Students help launch the next generation of dorm décor

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Dormie's "Georgia” kit creates a "polished, playful, and sweetly Southern" space, according to the company's website.

Making a home in a cinder block dorm room is a rite of passage for most college students.

It’s an experience that the students in Professor Megan Guy’s class know well, and one that came in handy when, for their senior capstone project, they were tasked with consulting for Dormie, a new company offering curated decorating kits that transform generic dorms into cozy domestic digs.

Founded by New Orleans-based interior designer Olivia Erwin Rosenthal, Dormie sells $25 décor plans and shoppable checklists with everything needed to style a dorm room. The kits include customized recommendations for setup and storage as well as links to purchase bedding, rugs, lighting, artwork and accessories. Customers can choose from themed kits like “The Georgia,” for a pastel garden party look, “The Zoe” for a bright, beachy feel, or “The Natalie” for a vintage vibe.

Guy, professor of practice in business and legal studies, said her students’ intimate knowledge of college life gave them a distinct advantage while working on this project.

“Capstones help students understand how to apply the academic theories that they've learned in class,” she said. “And it’s especially useful when they can apply what they’ve learned in class to something they're interested in. I think the students added a lot of value because they are part of Olivia’s target demographic.”

Erwin Rosenthal said the students helped her team see their product and customers through a new set of eyes.

“It was refreshing to get perspectives that weren’t filtered through industry assumptions,” she said. “That kind of feedback helps us refine not just the product, but the entire experience, from how we present the product to how we simplify decision-making.”



Olivia Erwin Rosenthal

During the eight-week project, students were split into two teams and asked to devise plans to optimize and scale Dormie’s business operations. They began by analyzing Dormie’s current market position using financial data Erwin Rosenthal’s team provided, including the number of kits the company has sold and the conversion rate. From there, they conducted market research, investigating competitors and drawing on their own contacts to conduct focus groups with potential customers.

“I sent an explanation of the product out to some of my friends, and the girls loved it,” said Claire Ravin (BSM ’26). “They all thought it was such a cute idea. From our focus groups we found out that now, more than ever, girls are really getting into cute dorm room décor, especially on social media.”

The teams ultimately took two different approaches to optimizing Dormie’s operations. The first drew on their own experiences receiving packages on college campuses and developed a plan to revamp Dormie’s checkout and shipping

process.

“We understand the process of getting packages delivered to dorms on campus,” said Perry Krosser (BSM ’26). “At Tulane, for example, there’s a limited number of packages that can be delivered to your dorm.”

To ensure college customers could easily receive the items in their kits, the team proposed Dormie streamline its shopping experience. Under their plan, customers would purchase the checklist items in a single transaction, and the items would be shipped in just a few packages rather than individually.

“We also thought it would be helpful to allow customers to select what items they wanted from the kit,” Krosser added. “Customers might not need everything in a kit, so it would be nice if they could choose what would work for them and remove products they weren’t interested in.”

The second team focused on targeted partnerships and influencer marketing. They recommended Dormie ramp up its microinfluencing by partnering with influencers at SEC schools or those in sororities. In their presentation, the team included specific influencers and SEC schools that might work well for a partnership.

Erwin Rosenthal said that the teams were able to leverage their perspectives as students to propose viable recommendations for expanding the company.

“Streamlining the shopping experience is one of the biggest opportunities for Dormie as we scale,” she said. “The easier we can make it for someone to go from inspiration to actually purchasing, the stronger the business becomes. The idea around sorority influencers at SEC schools was also strong. We had already explored that approach last season, but it was helpful to see it reinforced and expanded. In their presentations, the students were thinking in the right direction and understood where our audience naturally lives and engages.”



Dormie describes its "Eliza" kit as "bold, preppy, and a little bit wild."

Guy said the presentations were a pivotal learning moment for students, mirroring what they will likely experience in their careers.

“You have to think on your feet in business,” she said. “You have to answer that question that you weren’t expecting. There's no better preparation for what you’re going to face when you graduate.”

Sarah Martin (BSM ’26), one of the capstone team members, said the project ended up being the best job preparation she could have asked for. After the capstone, Martin landed an internship with Dormie and Olivia Erwin Interiors. Following her graduation in May, Martin will join the company as a full-time assistant.

“After the course ended, I interned with Dormie and Olivia’s interior design business,” Martin said. “I shared my interest in interior design with Olivia and showed her some of my work. A few weeks later, she reached out, called me a ‘go-getter’ and offered me an internship.

“As an intern, I helped with Dormie’s social media by creating short-form videos highlighting the design kits, sent and organized samples, and assisted with operations. That role eventually transitioned into a full-time job.”

Martin said she will continue to take on more responsibility in her new role as a full-time assistant. In addition to supporting ongoing projects, she is learning interior design software.

“I didn’t expect this capstone project to lead to a full-time role,” Martin said. “I did hope it would open some doors, but it did so much more than that. I’m really excited for what’s ahead.”