

UIUC SSA Dorm Review 2016

Dear Freshies,

This housing guide is put together by the SSA seniors to help you select the dorm that most fits your needs. However, this list is not exhaustive, as we only included feedback on dorms we have lived in. Hope it's useful!

Love,
Seniors

Getting started:

1. There are 2 main types of housing you can choose from, university residence halls and private certified housing.
2. Look through the pros and cons, and prioritize what is important to you e.g. Location, food, study environment etc.
3. Contact us to find out who has stayed in which hall, should you like to understand more.

I. University Residence Halls

- Busey-Evans (all women)
- Ikenberry Commons North
 - Barton (all women), Lundgren (all men), Hopkins, Weston, Nugent
- Ikenberry Commons South
 - Snyder, Scott, Taft-Van Doren, Bousfield, Wassaja (new!)
- Illinois Street Residence (ISR)
- Pennsylvania Avenue Residence (PAR)
- Florida Avenue Residences (FAR)
- Lincoln Avenue Residence (LAR)
- Allen Hall

II. Private Certified Housing

- Hendrick House
- Illini Tower
- Armory House
- Bromley Hall
- Presby Hall
- Newman Hall

*disclaimer: not all halls are covered/have feedback

Pros and Cons of the dorms

I. University Residence Halls

Pros

- Able to eat at all University Housing residential halls with same meal plan (6 dining halls over campus)
- All dorms have a communal kitchen with oven, stove, refrigerator, microwave
- Some dorms have Living Learning Communities (LLC): communities that have special focus on diversity, innovation, music, etc. There will be a full-time program coordinator who plans programs for everyone
- Common area with TV
- Computers with scanning and printing (5cents/page) available
- Active dorm life: most dorms will plan their own dorm activities, opportunities to make new friends

Cons

- No free break housing (except for Global crossroads LLC)
- Food quality varies vastly across different residential dining halls
- Communal toilets (some dorms have suites- i.e. private toilet)
- Difficult to get single rooms, usually get a double (with a roommate)
- Rooms are generally smaller than those in private certified housing
- Though most dorms use wireless, some still require the ethernet cable

II. Private Certified Housing

(<http://certified.housing.illinois.edu>)

Pros

- More privacy
- More living space, since rooms are bigger than the average ones in university residence halls.
- Semi-private bathrooms (4-to-1)
- High speed wireless provided
- More RAs per student

Cons

- Only able to eat at your own private housing dining hall
- Generally less social compared to university housing
- Slightly more expensive than university housing
- no LLCs

Housing Details - University Residence Halls

Busey-Evans

Feature	Description
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• East of campus• 5min walk to the quad• 710 mart across the road (korean minimart if you need anything)
Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Variety and good quality food<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Lots of fruits and vegetables◦ Awesome desserts and smoothies for late night• Busey Beanery - buy snacks and smoothies with Illini credits• Oodles (specialty restaurant) on Fri<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ live station where pasta is cooked on spot based on your selected ingredients◦ delicious cheesecake, chocolate cake◦ lots of fruits• Dining hall closed on Saturdays and only has food from 12-6pm on Sundays
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Air-conditioning• Wifi in rooms• Carpeted rooms• Common lounge with tv, and pianos• Computer lab and library for studying• Shared kitchen
Living Environment/ Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All-girls dorm• Quiet studying environment• Floor events and hall events organized by RAs• Harder to meet new people unless you actively seek them out• no LLC
Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good mix of students, both American and Asians

Ikenberry Commons

Feature	Description
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southwest corner of campus • 10min walk to the main quad, 5min walk to the south quad • Directly opposite the ARC (gym) • Close to business classes, further away from engineering classes • Many buses available, bus stop at the dining hall building; highly accessible
Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biggest dining hall out of all the university residential halls with the widest variety/selection of food • Inconsistent food quality • Can use credits to buy steak/ good burgers during mealtimes (a la carte) • Can use credits at the I-57 North convenience store which is open till 1am daily
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directly opposite ARC (4-level gym with 2 swimming pool, indoor track, basketball courts, rock climbing wall, soccer, all the gymming equipment you need), biggest gym on campus • SDRP/Ikenberry commons (the dining hall building) is a common area for all the people living within ikenberry, it has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o library (equipped with computers, scanner, photocopying, printing, books) o another small gym o project rooms o Caffeinator (can use credits to buy coffee or delicious smoothies!) • Ikenberry lawn: an open space for activities (football, snowball fight, dorm activities) • Each dorm has their own common area/ lounge area (tv, computer, printer) and shared kitchen • Some dorms have AC (snyder, scott, nugent, bousfield...), some don't
Living Environment/ Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depends on the culture of your dorm, each dorm is different • Good social life • Conducive studying environment in dorm (alternatively there is the ike library or study rooms), weekends tend to get noisier • Snyder has active hall activities (e.g. Dial-a-carol: sing carols for ppl who dial in from all over the world) • Hopkins: LEADS LLC • Weston: Weston Exploration LLC • Scott: Decomposing food in the corridor; noisy neighbours • Snyder: substance-free (people still go out and party, but the good thing is that they cannot come back drunk, and "no drugs/substances" rule implemented)
Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Known informally as the "six pack", sometimes known as the party dorms • More americans, but good mix of students

Illinois Street Residence (ISR)

Feature	Description
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East of main quad, at the eastern bound of campus • Closest residential hall to engineering quad • 5-10min walk to the main quad where most freshman classes are • 8 min walk to CRCE (gym/recreation centre)
Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normal variety of food, but quality is average • Asian food night on Wed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Generally satisfying, but authenticity and quality inconsistent ◦ Yummy food such as potstickers, mochi, red bean bun, sweet chili tofu • Has an ala-carte café (Chomps) where you can purchase food from with Café Credits from your meal plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Has convenience store items such as snacks and ramen ◦ Made-to-order hot food such as pizza, hamburgers, and rib tips
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air-conditioned rooms • Conducive study rooms, study carrels (really quiet study rooms) • Computer lab open 24/7 • Gym in the basement with machines, but no bench press or squat racks • Lounges available for booking (table tennis table and tv) • Multi-purpose Rooms that can be booked for studying or hanging out • Both Townsend and Wardall Halls have lifts
Living Environment/ Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average social life, depends on how much you want to engage your floormates • Many activities organized by the hall council to engage residents • Many international Asian students, Koreans and Chinese
Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation LLC - quite active, programs for entrepreneurship • Has a nice courtyard that Townsend residents staying along the inner corridor can overlook, good for frisbee or other sports • 1 of the dorms, along with PAR and FAR, that provides housing over spring and fall breaks, at an added cost • Wardall Hall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 12 stories high ◦ Separate floors between Male and Female ◦ Fewer rooms per floor than Townsend- easier to get to know people • Townsend Hall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 5 stories high ◦ Guys and Girls are on same floor ◦ Small toilets as compared to Wardall

Pennsylvania Avenue Residence (PAR)

Feature	Description
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southeast corner of campus • Far from main quad (20min walk) • Regular and extensive bus services such as 12 Teal, 13 Silver and 22 Illini make up for huge distances from school buildings • Close to south quad, great for those in college of ACES. • Close to CRCE (smaller gym) • Next to Illini grove and tennis courts
Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decent food quality and large variety • Only dining hall with stir-fry, tastes pretty good but has insanely long queues. • Late night offered from 8pm-12am • can use credits at Penn Station
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Room is pretty small if furniture is not lofted. • Library, computer lab, private piano room that you need to check out keys for, and a couple of lounges. • Community kitchen is in an undesirable state • No air conditioning • Decent wifi throughout dorm but nothing fantastic
Living Environment/ Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one of the most social dorms around, can get a little noisy at night due to LLCs & late nights • LLCs eligible for some classes that are held in PAR. • Intersection LLC in Babcock <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ mix of exchange, international and local students ◦ regular info nights about different countries, Conversations about Diversity (CODES) and assigned mentors ◦ music lottery, free trip 2D1N trip to Ohio etc. ◦ eligible for researcher's initiative where you are paid \$8.50/h to do research • Global Crossroads LLC in Saunders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ free break housing! ◦ great opportunity to meet lots of international students from extremely diverse backgrounds ◦ positive, friendly environment ◦ very active with events such as a free Chicago trip, reindeer ranch trip, capture the flag and other ad-hoc events organized by RAs.
Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides break housing: You have to pay for (except Global Crossroads) but you get to stay in your own room

Florida Avenue Residences (FAR)

Feature	Description
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southeast corner of campus, opposite PAR • 10 min bus ride from the quad • first stop for 13 Silver and 22 Illini (advantage especially during winter) • near Campus Recreation Centre – East • near tennis courts
Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soul food night on Thursday • Breakfast for dinner on Tuesday • Food not the best, but decent • Food gets repetitive after a while, just head over to PAR for a change • PAR has relatively more options and better food (pizza, stir-fry) and has breakfast
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rooms slightly larger than PAR • Wifi throughout the building • A gym • Computer lab with 1 EWS machine • A library • Pool table • Table tennis • Music room w/ piano (loan key from desk) • Lounge on every floor • Air-conditioned • Co-ed by floor
Living Environment/ Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually quite quiet, good studying environment • Occasional activities organized by RA • Two LLCs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oglesby: Health Professions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → usually has a short trip each semester → research opportunities available • Trelease: WIMSE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → has a short trip each semester → research opportunities available → WIMSE EWS lab located on 2nd floor • Both Health Professions & WIMSE are eligible for LLC courses held in PAR/FAR/Allen, e.g. free music lesson by lottery, math discussion held in Allen Hall rather than Altgeld
Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides break housing: You have to pay for it, but you get to stay in your own room • larger population of asian american and african american students • generally large international student population

Allen Hall

Feature	Description
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• East of campus• Right next to CRCE (gym), super convenient if you like working out• close to major libraries, ACES library and undergrad library• 5-10min walk to main quad
Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Food is pretty decent• it gets repetitive, lack variety• Good fruits• Leafy (specialty restaurant) on Wed<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ vegetarian dinner served with many fruits, fancy cheese, cheesecakes and desserts
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No air-conditioning, so fan might be necessary• Music practice rooms (you get free music lessons if you are part of the LLC)• Lounges• Study rooms
Living Environment/ Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rather artsy environment with a lot of music going on• Relaxed environment, easy to make friends with people on your floor• Good mix of all types of people of all majors• Unit one LLC -<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ free music lessons for different skills including singing◦ guest-in residence program
Others	NIL

Lincoln Avenue Residence (LAR)

Feature	Description
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● East of campus, next to Allen hall ● next to CRCE and Mckinley; near krannert ● main quad is within walking distance
Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● dining hall shared with Allen hall ● Vegetarian lunch available daily; only has vegetarian dinner on Wednesday ● decent food ● no late night
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● largest rooms out of all the university housing dorms ● in-room wireless (new!) ● no air con
Living Environment/ Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Artsy and quiet environment ● Sustainable LLC focuses on sustainability in many aspects ranging from housing to electronics. Events may involve other RSOs such as Habitat for Humanity and includes stuff like talks, seminars and puppet projects.
Others	NIL

Housing Details - Private Certified Housing

Hendrick House

Feature	Description
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northeast edge of campus • Along green street; 5-10min walk to engineering quad • 15min walk to main quad • Buses within short walking distances (brings you around most of campus) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 5 Green is right outside ◦ 22 Illini is a 3-5min walk away at West Illinois Street ◦ 10 Gold & 13 Silver are a 5min walk north of Hendrick • Best caters to Engineering, LAS, Music majors, but Business majors should consider as there are buses that lead directly to the business buildings
Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best dorm food around • Good variety of food with the specials changed daily (student special request can be made through online form) • Variety in the form of different types of cuisine, from Indian to Mexican to Jap • Healthy- salad bar always filled with fresh veggies from local farms. • Only those with a 19 credit meal plan can sign others in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Can sign people in during late night ◦ Pizza night for late night Fridays • No dinner provided on Sundays • Shares the same meal system as Newman Hall (another private housing)
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break housing available but additional payment is required <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Cheaper than any university dorm • West-side dorms → Twice the size of most dorm rooms on campus • Private washrooms shared only between suitemates (max 4 person) • Several common areas for studying and leisure (equipped with pool table, foosball, pianos, TV, pingpong table etc.) • Small gym and computer lab in the basement • Air conditioned (Personal air-con/heater for West side) • Bike room for storage (paid), free sheltered bike parking area • Weekly housekeeping • High speed wireless • Cheapest self-service laundry room on campus
Living Environment/ Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet dorm with a conducive studying environment • Small dorm = easy to make friends • Staff are super friendly • Movie marathons and game nights held at the North Lounge • Not very social apart from the occasional welfare event <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Can be social if you hang around with the crowd

Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scholarship offered<ul style="list-style-type: none">o \$50 for 3.5 GPAo \$75 for 4.0 GPA• Free tickets to shows and performances that are sponsored by HH
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Illini Tower

Feature	Description
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• West of campus• 3-5min walk from main quad, near green street, armory and ice arena• Many buses available- transit plaza is just a 5min walk away and 22 Illini stops right outside Illini tower
Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Below average and inconsistent food quality• Extremely repetitive menu• Panini bar is the only consistent thing there
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suite living- spacious rooms equipped with a private bathroom, kitchen, and living area.• Small gym, study lounge, music room, flix (mini movie theatre), pingpong table and pool table provided• Wireless internet• Air conditioned• Netted windows-no problems with bugs• Break housing available at an additional cost of \$175, regardless of duration
Living Environment/ Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Huge mix of international students• Relatively quiet environment• Several dorm events organized throughout the academic year such as IT got talent, Bingo night, Resident Appreciation week etc• Additional floor events organized by your RA (resident advisor).
Others	NIL

Armory House

Features	Description
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southwest corner of campus • 10-15min walk to main quad • 5-10min walk to ARC, ice arena and green street • Far from engineering quad; relatively close to south quad and business buildings • 22 Illini is 1 street away • Surrounded by fraternities and sororities
Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor food quality • Repetitive menu • Creation station available • No late night and no dinner provided on sundays • However, there is a cooperative food agreement with Hendrick House (meal plan can be used there but not to sign others in)
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large rooms in both main and suites • Small lounge (equipped with movies, Xbox and a piano), study lounge and gym • Ethernet cable and high speed wireless provided • Weekly bathroom cleaning • Air conditioned • Community kitchen shared by main and suites automatically locked at 12am • Free break housing offered (a deposit is required but will be returned in full upon return of break housing key) • No lifts in AH main, only at AH suites. RAs help you carry your stuff up during move-in day.
Living Environment/ Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducive studying environment except on fridays and weekends as the numerous fraternities/sororities nearby start partying. (The noise dies down during cold weather/ winter) • Extremely helpful staff that attend to maintenance requests quickly • Balanced mix of international and local students • Very few social events organized.
Others	NIL

Newman Hall

Feature	Description
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The best centralised location you can find. It is right beside the quad. • 2 minutes walk to BIF, Undergraduate Library, Quad and Union Bookstore • Housing is right beside the St. John Catholic Newman Chapel
Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shares the same meal system as Hendrick House (another private dorm), meaning that if you stay in Newman Hall you can dine at Hendrick House, and people staying in Hendrick House can dine in Newman Hall as well. • One of the best food served • 24/7 COFFEE • Special meals that are uniquely Newman are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Taco Tuesdays o Wednesday Chef's Special Fried Chicken o Sunday Brunch • Special "Late Plate" Order - if you are unable to make it for dinner, you can order a late plate and your dinner will be packed in a box and ready to be picked up at the Student Kitchen when you return to Newman Hall
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lets you stay in dorm during Fall and Spring Breaks for free! • 500 pages of Free BW Printing at their computer lab (this is a huge convenience as you do not have to travel to the library to print documents) • Color printing available at front desk • Many spacious lounges with pool tables, ping pong and foosball • Student Kitchen available for rent • Music Room with piano • Laundry • Gym with a variety of machines and equipments • Internet is very stable

Living Environment/ Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although it is a Catholic Dorm, there is a large population of non-Catholic residents here so you need not worry if you are not Catholic. Newman Hall is very accepting! • Generally quiet • Newman Retreats are worth participating • Basically, Newman Hall has two types of Dorms: 1. Traditional Dorm on the South and 2. Single or Suite Style on the North • Tradition Dorm on the South: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Singles, Doubles and Triples Rooms o Shared Communal Bathroom o More traditional, more open interactions with your neighbors o Weekly house-keeping o Air conditioning and heater can be controlled by you • Single or Suite Style on the North <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o North Rooms are newer than South Rooms, hence more expensive o Singles Private Rooms, Doubles Suite and Singles Suite o One bathroom and a living room to each suite o Less traditional, more private, less interactions with your neighbors o Weekly house-keeping o Air conditioning and heater are centrally controlled
Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be considered as pricey but it is definitely worth it if you make use of their free printing and other facilities as well as cleaning services