UPDATE: 03/02/07 - Underwriter Laboratories issued notice today stating that these lamps are a fire hazard and recommends that consumers immediately stop using them. http://www.ul.com/newsroom/newsrel/nr030207.html

Many students in our residence halls have a 5-light multi-colored floor lamp in their rooms. These lamps can be found at Walmart, Bed, Bath & Beyond, and other common chain stores. They have become quite common because they are not only inexpensive (less than $20) but also very attractive. The plastic shades on these lamps can melt and can possibly cause a fire. Other universities have reported several close call incidents. One where melted plastic from the shade burned a hole in a bedspread and another where a student turned on the lamp and, within 15 minutes, the shade melted and the heat began to turn a poster on the wall brown. Different models have found to be defective, but all shared the common plastic shade although some required Type A 60 watt bulbs and other required Type B 25 watt bulbs. Damaged shades were found in lamps using both sizes of bulbs. It should be noted that damage was found to have occurred even when the proper watt bulbs were being used in accordance with the manufacturer’s directions.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission is investigating for "possible product hazards" and to determine if a recall is necessary.

We are recommending all lamps of this nature be removed from student rooms and other areas on our campus. If you have further questions, please contact the Safety & Workers’ Compensation Office at (828) 262-4007 ext. 1.