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Dental school begins in temporary digs

By K.j. Williams
The Daily Reflector
Tuesday, August 23, 2011

Inside a single auditorium classroom and one laboratory, the first class of 52 students at East Carolina University's School of Dental Medicine will take all their classes in temporary digs for their first year.

By their second year, they'll be exchanging that temporary space at the Brody School of Medicine for their own building: the four-story, 184,000-square-foot Ross Hall, under construction with an estimated $50 million price tag.

The sparseness of the space at the fledgling school and the resignation of its first dean last week following a state audit didn't dampen the students' excitement on Monday, the first day of school.

They were just glad to be starting this new stage of their lives.

Reeva Sawhney, 22, summed up her first morning: “It's just been overall a great day so far, and I'm looking forward to the next four years.”

Sawhney said as a child she didn't dread visiting the dentist. She actually enjoyed going.

“I was a geek,” she said. “I wanted my cherry-cheesecake (flavored) fluoride.”

She had a few cavities but doesn't recall any discomfort.

“I never felt any pain — laughing gas,” she said.

In high school, she “shadowed” her dentist, observing him at work. “I absolutely fell in love with the profession,” Sawhney said.
Student Alex Crisp, 23, said a mission trip to the Dominican Republic convinced him of the good that could be done through dentistry.

In particular, he saw a woman in extreme pain from an abscessed tooth find relief that didn't need a common language to be communicated.

“It's a lot of gratification just being able to reach out,” he said. “You can make a positive impact on someone's life.”

His goal to work in rural areas with the underserved meshes with the mission of the new school.

In the laboratory, students will train on mannequin heads attached to simulators that mimic working on live patients.

As part of its $83 million in funding from the N.C. Legislature, money has been earmarked for up to 10 community service learning centers. Students in their fourth and final year will provide low-cost care to patients under faculty supervision at these centers.

Six sites have been announced. The new dental school has the benefit of starting out with the latest in technology, said Todd Watkins, assistant dean for dental education and informatics (technology).

“We weren't restricted by a set of restrictions that kept you from doing cool stuff,” he said.

Students will use iPads for most of their reading and use laptops to do research with e-books. The iPhones they use are equipped with custom applications.

While students will observe the dissection of cadavers, they'll do more than that. “They have a virtual cadaver that they can manipulate in virtual space,” Watkins said.

Dr. Waldemar De Rijk, a dentist who's been teaching for more than 20 years, said it's exciting to approach learning using these high-tech methods.

Student Jonathan Weisner, 23, said it's that approach that appeals to him. “Technology has changed so it's important to start kind of on the cutting edge of technology.”

The students come from a variety of backgrounds with various undergraduate degrees, so they're starting out with the basics.

During an afternoon class, they were taught about biological macromolecules by Don Ferguson, who has a doctorate degree.

A correct answer from a student was met with instant gratification. “Do you want a Werther's Original or a Dove dark chocolate?” Ferguson asked before tossing a candy to the student. “So, that's the deal. Answer a question. Get a treat.”

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**Editorial: ECU, city continue relationship**

Tuesday, August 23, 2011

The start of the fall semester at East Carolina University comes only days after North Carolina's unemployment rate for July topped 10 percent. Students return to classes today at a time of global economic turmoil and mere weeks after escalating rhetoric in the nation's capital brought the United States to the brink of defaulting on its obligations around the world.

The young men and women pursuing degrees at East Carolina will one day serve as the leadership, on whose shoulders the problems of the future will rest. The community is fortunate to play host to them, working as partners with the university to provide for them a nurturing environment conducive to the important work they do in preparation for the challenges of the future.

“Tomorrow Starts Here” reads one of the most recent marketing slogans used by the school, but it is a vision reflecting an astute perspective. Each year, East Carolina welcomes thousands of teenagers as they begin their college careers. Young and impressionable, they stand ready to change the world, applying their intellectual talent to unlock secrets and solve the problems of the day. In a very real sense, tomorrow does start here in Greenville at East Carolina.

Of course, the university sits in the heart of a growing and dynamic city, the most influential municipality in eastern North Carolina. It struggles with the impact of an unyielding population boom and the demands of an evolving and increasingly global economy. Yet, it has no more important resource than East Carolina, and it devotes considerable efforts as a partner to the university, working to solve common problems and address areas of shared interest.
That relationship serves both well, and has for more than a century. But it requires concessions from both parties. Year-round residents must be tolerant of the students and the particular quirks they bring to the community. They must accept the traffic and the congestion, for instance, and the issues that may result from large university events. And students, for their part, are expected to recognize their place in a community, to be accommodating to their neighbors as well.

By balancing those interests, both sides achieve their desired ends. Residents reap the significant windfall of having a university as the engine that runs the city, and students make this an energetic community that provides for them as they prepare to tackle the world's problems. That's best for all, and an ample reason for pride.
I am sure much thought, time and consideration has gone into the rebranding of Pitt County Memorial Hospital and UHS. The name change of Craven Regional Medical Center to Carolina East has certainly brought the need to address this issue to the forefront.

East Carolina University's Division of Health Sciences, the East Carolina Heart Institute, PCMH along with the other UHS care centers have been and continue to be viewed as the pinnacle for state-of-the-art health care in the eastern North Carolina regions they serve.

For too many years the citizens of this region were required to travel to other areas for major health problems to be addressed. The citizens fought and continue this fight even today to recruit and support initiatives for better and state-of-the-art health care for this region. It is important to recognize the change of PCMH from a county entity to a private not for profit was to facilitate health care and business initiatives.

Identifying PCMH and UHS in a generic manner may very well cause further confusion in the UHS service region as well as disharmony with the citizens of this area. While it is true that the UHS board may rebrand PCMH and UHS, I would hope that reconsideration would be given to this matter. I do not think monuments and videos speak as strongly and meaningfully to the community and region as the name of a facility, institution or building.

A prime example of this was the renaming of the ECU School of Medicine to the Brody School of Medicine several years ago. This designation honors and continues to recognize the Brody family for its considerable contributions and support to ECU while readily identifying the school of medicine.

A suggestion would be to identify the UHS facilities, affiliates and partners based on their locations. What would be wrong with PCMH being branded as UHS Medical Center-Pitt County?

JANNETTE HUMBLES HARRIS
Fountain
Editorial: The People’s Forum

And teaching, too

Dr. James R. Hupp, founding dean of the new East Carolina University dental school, steps down because an audit report accuses him of unacceptable violations related to outside compensation and not following the rules of the university system. And, according to ECU Chancellor Steve Ballard, without approval as required by UNC system rules, Hupp taught part time at UNC-Chapel Hill, failed to report outside income and took unnecessary trips at taxpayer expense while, on some of those trips, he accepted compensation in the form of free lodging from university vendors.

However, Hupp, who apparently admits his guilt, gets to retain a faculty position at ECU.

On the other hand, former UNC football coach Butch Davis, never found guilty of breaking any rule, gets fired completely from the university. Obviously, with Hupp, this is a case of the faculty tail wagging the academic dog. Hupp broke the rules of employment and should be completely removed from working at any UNC campus and in any capacity for the State of North Carolina.

Jim Pomeranz
Cary
ECU tickets at 50,000
BY RON GREEN JR. - Staff Writer

CHARLOTTE--Approximately 50,000 tickets have been sold for the Sept. 3 college football meeting between 12th-ranked South Carolina and East Carolina at Bank of America Stadium and organizers do not anticipate a sellout.

It will be the first of two scheduled games between the programs in Charlotte with a second set for 2014.

Ken Haines, president and CEO of Raycom Sports which is managing the game, said South Carolina has sold approximately 5,000 more tickets than East Carolina. He said sales are in line with expectations since the game is not in the season-ticket package at either school.

"We're still expecting between 50,000 and 60,000 fans though these early-season, first-games often have late ticket sales," Haines said. "With South Carolina being ranked 12th in the preseason poll, that's good but that's where we are with tickets."

All tickets cost $60 regardless of their location in the stadium. Tickets were recently made available through Ticketmaster.
Matthew McClure, left, helps brother Aaron move his stuff into Spruce Hall, UNCC's newest dormitory. Some fear significant state budget cuts to university budgets could lead to a "brain drain" among faculty. PHOTOS BY T. Ortega Gaines - ogaines@charlotteobserver.com

UNCC students feel the deep cuts

By David Perlmutt

After dramatic cuts in state funding over the past three years, UNC Charlotte's roughly 25,000 students will find a leaner university with fewer faculty and significantly larger classes as they start a new semester today.

The cut this year, $33.5 million, or 16.2 percent, means 295 lost jobs at UNCC (including 171 faculty positions). Only two other schools in the UNC system - UNC Chapel Hill and Western Carolina University - face a larger percentage of cuts.

Overall, the system's loss is $414 million.

"That has a huge impact on everything we do," said Beth Hardin, UNCC's vice chancellor for business affairs. "We just don't have enough people to teach."

Fewer professors means fewer course offerings and bulging classes, which also means some students may have to go a semester or two longer to get their degrees, UNCC officials say.
Larger classes mean the university will have to rearrange spaces to seat all those students. The university, Hardin said, has received no state money to build new classrooms.

Adding to the stress, faculty and staff have worked without pay raises in four years.

That could lead to "brain drain," as other institutions, particularly private schools with larger endowments, seek to hire away the best and brightest with enticements such as higher salaries and better resources to conduct research.

A pool of state money used to retain faculty has dried up, Chancellor Phil Dubois said.

"The challenge for the future ... is to hold on to as many of our talented people as we can," he said. "We face a host of constraints placed upon us by our elected officials in terms of responding to threatened departures, including a prohibition on the use of state funds."

In recent years, the university has worked on building its brand as the UNC system's lone urban research university.

To do that requires Ph.D. students.

The doctoral programs are suffering from a lack of money, UNCC officials say.

For instance, the political science department drew 15 Ph.D. students last year. This year, it's enrolling only three.

"Funding has been eviscerated," said David Swindell, assistant political science professor and director of public policy. "It's just impossible for us to manage to keep our numbers where they were."

Dale Halton, the Charlotte Pepsi-Cola executive and philanthropist who has given millions to UNCC over the years, is concerned about the toll that continued cuts could have on students, the institution and, consequently, the region.

"I regret that the state thinks it must cut so much out of education," said Halton, who recently finished a six-year term as trustee. "Anytime you cut funds for education, you hurt young people and their future, which is our future."

Making matters worse, need-based financial aid at UNCC was cut by up to $8.5 million in state and federal funds this year, after four years of increases.
"I've never seen financial aid cut so dramatically in 23 years of being involved with it," said student financial aid director Tony Carter. "Unfortunately it hits our neediest students. We have students who are receiving anywhere from $1,000 to $4,000 less than what they got last year."

As money cuts deepened, student body president Dave Craven said he's seen classes grow increasingly larger.

Craven, a senior from Asheboro, knows some students who may be forced to withdraw from school, or take out additional loans or a part-time job to help make up for the loss.

"That means they would increase their loan indebtedness or spend more time working and less time on academics," Craven said. "And if they're working, they may have to drop some classes - which could delay their degrees."

"Our chancellor and staff have done an outstanding job making things work within the cuts. And we've all worked together to make things run efficiently. But it's getting harder each year."

Marty Minchin contributed to this story.
The new UNC Charlotte Center City building at 320 E. 9th St. - with 25 classrooms, an 18,000-square-foot outdoor plaza and two auditoriums - is designed to draw people to lectures, art exhibits, movies and performances.

**UNCC hub opens**

By David Perlmutter

UNC Charlotte's new 12-story Center City Building officially opened in uptown's First Ward on Monday, giving the university its most visible presence off the main campus.

The $50.4 million high-rise - looking like a twisted Rubik's Cube - was designed to better engage the university with Charlotte and bridge the once-vast divide between the city and the sprawling campus just 11 miles north.

Built at East Ninth and Brevard streets, the new building is a hub for the university's MBA and other graduate programs. It also houses the College of Arts + Architecture's urban design master's program, and the College of Health & Human Services' health administration master's program.

It replaces the 15,000 square feet of uptown space the school used in the former Mint Museum of Craft + Design on North Tryon Street.

The 25 classrooms will be used for day and evening classes, Monday through Thursday. Each week, more than 1,700 students and 60 professors will use the building.

The building includes a gallery and two auditoriums, one with 300 seats and the other with 100.
Paul Reinmann of UNCW's Center for Marine Science and Dan Baden, executive director of the Marine Biotechnology Center of North Carolina, go over plans for the MARBIONC building at the Center for Marine Science off Masonboro Loop Road. Construction is set to begin within the next few weeks. Photo by Mike Spencer

**UNCW hopes MARBIONC will be the Research Triangle Park of the coast**

By Jason Gonzales
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Just off Masonboro Loop Road, tucked between a wooded sanctuary and the Intracoastal Waterway, sits a parcel of land expected to be developed into the gem of the research world in Wilmington.

In a way, it will be the city's Centennial Campus or Research Triangle Park, with a focus on accelerating innovations discovered from marine research done at the University of North Carolina Wilmington's Center for Marine Science.

The building will house the MARBIONC program, or the Marine Biotechnology Center of North Carolina – a fledgling marine science program with a focus on creating a marine biotechnology business economy.

The building provides a foundation to take the program from which it receives its name to new heights, UNCW officials said.
MARBIONC is a $30 million business venture from federal and state money, a first-of-its-kind step to build an almost nonexistent industry. It is a risk, UNCW officials acknowledge, but the building is also an investment in the future of the school's students and in North Carolina.

Once built, the facility will serve as an economic development center housing professors, international educational institutions, a few big companies and plenty of space to help start-ups grow, said Steve Fontana, the program's senior technology development officer. He said the setup is similar to a mall with a large company anchoring the building and medium-sized and smaller companies taking up the majority of the space.

“We are helping to create an environment for 10, 15 or 20 start-up companies where hopefully they move out from our facility and boost the economy of Southeastern North Carolina,” he said. “That's when you have true economic development.”

Like most incubators, qualified researchers and scientific tools will be at the fingertips of companies looking to commercialize the school's research. But no time limit will exist on how long companies can lease the university's space, Fontana said.

“We use the term accelerator,” he said. “If we can get a 10-year lease out of a company like GlaxoSmithKline, who says this is where we want to be and we are committed – and it fits the relationship we desire with our corporate partners – then we are exactly where we want to be.”

**Building from scratch**

So far, no leases have been signed at the building expected to break ground in less than a week, but there is interest, said Dan Baden, director of the Center for Marine Science at UNCW.

He said once the building is complete at the end of 2012, he believes the resources the center is amassing will ensure companies flock to the university's venture.

From the scientific tools to the qualified personnel, he said, it has taken 11 years of handpicking the best in the marine science world to make the program and building work.

“By the time we are done, this will not just be a building associated with the university, but will include a hand-selected group of people and tools that will interface to create (a hub) that will allow economic development in the region,” he said.
But that also means creating something out of nothing.
There isn't a large industry in marine biotechnology, and there are few viable commercial products to draw inspiration from.
Finding the next big thing, Baden said, takes a lot of preparation.
“It's a bit of luck, and a lot of hard work,” he said.
But Fontana said he believes the school is building the future of a marine biotechnology industry.
“I believe we will create a market for a product that people don't know they need yet,” he said. “We have an untapped resource in the ocean and over the years, marine biotech will be responsible for the future's innovations.”

**A public/private venture**
The business side of the building is made possible by UNCW's Campus for Research, Entrepreneurship, Service and Teaching project.
Under the CREST project, the university is able to designate parts of campus that can interact with business partners.
The opportunity to have a venture like this was made legal under the Millennial Campus Financing Act in 1999 by the General Assembly. Shortly after the act passed, Baden and Fontana said that's when the university's wheels started turning on how the campus could take advantage.
Charlie Maimone, vice chancellor for business affairs, said what CREST allows is a public-private venture meant to make the university money and further academics on campus. It also brings in partners to strengthen the local economy, he said.
“It enhances the region and builds opportunities,” he said.
With the money, the university is able to give back to students by creating real world training on the campus and further its academic mission, Maimone said.
He noted without the opportunity, the university would lose money when trying to protect assets, including when it patents research ideas. Seeking patents can be very costly, he said.
“This creates more than we can do by ourselves.”

**Drawing inspiration from others**
While what MARBIONC is trying to achieve is new, the model is not, Baden said.

The university is drawing heavily from the experience of others who have succeeded in creating viable companies and university opportunities. That includes both out-of-state and in-state campuses.

The University of Maryland's Technology Enterprise Center is one such success in biotechnology that UNCW is gleaning from, especially in how research gets back to students.

Dean Chang, director of Mtech's ventures, said the center has contributed $19 billion to the state's economy since its creation in 1983. Some of that money has gone back to the university.

With the money, he said, the university has created diverse learning opportunities for students to become the next entrepreneurs. That includes entrepreneurship classes connecting science and business. He said about 300 classes have been made possible by the school's incubation efforts.

“We have a robust set of learning opportunities that complement our research,” he said.

In-state, N.C. State University's Centennial Campus is the reason a facility such as MARBIONC can exist and the school is leaning heavily on N.C. State's experiences.

Michael Harwood, associate vice chancellor for the Centennial Campus development office, said when it comes to ventures such as MARBIONC, the directors will learn there exists a considerable amount of skepticism.

He also said the school will continually need to adapt how it can do better and reinvent its processes to stay on the cutting edge.

“You need to always be re-evaluating the skill sets you have that are adequate for what companies need or what the campus needs to stay ahead of the curve,” he said. “The last thing you want to do is get complacent. While you are enjoying all the attention the world can change and your model no longer will be relevant.”

Chang said success at MARBIONC will help create something that not only boosts the economy, but also moves UNCW to the top tiers of universities in the nation.
“I firmly believe to have a top-notch university you have to have an incubator to help commercialize your research,” he said. “It's critical to building a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation.”

“It creates students who are the next generation of entrepreneurs that create companies that are tomorrow's Googles and Ciscos. These types of buildings and programs are not just important for the university but the country to create the next leaders.”

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The dean of Columbia College has abruptly resigned over what she called administrative changes that would diminish or eliminate her authority, leaving the undergraduate division of Columbia University without a leader two weeks before the start of classes.

Michele M. Moody-Adams, the first female and the first black dean of the college, said in an e-mail sent Saturday to Columbia alumni and donors that she planned to stay through the academic year. But on Monday, the president of Columbia University, Lee C. Bollinger, said in a statement that it was in the best interest of the college and the university for her to step down immediately. He promised that an interim dean would be named soon.

In the Saturday e-mail, Dr. Moody-Adams wrote that the university had begun to “transform the administrative structure” of the faculty of arts and sciences, compromising her authority over “crucial policy, fund-raising and budgetary matters.” She said that she had repeatedly expressed concerns that the changes would affect “the college’s academic quality and financial health,” and that she recently realized that “the structural transformations intended to fundamentally alter decision-making in and for the college cannot be stopped.”
The resignation, which was reported over the weekend by a student news blog, Bwog.com, and Columbia’s student newspaper, The Spectator, is the second in three months by a prominent African-American administrator at the university. In June, Claude M. Steele, who was the university’s provost, left to become the dean of Stanford University’s School of Education. The departure of two senior administrators so close together is highly unusual for an elite university.

Neither Dr. Moody-Adams nor Mr. Bollinger responded to requests for comment on Monday, and a university spokesman said he had no further information about the administrative changes.

Dr. Moody-Adams, who also holds a tenured position in Columbia’s philosophy department, suggested in the e-mail that she would remain at the university.

She was recruited to Columbia in 2009 from Cornell University, where she was vice provost. She was charged with working with university administrators and the faculty of arts and sciences to more clearly define the role of Columbia College within the university after years of tensions over its financial and educational autonomy.

In his statement, Mr. Bollinger wrote that his administration had hoped that Dr. Moody-Adams would be “a key voice in the ongoing discussions involving faculty, alumni and administrators about how to position the college even more centrally in the life of Columbia’s faculty of arts & sciences.” But some professors and staff members said that Dr. Moody-Adams did not seem to have support from much of the faculty, or to work closely with administrators.

News of the resignation surprised many students and faculty members on summer break.

Sharyn O’Halloran, a political economist who is chairwoman of the executive committee of the University Senate, an elected body of faculty and staff members and students, said she was saddened by the news. Dr. Moody-Adams had been involved in discussions about ways to increase faculty input in admissions and curriculum decisions, among other areas, she said.

“I do think everyone viewed her as crucial to leading those conversations,” Dr. O’Halloran said. “She was brought in from the outside to bring energy into the whole environment.”
But Claire Sabel, a junior who is the editor of Bwog, the undergraduate news blog, said that Dr. Moody-Adams had not been on campus long enough for students to form much of an attachment to her.

“She put in all the regular appearances, but nothing really beyond that, so she didn’t have a lot of enemies but she also didn’t have a lot of champions,” Ms. Sabel said.

Alex Frouman, a senior mathematics major who is co-chairman of the student affairs committee of the University Senate, said she had been open and responsive to student concerns over issues like course evaluations and career counseling. “Our priority now moving forward is to ensure that any future dean of Columbia College is open to working with students,” he said.
Stores offering designer dorm gear for the college-bound

By Jenna Johnson

As soon as Amanda Zuckerman graduated from Potomac’s Winston Churchill High School in 2009, she began another rite of passage: shopping for her college dorm room.

Long gone, it seems, are the days of grabbing milk crates and grandma’s extra quilt and making do. Students prepared to spend $100,000 on an undergraduate degree increasingly are willing to invest in transforming the dorm into something closer to a first apartment.

It’s a shift retailers have seized on as an opportunity to launch a relationship that could well track over years and decades — from throw pillows to an apartment-size sofa to a full sectional for the den.

It’s also a design challenge: how to make creative and economical use of a 12-by-12 space that will be used for studying, eating, spacing out and sleeping.

For Zuckerman and her mother, it had to be showstopper. They decided on a neutral palette of gray, tan and black with pops of lime green and headed to New York to shop. They were quickly frustrated that they could not find everything they needed in one spot.
“We went from store to store, taking a pillow from Urban Outfitters and another from Bed, Bath and Beyond” and hoping they would look stylish on the same bed, Zuckerman said. “There was nothing in one place.”

They searched all summer and staged their purchases on the dining room table. Then they saw their ideas come together in Zuckerman’s room at Washington University in St. Louis.

“They called it ‘the hotel,’ and people from other buildings were coming over and saying, ‘I heard about this dorm room. I wanted to see it,’” said her mother, Karen Zuckerman, who runs a design and advertising agency based in Rockville. “That’s what we wanted.”

The experience inspired Zuckerman to launch an online boutique this summer called Dormify.

The site carries bedding in regular and extra-long twin sizes, posters and wall decals, all designed by the mother-daughter duo, plus accessories like throw pillows and frames from designers like Blissliving Home and Jonathan Adler.

Their target audience: College women (and their hovering parents) who have a sense of style and a larger-than-average decorating budget. This is the crowd that shops for jeans at Abercrombie & Fitch, asks for designer sunglasses for birthdays, reads Vogue and watches interior-design shows on cable.

“I am the target audience,” said Amanda Zuckerman, now 20 and entering her junior year. “I want my dorm room to look like an apartment. I don’t want to feel like I’m in a gross dorm room.”

The Zuckermans aren’t the only ones eyeing these college consumers. This year, Crate and Barrel opened its first Washington CB2 store, which sells affordable furniture aimed at apartment and loft dwellers. Last year, Pottery Barn pulled together pieces from its main line and a line of teen furnishings into an online PB Dorm site that features $35 bath caddies and $189 monogrammed beanbag chairs.

Going off to college has always been a major consumer event, and this year students are expected to spend $33.8 billion during the back-to-school season on electronics, clothing and supplies, according to the National Retail Federation. That’s an expected average of $96.94 on dorm furnishings, a significant increase from last year’s average of $80.06.
And these retailers aren’t just offering students merchandise to buy — they are providing shopping checklists and advising students on how to make their dorm room their own. These companies aren’t just selling extra-long sheets, they are selling a lifestyle and hoping to recruit lifelong customers.

CB2 provides free in-store room design help. PB Dorm has a photo gallery of “dorm room inspirations” and a “design your own bed” interactive feature that allows students to experiment with color and pattern combinations. And Dormify has a crew of 50 college-aged “style advisers” who blog about their decorating experiences, do-it-yourself projects and getting along with roommates.

“People who have style have style, no matter what their budget,” said Cynthia Bell, a rising senior at Seton Hall University in New Jersey who interned in Washington this summer. Each year, Bell has carefully decorated her room, often using fashion photos ripped from Elle and Vogue magazines, but has yet to spend hundreds or thousands of dollars doing so. But, she concedes, “if Anthropologie had a college line, I would cry to my parents until they bought me everything.”

Just like retailers such as Target and Wal-Mart have long marketed dorm sets that contain nearly everything a college student might need in one box or bag, Dormify has put together matching collections with funky names. There’s the “punk princess collection” featuring black, white and hot pink bedding, pillows and wall art for $427.68. The “red romance collection” costs $622.07.

Zuckerman thought these collections would be the site’s bestsellers, since they easily give a student a pulled-together look without the store-to-store search. Instead, she’s seeing more sales of single sheet sets or accessories.

In many cases, dorm rooms look like mini apartments, and students are investing in pieces they can use beyond their college years. New residence halls are often apartment-style and feature in-house gyms, music studios or gaming rooms.

“Why live in a cookie-cutter interior when for a few dollars more you can have something different?” said Herbert Brito, dean of the School of Building Arts at the Savannah College of Art and Design. “College students are always desiring to make an individual statement, and this is an easy way to do that.”

Some parents are willing to splurge on dorm stuff, especially when their children first go to school, because it’s a way for them to visually be a part
of this new lifestyle. This is especially true for students moving far away, who will be able to return home only a few times a year.

“Especially for incoming students, you are coming into a strange place. To me, to have anything that reminds me of home is comforting,” said Max Meadows, 20, a rising junior at the College of William and Mary from Upstate New York. Last year, Meadows had a single room and decorated it with flags from countries he has visited and added a bookcase of his favorite books. “It’s comforting to have,” he said.

And for mothers and daughters who have bonded over the years during shopping trips, putting together a collection of things to take to college can be a fun project.

“Whatever it will take to make their children comfortable, they will do it,” Karen Zuckerman said. “When they walk into their room everyday — even if they have had a fight with a friend or they are feeling homesick — they have this room that they love and feel good in.”

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