How do I decorate my dorm on a budget and how do I slay?

The unsponsored keys to self and outside beautification presented by The Wildcat Word: a TNH advice column for students, by students

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We hope you all had a restful spring break and an easy first two weeks back. Being back definitely has its (pretty major) downsides, BUT it does mean that we get to put out ANOTHER installation of The Wildcat Word: The New Hampshire’s unprofessional student-run advice column (cue the cheering crowds)!

Remember, you can submit questions at any time using the link here or using the QR codes found around campus. We try to answer four questions every week, so keep ’em coming!

Q: “Do you have any cheap recommendations for how to decorate [my dorm]?”

In my opinion, the key to being happy on campus is having a nice space to go back to at the end of the day. It shouldn’t be too expensive to personalize your space if you know where to look and aren’t afraid to get crafty.

The quickest way to spruce up your room is to make sure your walls aren’t bare. The white-painted stone starts to look like a prison cell real quick. My personal favorite way to stop that from happening is to create a photo collage. Using the CVS or Walmart app, you can easily export photos to get printed. CVS charges $0.42 for one 4×6 print, but there are always sales going on so you can end up forming a collection for pretty cheap. Not only does a photo collage look super cute, but it’s also an easy way to fill your space with things and people that you love.

Another essential to having a cute and comfy room is a carpet. The cold tile floors can really be a drag, but you can quickly change that with a cheap rug from Target, Walmart or even TJ Maxx.

A great place to look for knick-knacks and other cute room decor is Five Below. Normally, there is a whole section dedicated to trendy dorm-targeted items that can really pull your space together. A quick bus trip to Five Below will have your room looking good in no time.
If you're looking to get crafty and want to take advantage of your student activity fee, I find that attending UNH’s make-and-take events always leaves me with something cute and personal to decorate my room with, so definitely look out for their next succulent-making night.

Transforming your sad dorm room into a fun and personal space doesn't have to be an impossible task. Keeping these tips in mind while shopping around for your room, you should be confident in your ability to frugally create a space that will make you happy.

-Leah

Q: “What are the different religious clubs on campus?”

If you are Christian, Catholic, Muslim or Jewish, you are in luck here at UNH because there is a religious club for you!

Cru UNH is a Christian organization that “exists to help students encounter Christ, grow in community, and experience the gospel.” With 22 members, Cru holds meetings at 7 p.m. on Tuesdays in Memorial Union Building (MUB) room 334/336 along with fun casual meetings sprinkled throughout each semester.

If you are Catholic, the Catholic Student Organization seeks “to empower each student with the resources and the support they need to deepen their faith, form community and participate in service.” With 11 members, this organization works with the Saint Thomas More Parish to foster a Catholic community. They meet Wednesdays at 7 p.m. in MUB room 162.

The Muslim Students Association “is a group that seeks to represent the Muslim community within the University of New Hampshire.” With 26 members, this is the largest religious association on campus and is the perfect place for those interested in learning about and practicing Islam. They hold Jummah prayer time at 1 p.m. every Friday in MUB room 203.

And lastly for those of you who are Jewish, Chabad at UNH “is a place where every Jewish student/person is welcome – regardless of affiliation or level of knowledge” where “the sole purpose is to create a warm welcoming environment to explore and experience [Jewish] heritage in a non-judgmental and inviting atmosphere.” Chabad is not a UNH student organization, instead, it is a campus branch of the larger association, which means that you can remain a member after graduating! Visit their website linked above for more info on how to join!

If you don't fall under any of these categories, don't worry, there are options for you. Located in MUB room 203 is an interfaith prayer and meditation room, which is a safe and quiet place to practice/pray. If you want to find a greater community for your faith, we recommend starting your own student org! UNH makes it easy, especially if you know other people interested in starting it with you.

-Leah

Q: “Did you slay today?”

*not sponsored*

I like to think that I slay every day, and that comes from within. However, there are some products I use and music I listen to that help in slaying.

Nice cosmetic products are the foundation of my slay day helping me to look good and feel good mentally, physically and emotionally. I used to be a complete drugstore makeup girly, but I have recently been upgrading my collection to more long-lasting and nonirritating products for my sensitive skin.

My fave cosmetic products (physical slay):
My makeup style is natural with a subtle smoky eye. For every day, I use the Flush Balm Cream Blush in the shade Stockholm by Merit. This blush has the smoothest application I have ever experienced in a cream blush and is worth trying to get a subtle tinted look that stays throughout the day. I apply the blush straight from the container and then blend it out with my fingers. Merit also has its own lip oils that my friends have raved about, so I look forward to checking those out as well. Here is the Merit lip oil in my friend's favorite shade Sangria.

My eyes have been on a complicated journey from which I am just recovering. From late 2019 to the early 2020s, I fell victim to the large liquid liner blowout wing that did not fit my hooded eye shape. Leah and my mother have helped me see the light by recommending I try an eyeshadow pencil in a more brown shade. I have started using the Bobby Brown Long Wear Eyeshadow Stick in the shade Bark. I apply this a tad under the waterline of my bottom and upper lid and then blend it out with a mini sponge stick for a smoky look. The shadow stick lasts throughout the day and makes my eyes pop without excess dramatics. There are a lot of different colors available in the shadow sticks with finishes from matte to shimmery. To finish off my eyes I use the Rare Beauty Perfect Strokes Universal Volumizing Mascara. Mascara and I have a love-hate relationship as I have naturally curly lashes that allow for it to go on easily, but super annoying atopic dermatitis-prone eyes that make it near impossible to find one that stays in my collection for long. The Rare Beauty mascara has never irritated my eyes and comes off easily with Vaseline, or your personal choice of makeup remover.

I don't normally wear foundation daily as I don't like covering my freckles too much. With that said, I am an undereye concealer abuser to combat the eyebags I acquire from sleep deprivation. The Kosas Revealer Super Creamy + Brightening Concealer is my best friend (next to Leah). The concealer has caffeine and hyaluronic acid which not only covers dark circles but helps your under eyes to naturally look awake. For a more complete look, I use the Rare Beauty Tinted Moisturizer. The moisturizer doesn't cover freckles and has SPF in it which is a bonus because sun damage isn't slay.

Girl anthems (emotional slay):

I am a big believer that music increases mood, and the best way to increase my mood is a girl anthem. The best artist for a girl anthem is Chappell Roan. She is a queer pop artist and drag queen who has recently released her debut album “The Rise and Fall of a Midwest Princess,” available on Spotify, Apple Music and Youtube Music. Her vibes are campy, sparkly, dancey and disco. Her songs “Femininomenon,” “Super Graphic Ultra Modern Girl” and “Guilty Pleasure” are great for highway driving and late-night dancing. Listening to her on the way to class transports me into an early 2000s movie montage where I am the hyper-feminine protagonist that just told off the hyper-mega bummer male character.

P.S. I just saw Chappell open for Olivia Rodrigo’s “Guts” Tour on Monday, April 1 at TD Garden, and it was absolutely life-changing.

Yoga + crossing off that to-do list (mental slay):

The final component of a universal slay is mental health. My mental health can get bogged down by the many things related to work, school and extracurriculars, due at the end of the day, week, month, hour, etc. In accomplishing daily tasks it is helpful for me to reset my brain. If my schedule allows, Leah and I like to take advantage of free yoga classes at the Hamel Recreation Center (HRC). The HRC has many different fitness classes available to students at any level at almost any time of day. The classes are about an hour long and are led by a professional. The focus and attention yoga promotes becoming more in touch with oneself and readying for the workload.

While the yoga classes are helpful, it is not realistic for a college student to balance work and school to have time to attend regularly. In addition to yoga, list-making fills in the organizational gaps in my brain. Making an agenda of what I have to get done and when it is due reminds me that everything is not just one big deadline blob. The feeling of crossing something off a list is unmatched. Bottom line: be sure to make time to do activities you enjoy whether that's yoga, art, shopping (another one of my vices), etc.

Conclusion

I did slay today, but the truth is, it is hard to feel that one accomplishes a universal slay every day with the many tasks and obligations in the balance. My one task for you is to find the slay every day.

-Sophia