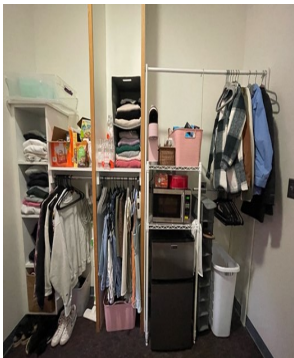




Thea Bowman

*Living
in a
dorm is
completely different
from living at
home.*



Thea Bowman

Which Building is the Best to Live in for First-Years? By Francesca Michener

When it came time to do my housing assignment for my first year, I was so excited, even though I had no clue who I was going to be rooming with. The only thing I knew was I did not want to live in apartment-style housing. Luckily, Loyola has so many different housing options to fit everyone's preferences. They have apartment-style, suite-style, and traditional double-style rooms. No matter where you end up, you will be happy. Each building has its ups and downs, but what first-year building on any college campus doesn't? In my opinion, every first year dorm is equal.

Hillside

My first year I lived in Hammerman Hall; this building is traditional double-style, dorm housing. Two other buildings similar to Hammerman are Butler and Hopkins. When you think of communal-style housing, you think of the whole floor sharing one bathroom, but that is not the case with Hammerman, Butler and Hopkins. Here at Loyola, these buildings are different—every floor has four bathrooms and four to five rooms share these bathrooms. So you are really only sharing a bathroom with eight to ten other people. For the most part, our bathrooms stay clean. Besides when people throw out their food in the trash cans in the bathroom because this makes it not smell good (which seems to only happen in my particular bathroom). The actual rooms are the perfect size for two people. I have never felt like my roommate and I were on top of each other. Although we are not particularly friends, we get along enough that we do not have issues with each other.

Another housing style is suite-style. This is where two rooms share a bathroom. So you have your direct roommate and two other roommates. Although these might be bigger rooms than the rooms in Hammerman and Butler, you do have to clean your own bathroom. In my opinion, I would not want to clean my own bathroom during my first year of college. The only building like this is Thea Bowman. More commonly known as Bowman. Each floor has a common room, a kitchen and study rooms. Unfortunately, there is only one laundry room, but it has plenty of washer and dryers.

I asked my friend Izzy four different questions. Do you like living in your building? What are some perks to your building? What are some of the things you do not like about your building? And lastly, is there a building you wish you lived in instead? Isabella DiFoggio '26 responded by saying, "I love living in Bowman. My roommate and I went to the same high school so we knew that we would get along just fine. We also both love our suite mates. Although one of them transferred after the first semester, we never had any issues with her. One of the perks of living in Bowman is having my own bathroom. Another one is that the closets are big enough to fit all of my sweatshirts. If I had lived in any other building, I do not know if I would have been able to keep all of them here because I have so many. There are only two things that I do not like about my building. This is having to clean my own bathroom, which I hate doing, and the laundry room. Since there are so many students it is sometimes hard to find a washer or dryer."

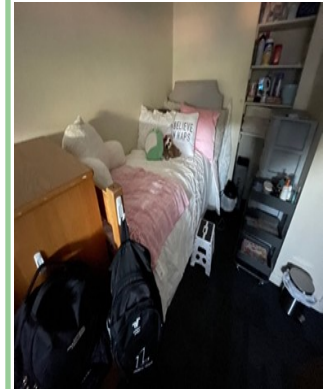
When I asked her if she would've wanted to live in a different dorm her only response was, "No this one's cool." If I were to ask her what the best first-year dorm is, she would probably say Thea Bowman.

Westside

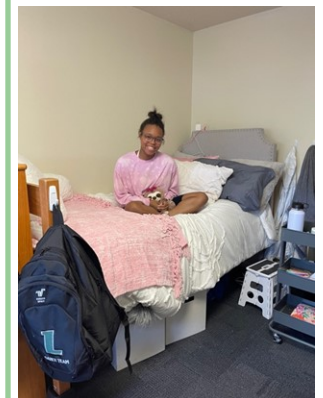
The final style of living for first-years is apartment-style. One of the many apartment-style housing buildings is Campion. In this building you can either live with a group of four or a group of six. As a first-year, it can be scary not knowing who you are going to be living with but the thought of having more roommates than your direct roommate can be terrifying. But everyone I know who lives in Campion loves it there. I asked my friend Maddie a series of questions about how she likes living there. Madison Betsill '26: "I love living in Campion. I think as a first-year getting to experience living on Westside of campus is definitely different because not many freshmen besides athletes live here. At times it is hard because you do not really get to connect with other freshmen." I then proceeded to ask her about some of the perks of living in Campion. "The perks of living in Campion are you do have an apartment, you have a dining area, a common space, and you get to have a bathroom, which I think are key features. So personally I would rather be over here versus the freshman side of campus. A huge part of this has to do with having my own bathroom. I could not imagine having to share one with a bunch of other girls. I also love how by having an apartment we are not confined to just being stuck in one room. You can leave your bedroom door open and watch movies in the common space with all of your roommates, you can eat together, cook together, and I think that is great. Overall it's just great to be in this building." I then asked her 'What are some of the things you do not like about your building?' she said she thought "not getting to interact with other freshmen all the time besides the athletes that live here, you kind of miss out on branching out and that connection. Yes, you know your neighbors and I'll say hi, but there is never any interaction besides that. While, on the freshman side of campus you get that." Maddie's final statement to me was, "but overall, I love Campion and I think it's been a great first year experience." Maddie lives with two other first-years who happen to also be on the dance team with her. She claims that she got "so lucky."

RA's Perspective

The last person I interviewed was my RA. Grace is currently a senior in the class of 2023: "As a first year I lived in Thea Bowman hall. I had a roommate and two suitemates and we shared a bathroom. I lived on the fourth floor. I actually lived there my sophomore and junior year as an RA. This year I became an RA in Hammerman on the fourth floor." After finding out that she had lived in the first-year dorms all four years, I had to ask her which she thinks is the best first year dorm to live in. "In my opinion," she said, "I think that Bowman is the nicest first year dorm just because it is the newest, but Hammerman and Butler do have their perks—being able to control your own temperature is really nice, having the unit in your room. I also think that the community that is formed in Hammerman and Butler is a lot stronger than on the floors in Newman because you're in all of these nooks and there is a stronger sense of family that I found this year compared to my floors in the past. This might be contributed to COVID but that's just what I've noticed." Finally, I asked, "what are some challenges



Campion



Campion

that you face being an RA in a first year dorm?" One challenge "that I face as a first year RA—a lot of people are coming from never having lived with other people before. They have had their own rooms, don't have siblings, etc. So just getting people as comfortable as they can be. Confronting their roommates with issues and not just trying to run away from the problem is a big thing. Also this is the first time that they are away from home so we do deal with a lot of rambunctious behavior." Grace ended our interview by saying, "But overall I do enjoy being a first-year RA because I like having a stronger connection with my residents and I feel as though the RA's who are upper-classmen RA's don't have that connection." I really enjoyed talking to Grace about her experience. It allowed me to feel more connected to her as a student and not as my RA. It was great to have someone else's perspective of the first-year housing that has lived in different ones.

My Experience on My Own

After my parents left on move-in day, I was terrified. No one in my corner of the building had moved in yet. I was so nervous this first night that I kept constantly texting my two older sisters questions that I had. I stood in the hall hoping to hear voices so I could ask them if they wanted to get dinner. Luckily, soon after I heard a group of girls walking down the hall. I had met my first group of girls here at Loyola. Although none of these girls stayed my friends, I did meet one of my best friends that night. After we got dinner, we went through the four different floors and knocked on people's doors asking to do room tours. This was so much fun and allowed me to meet so many different people.

College vs. Home

Living at college is completely different from living at home. There are certain things that you might do at home that you should not do at college. You might not think that much of it but you should make your bed every day. It's not a big deal if you do not but it helps the room look cleaner than it actually might be. You also have to be aware that you are not living in a room by yourself anymore. This means to be respectful of your roommates' space and things. There is nothing worse than having a roommate that does not respect you and your belongings. The one thing that is a MUST is to wear shoes in the shower if you are in communal housing. Even though the cleaning staff clean the bathrooms multiple times a week, they do not always get the chance to get to the showers every time. The shower floors are just not the cleanest place in the bathroom. Always keep in mind that your room is not only your room.



Hopkins



Hammerman/Butler