

# 'IT'S KIND OF AN INVESTMENT': STUDENTS SHARE THEIR FINANCES FOR HALLOWEEN

**Kelly McPoyle**  
Staff Writer

Shamus O'Grady is one of many Pitt students shelling out a significant amount of money on Halloween outfits that will only be worn once, but he says it's simply part of college culture.

"It's Halloween," O'Grady, a first-year nursing major, said. "It's kind of an investment and you just have to go with it."

Halloween on college campuses means one thing — costumes for "Halloweekend." Students often plan out their costumes weeks in advance, but the costs for different parts and accessories can quickly add up.

O'Grady is dressing as Ken from the "Barbie" movie one night and joining in on a group costume of Alvin and the Chipmunks for another. So far, he has spent \$60 on two outfits — \$30 on his Ken outfit and \$10 on a blonde wig. For his Alvin and the Chipmunks costume, he spent \$20 on his shirt and shorts.

"I'm really hoping to stay around \$60, but I guess I will get myself up to \$80 because it'll be spread out," O'Grady said. "I still need another costume, but I'll throw that together when the time comes."

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, as of 2020, around 40% of full-time undergraduate students balance a job with their classes during the school year. This can make pricey costumes, clothes and accessories a financial burden for many students.

Julia Pepper, a first-year pharmacy student, has three costumes planned for this year. She estimates she spent around \$100 on her Halloween costumes altogether and dipped into summer job savings to afford the outfits. Pepper and O'Grady are friends, and their Alvin and the Chipmunks costume is part of a group costume.

"First, I'm going to be an aerobic Barbie," Pepper said. "Then another night I'll be Alvin from Alvin and the Chipmunks and then I'm being pepper from salt and pepper."

Online shopping makes purchasing Halloween costumes easier for busy students who may not have time to go off campus to buy a costume. Amazon and Shein offer cheaper options than

Spirit Halloween.

Peffer got her Halloween costumes mainly from Shein, which is known for its low prices. O'Grady also purchased some of his costumes from Shein.

Mia Callaghan, a sophomore urban studies major, plans to be Slack Swan, a spy, and Rachel Berry singing "Hit Me Baby One More Time" in Glee. She ordered all of her costumes from Amazon.

"For all of my costumes, I spent around \$50, but I haven't gotten one of them yet," Callaghan said. "I've found the cheapest options for everything and I'm going to return everything after Halloween."

Callaghan said she "wants to spend the least amount of money, but have a really good costume," which is why she plans to return her costumes to Amazon when she is done with them.

Another low-cost option for students is to reuse costumes or thrift. Riley Johnson, a senior emergency medicine major, spent around \$50 on her costumes, which include Harley Quinn, a police officer and a lamb as part of a group costume of barnyard animals.

"I'm recycling two of my costumes and my friend had a dress I could borrow," Johnson said. "I enjoy thrifting, so I thrifted some pieces, but I ordered off Amazon as well. I work two jobs, so I was able to spend the \$50."

Jordan Grunfeld, a sophomore film and media studies major, spent around \$110 on her Halloween costumes.

"My skeleton costume was around \$60, and I spent about \$50 on my 'Men in Black' costume," said Grunfeld. "I had some black clothing that I can use for my men in black costume, but I did buy a black bodysuit and a plastic gun."

Grunfeld started planning her skeleton Halloween costume last year.

"I felt pressure in my mind to get the costume since I had been planning it since last year," said Grunfeld. "When I looked it up it was \$60, which was a bit out of my price range. But I was determined to wear that costume, so I got it."

Robin Higgins, a junior biology major, didn't necessarily feel pressure to spend a lot of money, so she opted for a relatively cheap costume.

"I'm dressing up as Mario and my roommates are going to be Luigi, Yellow Toad, and Blue Toad," Higgins said.



Nicholas Cassano | Staff Illustrator

"I haven't pulled the trigger on buying the costume yet, but it's probably going to be around \$30 from Amazon."

For students like O'Grady, the financial sacrifice is worth it for Halloweekend because the upcoming holiday sea-

son is rife with opportunities to receive money as gifts.

"It'll be Christmas soon, so I guess we'll replenish then," O'Grady said. ■

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