**  
Opinion Editor

Student housing is often framed as a logistical concern: square footage, location, air conditioning that may or may not work when it matters most. Conversations orbit move-in dates, move-out deadlines, room checks and key returns. We talk about housing as something we endure before graduating into “real life,” a waiting room rather than a formative space. But that framing misses something essential. Housing is temporary, but the habits you build inside it are not.

Dorm rooms and shared apartments function like small laboratories of adulthood. They are imperfect, crowded and often uncomfortable by design. You learn quickly that no one is coming to enforce bedtime or remind you to eat vegetables. In that absence, habits quietly step in to fill the void. How you wake up, how you respond to mess, how you treat shared space, how you handle tension — these patterns begin to solidify long before you realize they are becoming yours.

There is a strange intimacy to shared living. You see people at their least curated, half-asleep, stressed, sick, celebratory, careless. In these moments, you absorb lessons about what you tolerate and what you correct. Do you let resentment simmer until it spills over, or do you address discomfort early? Do you retreat inward when conflict arises, or do you practice the awkward art of conversation? Housing teaches you whether you default to avoidance or accountability, and those defaults rarely stay confined to a dorm room.

The habits we build over time are particularly telling. In housing, time feels elastic — nights stretch late, mornings arrive early and responsibilities blur together. Some students learn how to structure their days despite the chaos, creating rhythms that protect sleep, work, fun and rest. Others learn how easy it is to live reactively, letting noise, stress and social pressure dictate their schedules. Both are habits, one simply costs more in the long run.

Shared spaces also expose our relationship

with responsibility. When a kitchen belongs to everyone, it is easy to believe it belongs to no one. Dishes pile up, trash waits an extra day. The question quietly emerges: will you clean because it needs to be done, or only when someone asks? That distinction, between internal and external motivation, matters far beyond housing. It shapes how people approach jobs, relationships and communities. Habits of care do not begin when space becomes permanent; they begin when it becomes shared.

There is also the habit of presence. Housing places you in proximity to others without guaranteeing connection. Some students learn to fill every silence with noise, afraid to sit alone in a crowded place. Others learn how to be present — to knock on a door, to sit in the common room, to notice when someone has withdrawn. These are not grand gestures; they are small, repeated decisions that form the muscle memory of community. Long after you leave student housing, that muscle remains.

Of course, not all habits formed in housing are healthy. Some students learn how to survive rather than how to live — how to shut down, to disappear, to minimize their needs. Housing can be isolating, especially for those who never feel fully at home in assigned spaces. But even those coping mechanisms are habits, and recognizing them is the first step toward unlearning them. Temporary spaces have a way of revealing long-term patterns, whether we want them to or not.

We often comfort ourselves by saying, “It’s just for now.” Just this year. Just this roommate. Just this room. And while that is true in a literal sense, it can become an excuse to disengage. If the place you’re living is merely something to get through, then it does not feel worth investing in how we show up within it. But the irony is that the investment pays dividends elsewhere. The habits you build in temporary places are often the ones you carry into permanent ones.

One day, the key will be returned, the room emptied, the door closed for the last time. But the habits — how you care for space, how you manage conflict, how you live with others — will walk out with you. Housing ends. Formation does not. And that may be the most important thing we fail to acknowledge when we talk about where us students live.



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# Seniors offer off-campus living advice

AARAH SARDESAI

Staff Writer

For many Baylor students, moving off campus isn't just a decision; it's a milestone in their college career.

From finding the right roommates to looking for a neighborhood that feels just like home, some students who signed their first lease walk away happy, prepared and satisfied that they're taking their first step to an independent life.

However, this doesn't show the full picture behind what goes on in the minds of students that are preparing to look for a house off campus for the first time. For many students, the lease is the first official contract that they've ever signed. Even initiating the housing process can leave people feeling stressed.

The Woodlands freshman Jaxon Luddeke hasn't signed his lease yet, but is already thinking of what matters most. Luddeke said he was trying to learn from upperclassmen, his parents and other mentors before making any housing decisions.

"I want to understand what to look for during tours," Luddeke said. "Things like safety, maintenance and what utilities actually cost each month. I don't want to be surprised later."

Luddeke is also thinking about the timeline and process of signing a lease and what others' experiences have been.

"Everybody says to start early, but I don't want to rush into something just because other people are signing," Luddeke said. "I want to feel confident about it."

Keller senior Rebekah



Jake Schroeder | Photographer

**LEVEL UP YOUR LEASE** Baylor's freshmen could learn a thing or two from upperclassmen who have learned through trial and error that students should start looking for places to live early on.

Dunning remembers the moment when she and her roommate decided it was the right time to move off campus. Dunning spoke with friends who already lived off campus to hear about their experiences.

"I also looked across social media to get honest reviews on how the places were," Dunning said. "But there were two main non-negotiables: it must be walkable to campus, and it must be safe."

Dunning also said the lease process was surprisingly clear. She said the leasing manager walked her through every section, and while she had considered practical things like safety and walking distance from campus, she was caught off guard when she had to consider the benefit of various utilities.

"It was pretty upfront," Dunning said. "Everything matched what was advertised, which made us feel good about signing."

Katy senior Zahabia Kanchwala also lives off campus, and her experience came with a few surprises. When she moved off campus for the first time, her electric and water bills came as a shock to her.

"I thought that my electricity and water bill would be around \$40 or \$50 considering it's split between me and my roommates," Kanchwala said. "But this month it almost went to \$100. No one warned me that it

could get this high."

Kanchwala also described how her complex went through a stretch of security challenges that made things inconvenient.

"Unlike on campus where packages go straight to your mailbox, here there's a whole system you have to go through just to pick something up," Kanchwala said. "They were also renovating the security system and replacing all the community gates, and at one point the gates were down for

almost a month."

Despite these issues, Kanchwala still described her overall experience as positive. Maintenance was quick, the environment felt safe once renovations were complete and she loved having her own space.

"Even with the extra costs and the security hiccups, I don't regret living here," Kanchwala said. "I genuinely love living here, and it is a good place for me."

Despite shocks and issues, the seniors agreed that their roommates were some of the best parts of living off campus.

"It really reminded me of my family experience, and it gave me a chance to build a community and expand my community by hosting events and meeting new people," Dunning said.

Both seniors also agreed that students should start looking for places to live early on. Kanchwala started nearly a year before she planned to move in, and Dunning started looking for potential places early as well.

"I honestly felt like I had just settled into my dorm, and I was already looking for another place to live," Dunning said. "But it also gave me a couple of weeks to figure that stuff out and find a good place to live."

While moving into off-campus housing was a big change for both of them, Kanchwala and Dunning said it helped them build new friendships and learn how to be adults.

"Living off campus teaches you a lot," Kanchwala said. "Embrace it, because it is one of the best experiences that you can get from independence."



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Two young men are shown in a stadium. The man on the left is wearing a white polo shirt and headphones, looking towards the right. The man on the right is wearing a blue polo shirt and headphones, looking down at a laptop on a table. The background shows stadium seating and a green field.

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# Sophomore blues got you down?

*Baylor launches Year2@Baylor to combat second-year slump*

**ZAINAB RICHARDSON**  
Staff Writer

Students often refer to the “sophomore slump” as a feeling of stagnancy and uncertainty in your second year of college, as the pomp and excitement of freshman year dies down. Baylor’s recently launched Year2 at Baylor program hopes to fix that.

This new program was designed to provide more support systems for sophomores, helping them find their belonging while also exploring their purpose, said Senior Coordinator for Student Life Initiatives Matt Hintzoglu.

“So that kind of inspired us to really want to come alongside students and help them know that we still care about them, even if they’re not necessarily ... new,” Hintzoglu said. “But we still want to be a part of their journey and to help them succeed here at Baylor and beyond Baylor as well.”

One of the main events in this program is “Rooted,” a two-day retreat that will involve speakers and small groups getting together.

Hintzoglu said another reason for the program is to boost retention rates. Freshmen have several staple events and experiences that help them feel at home. Sophomores don’t enjoy the same luxury.

“You think about things like ... running the Baylor Line and going to Line Camp, and these are kind of things that Baylor students just do because that’s part of being a Baylor Bear, and that’s part of the Baylor experience,” Hintzoglu said. “And so we’re hoping to provide accessible ways for all students to come alongside each other each year following that as well.”

This program is going to be an extension of that, but for juniors and seniors who just missed the mark, there are mixed reactions.

Fort Worth junior Genesis Hudspeth said she wishes she could have participated in the program herself. According to Hudspeth, sophomore year brings a lot of change, and



Sam Gassaway | Photo Editor

**RUN IT BACK** Baylor recently launched a program aimed to provide more support systems for students entering their sophomore year.

many students choose to change their entire course of study.

“A program that kind of helps kids like that would really be beneficial to sophomores,” Hudspeth said. “I feel like it could kind of eliminate that limbo panic state of, ‘What do I do now?’”

Others, like Nassau, Bahamas, senior Miracle Bain see the retreat slightly differently. After having spent a year in college, Bain said she wouldn’t be receptive to having people give her additional instructions.

“Having a bunch of adults kind of speak at me and telling me things that I should be

doing, or I shouldn’t be doing — I know a lot of students are not going to be receptive to that because it’s hard to relate to someone that doesn’t seem like they’re in the same life crisis,” Bain said.

But for transfer students who came in as sophomores, the program could be the thing that bridges the gap.

Houston senior Leylah Walker-Battle transferred to Baylor her sophomore year and said the sophomore retreat would have been exactly what she needed to acclimate.

“I kind of had to go through it the harder way,” Walker-Battle said. “I mean, making

friends for freshman year is hard, but making it as a transfer student is harder, especially when people have already established a relationship.”

Overall, the main hope of this program is to enrich students, and Hintzoglu said he hopes it can do just that.

“We’re hoping that as we continue to put stuff out for students, and specifically our sophomores, that they’ll continue to be curious about what Baylor has to offer them and continue learning how to maximize their time here,” Hintzoglu said.

# Drive-thru destination

## Roni's adds location in Waco



Alexandra Brewer | Arts & Life Writer

**SAY CHEESE** A Union Hall classic, Roni's Mac Bar has just opened their second location.

### ALEXANDRA BREWER

Arts & Life Writer

Roni's Mac Bar opened its second Waco location earlier this month, expanding beyond its store inside Union Hall with a stand-alone storefront designed to reach a wide variety of customers. The new location provides more space, a drive-thru and a restructured menu, offering a different experience than the original downtown spot.

While the Union Hall location has maintained a consistent menu for the past few years, the new spot allows the brand to showcase updated designs and test how a second location can perform in the same city. The second store is located at 2424 Creekview Drive and is open 11 a.m. - 10 p.m. during weekdays and 11 a.m. - 1 a.m. on weekends.

Roni's CEO Frank Senese said the idea for Roni's Mac Bar began after a conversation with a friend about a mac and cheese restaurant, and it quickly grew into a full business concept. He described the moment the idea clicked.

"A couple years ago, a buddy of mine was telling me about his friend that had a mac and cheese restaurant, and he actually meant they sold mac and cheese," Senese said. "But I was like, 'That's a cool idea, let's do a mac and cheese restaurant.' So it sparked an idea. My wife and I already had a business, but we wanted something a little bit bigger ... something fun, you know, familiar food, but with a twist."

Senese also said the new storefront allows the company to test expansion and showcase what a modern Roni's Mac Bar can look like.

"We wanted one, and also we wanted to be

guinea pigs for what a second location in the same city can do for our franchisees," Senese said.

A major difference at the new location is the drive-thru, which has brought in a new group of customers. Gracie Whitton, Roni's assistant manager and public relations intern, said it allows the restaurant to reach late-night crowds that might not visit Union Hall.

"Having our own store now, I think it's so special, especially having a drive-thru," Whitton said. "It allows us to reach people, especially late in the after hours."

She also mentioned how the team has adjusted to the larger space, managing tables, bathrooms and the increased customer flow.

"I love working at the new store," Whitton said. "I think having the open space is such a nice area to work in."

Other aspects of the new store, like pricing and menu structure, have caught customers' attention as well. Senese said bowls are now cheaper than before, and the restructured menu allows people to order more for less. He described the location as a space for families and Baylor students.

Carlos Gutierrez, a customer who attended the grand opening, said the standalone location offers a different experience than Union Hall.

"It has a cool family vibe," Gutierrez said.

Early responses have been encouraging, and Senese said there are plans for more grand openings nationwide this year. Between the drive-thru, open layout and family-friendly atmosphere, the new storefront gives Waco a fresh spot for customizable mac and cheese — one that can satisfy both students looking for a quick meal and families wanting a place to hang out.

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Sam Gassaway | Photo Editor

**CASA DE CURATION** Senior lecturer Kevin Tankersly (left), his wife Abby Tankersly (right) and their cat Butters surrounded by their vast collection of books and artifacts.

# Color, cats, creativity

## *A look inside this professor's unique home*

**KALENA REYNOLDS**

Arts & Life Editor

Inside the doors of Kevin and Abby Tankersley's home exists the ultimate I Spy wonderland of color, cats and creativity. Kevin, a senior lecturer in the Journalism, Public Relations and New Media department, and his wife have spent the last 20 years intentionally collecting pieces that represent their love for local artists and design.

When you walk through the doors, immediately to the left are floor-to-ceiling bookshelves spanning the entire wall, installed

by the Tankersleys after they purchased the house. The shelves are filled with a large collection of books spanning from Dr. Seuss to historical books to artist biographies.

"When we moved here 20 years ago, it was just a wall," Kevin Tankersley said. "So that was the first thing we did to the house. We had the bookcases installed because we had boxes of books in storage."

Also on the shelves, Kevin had shoes in a shadow box from his great-uncle, Clyde, who served in Casablanca, Morocco during World War II.

"He brought those back, and he and his

wife, Esther, who never had kids, so they kind of adopted my parents and, in turn, us," Kevin said. "So they had those put in that shadow box."

The books are sandwiched in between family heirlooms, memorabilia from Kevin and Abby's careers, an Elvis shrine and a Prince shrine. To the left of the bookshelf is a record player sitting on a small credenza filled with vinyls from artists including Willie Nelson, Tammy Wynette and Tyler The Creator, which Abby said was part of her son's music collection.

Abby, who went to culinary school and runs a food column with Kevin, has a collection of

cookbooks in a bookcase in the living room as well. The books prop up humbly in the corner compared to the all-encompassing bookshelf on the other side of the room. However, this doesn't mean it doesn't complement the variety of art on the walls.

As for the art pieces, Kevin and Abby have collected a vast array of colorful works by Texas artists Bruce Webb and Leon Collins. "Waco Cat," an abstract painting by Bruce Webb of a yellow figure with a large cowboy hat, mustache and red bow tie, hangs along the bedroom hallway of the house. The painting is also tattooed on Kevin's arm.

While most of the pieces around Kevin and Abby's house were found at estate sales, flea markets and art galleries, they also have added musical instruments to their interior design lineup due to their son, Brazos', love of music.

"We have so many musical instruments, and he comes home with pieces of things that he finds ... so we have lots of partial musical instruments, and he's got one drum set in his room, and he's got one in the storage building," Kevin and Abby said.

As for the more personal installations, the Tankersleys have two cats — Butters the Cat and Olive — who coexist carefully with every piece in the house.

Moving into more eclectic pieces, the Tankersleys have multiple heads and faces made from a variety of materials, from ceramics to clay, that add a dimensional aspect to the living room. While the pieces are all connected by the use of bright colors, a large piece sits above a vintage piano in the corner, titled "Cotton Picking Blues," by

Leon Collins, which includes a black background with large strokes of color on it.

"The guy who did that piece ... 'Cotton Picking Blues' up there on the wall, he lived in Navasota, which is on the other side of Bryan," Kevin said. "So I went to Navasota, and Abby told me, 'Don't buy anything and don't buy any paintings,' so I came back with three."

The inside of the house continuously resonated with intentionality and creativity; however, the outside was no different, with a large piece of colorful graffiti plywood among the main staples on the front porch.

"We kind of got some looks from neighbors when we first put it up because it was kind of graffiti-like," Kevin said. "But it was beside a dumpster at Baylor."

While the Tankersleys appreciate art of any kind, they emphasized the importance of supporting local artists.

"Buy the things that you love, that speak to you somehow, or something on a trip or that has some kind of memory," Kevin and Abby said. "Don't buy mass-produced art ... and don't be afraid to buy the weird stuff."

**KEVIN & ABBY  
TANKERSLEY**



Sam Gassaway | Photo Editor

**ONE FOR THE BOOKS** A floor-to-ceiling bookshelf is filled with books, family heirlooms and memorabilia from Kevin and Abby Tankersley's careers.

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Photo courtesy of Caroline Gibbs

**SISTERS** Winston Salem, N.C., junior Rachel Petusky, Saint Louis, Mo., junior Caroline Gibbs and Birmingham, Ala., senior Sara Kate Lynch pose in front of their passed-down Theta house.

# Greek life passes down more than letters

**ABBY RATHBURN**  
Staff Writer

Students have begun the long, tiresome process of apartment and house hunting for the 2026-2027 academic year. Through this, a long-standing Greek tradition continues: passing down off-campus houses through generations of sisters.

Girls of all sororities are flocking to these houses, as they continue to grow in their friendships with one another. San Antonio junior Caroline Gibbs is a member of Kappa Alpha Theta, and lives in a house passed down from her sorority sisters.

Gibbs said living in her current house was cheaper than her apartment the previous year. Though it was built in 1905, Gibbs found it to be a fun option that tied her to her sisters.

“It’s a very small house, and doesn’t have amenities, like treadmills and stuff in a gym,” Gibbs said. “The price is definitely cheaper, and I think it’s cheaper than some newer houses

because the house is pretty old.”

But not all generationally passed down houses are a cheaper option. Costs vary based on location, upkeep and chapter expectations.

Hilton Head Island, S.C., sophomore Maya Norcross said the house she plans to live in next year is roughly the same price. As a member of Alpha Chi Omega, she was offered the chance to live with her friends, as well, at a competitive level with the market. Ultimately, the price is determined based on the condition of each individual house, rather than its intended use.

“It just depends on the house that it is that you’re getting,” Norcross said. “My house is still leased through Brothers Management, so it’s still the same pricing. Just because it is a passed down house doesn’t mean that it’s more expensive or less expensive than any other houses in the Baylor bubble.”

Cost, however, is only part of the equation. In Greek life, inherited student housing is often secured through back channels and connections rather than formal listings.



For these women, choosing to live in a passed-down house was far less about the price and more about the people surrounding them.

Gibbs said she found out about the house through a GroupMe message. Her roommate pounced on the opportunity to live with fellow Thetas, and the rest is history.

“They said, ‘We’re passing down a house; we’d love three Thetas to move into it so we can keep it a Theta house,’ Gibbs said. “We got first dibs because we’re in the sorority family.”

As soon as she moved in, Gibbs began noticing fun traditions that made her house unique compared to standard housing options, including Theta-specific trinkets, such as old composites and bid day memorabilia.

For these women, choosing to live in a passed-down house was far less about the price and more about the people surrounding them. Whether it’s a club, residence hall or intramural, every student is searching for a new community and a place to be themselves. According to the National Panhellenic Conference, this is what Greek life seeks to do.

“Finding a community at college matters a lot — perhaps more than ever,” the website reads. “Sorority can provide that sense of belonging in a new place. It’s about laughter, lifelong friendships, and a family that has your back no matter what.”

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that helped them better assimilate to life at Baylor, including Global Bears Week, the First Year International Program, International Snack Hour and the International Thanksgiving Dinner.

Katie Klingstedt, coordinator of International Programs for the International Student and Scholar Services Team in the Center for Global Engagement, said these events help build camaraderie among international students.

Klingstedt said she strives to foster stronger community bonds between all students, regardless of where they come from, through three key elements: chances to meet Baylor students from around the world, celebration of international culture and the assurance that students feel integrated into Baylor.

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nationally in the past few years. For first-year students that are living in on-campus residence halls, there are a multitude of resources available to make sure they are adjusting well to a new place. However, roommate disagreements are not always confined to the four walls of a freshman dorm room. With 3,552 freshmen enrolled in Fall 2025, that leaves 16,306 sophomores, juniors, seniors and graduate students who have previously or currently live with roommates.

Jason Cook, vice president for marketing and communications, said that he wants Baylor students to realize the “intentionality” that faculty puts into making the Baylor experience a good one. This student experience includes residence halls and student living.

“It’s an institution-wide effort and something we take great pride in,” Cook said.

Despite only working with a small section of freshmen at Heritage House, Lopez still believes that dealing with roommate disagreements always boils

“We say that all our events are open to all students,” Klingstedt said. “They are often targeted towards certain groups, but they’re open to all. We would love to see more participation from American students who might just be far from home or want to get to know other cultures.”

Although Baylor’s CGE prioritizes international students and their acclimation, Gregory said everyone feels homesick at some point during the semester.

“Anyone can connect with our office and utilize our office, whether that be through being a Global Ambassador or as an American student working with other international students and finding a sense of community there,” Gregory said.

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