

So how much does being a member of a fraternity or sorority *really* cost? Many people think joining a fraternity or sorority is simply “buying friends”—that you’re dishing out wads of cash just to hang out with people.

But this is just not true. Yes, there are costs associated with being a member of a fraternity or sorority. But these costs are very similar to what you would pay to be a member of any other club, sports team, student or community organization. And once you include housing, it’s often times *cheaper* than belonging to other organizations and juggling additional on- or off-campus housing.

*Here’s an example.*

The below chart lists a typical cost to be a member of an Interfraternity Council (IFC) fraternity or Panhellenic Council (CPH) sorority (and to live in-house) and the cost to live in the University of Cincinnati residence halls and have a meal plan (2011 – 2012 Housing and Meal Plan Rates [http://www.uc.edu/uchousing/rates/11-12\\_rates.html](http://www.uc.edu/uchousing/rates/11-12_rates.html)).

For joining a fraternity or sorority, this particular example provides:

- About average new member dues, quarterly dues, and housing costs for many of the IFC fraternities and CPH sororities that have houses
- It also assumes a student in a 5 year academic program required to co-op 6 terms—very typical for many members of our fraternity and sorority community
- Most of the fraternities and sororities have reduced dues for members on co-op
- New member dues are typically more expensive
- The student would live in the fraternity house over the summer (most of the sorority houses close for the summer; but you can imagine that finding on- or off-campus housing short-term over the summer might cost comparably), as their co-op rotation would have them on campus and in classes over the summer
- Most of the fraternities and sororities have reduced dues, if they even have dues, over the summer

For the residence halls and meal plan, this particular example provides:

- That the student is living in a multiple-occupancy residence hall their freshman year, such as Dabney, Daniels, Calhoun, Siddall—the cheapest residence halls option
- It also assumes the middle-of-the-road meal plan, the 154 plan, for the first year
- After year 1, it assumes that, because of co-op, the student does not sign a 12 month lease, rather goes quarter-to-quarter and goes with the Platinum meal plan, only available to returning residents
- It also assumes that after freshman year, the student moves to single-occupancy residence halls, and since they have to live-in over the summer, Stratford Heights is provided as the residence hall of choice (it could also be Turner, CRC, or Schneider, which are just a bit more expensive for single-occupancy)

## Fraternity or Sorority

## Residence Halls and Meal Plan

	<b>Year 1</b>		
Fall quarter new member dues and new member fee	\$600	Multiple Occupancy, 154 Plan (AY)	\$9,585
Winter quarter dues	\$500		
Spring quarter dues	\$500		
Summer dues	\$100		
	<b>Year 2</b>		
Fall quarter dues + living in-house	\$2,000	Multiple Occupancy (Stratford Heights), Platinum	\$2,657
Winter quarter dues + living in-house	\$2,000	Multiple Occupancy (Stratford Heights), Platinum	\$2,657
Spring quarter out-of-town co-op dues	\$100		
Summer dues + living in-house	\$1,600	Multiple Occupancy (Stratford Heights), Platinum	\$2,657
	<b>Year 3</b>		
Fall quarter out-of-town co-op dues	\$100		
Winter quarter dues + living in-house	\$2,000	Single Occupancy (Stratford Heights), Platinum	\$2,840
Spring quarter out-of-town co-op dues	\$100		
Summer dues + living in-house	\$1,600	Single Occupancy (Stratford Heights), Platinum	\$2,840
	<b>Year 4</b>		
Fall quarter out-of-town co-op dues	\$100		
Winter quarter dues + living in-house	\$2,000	Single Occupancy (Stratford Heights), Platinum	\$2,840
Spring quarter out-of-town co-op dues	\$100		
Summer dues + living in-house	\$1,600	Single Occupancy (Stratford Heights), Platinum	\$2,840
	<b>Year 5</b>		
Fall quarter out-of-town co-op dues	\$100		
Winter quarter dues + living in-house	\$2,000	Single Occupancy (Stratford Heights), Platinum	\$2,840
Spring quarter dues + living in-house	\$2,000	Single Occupancy (Stratford Heights), Platinum	\$2,840
	<b>Total</b>		
	\$19,100		\$34,596
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<b>Total including Year 1 in Residence Halls + Fraternity or Sorority</b>	<b>\$28,685</b>		

The total 5 year cost (comparable for 4 years as well) of joining this example fraternity or sorority, is cheaper than simply living in the residence halls. It's still cheaper if you add the cost of Year 1 fraternity or sorority membership to Year 1 residence hall and meal plan costs (assuming most students will be locked in to this contract).

Now obviously being a member of this example fraternity or sorority yet remaining in the residence halls with a meal plan would tack on the additional \$500 quarter dues to \$2,657 and \$2,840 cost of the residence halls and meal plan; which is an added cost.

This is just one example. Individual fraternities and sororities vary. Although all 7 of the CPH sororities have houses, only 16 of the 19 IFC fraternities have houses. And how each fraternity or sorority manages its member dues varies. Some fraternities and sororities charge dues and rent monthly. And not all members that join a fraternity or sorority can, or necessarily want to, live in-house. But the above example is very indicative of the typical costs.

None of the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC; historically African-American), multicultural, or other fraternities and sororities have houses. This is mainly because they are much smaller in membership: only 10 – 20 members or so. These fraternities and sororities typically have even cheaper dues:

- \$700 new member fee the quarter the student joins
- Zero costs after that

Or

- \$150 new member fee the quarter the student joins
- \$50 quarter dues

The bottom line is that joining a fraternity or sorority is not an exorbitant cost. It is not "buying friends." The 4 to 5 year cost (or even less, if a student joins as an upper-classman/woman) is well worth the immediate and lifelong benefit.