

Most Expensive College Dorms for 2011-2012

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While rising tuition numbers get all the rage, room and board costs at some colleges are so high they surpass the tuition prices of many public universities. Students at the popular UCLA campus pay just under \$13K in resident tuition. Meanwhile, students at private universities in New York are paying thousands more just for their college housing. With prices this high, it's clear room and board is a big (and often overlooked) cost of going to college.

Is the cost worth it?

While students living in high-rise dorms in New York may enjoy the views, city life, and amenities they have access to now, most will spend years paying off the loans needed to pay for the luxury and will never again have the privilege to live with such a view.

The most expensive college housing is found at The New School in New York where freshmen who live in the 13th Street Residence, a traditional corridor-style dorm, pay \$18,080 with mandatory meal plan. When you consider dorm residents move out in the middle of May, and aren't allowed to stay over winter break, the cost per day for cramped rooms comes out to be a pretty penny.

This double room can be yours for about \$75 per day. (Photo: 13th Street Residence at The New School)

The priciest dorms are found in (not surprisingly) the urban areas of New York, Boston, and the California coast. With the exception of the UC schools, all of the colleges on this list are private, with eight of the top 10 being located in the New York area. Only four of the top 20 are located outside the states of California and New York: two in the Boston area (Suffolk University and Olin College), one in Washington D.C. (American University), and one (unexpectedly) in Nashville, Tennessee (Vanderbilt University).

For the first time, the average room and board at private colleges has eclipsed the \$10K mark. For the 2011-2012 school year, room and board prices increased 4.0% at public and 3.9% at private colleges with average costs of \$8,887 and \$10,089, respectively.

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These are prices a typical freshman will pay for room and board for the 2011-2012 school year. Prices are based on a double room with meal plan.

1. The New School - New York, NY

At the 13th Street Residence, a traditional freshman dorm, a double room and required meal plan will run you \$18,080. Want to live in a single? Be prepared to pay \$21,220.

The Stuyvesant Park Residence is another popular freshman dorm at The New School.

2. New York University - New York, NY

Home to one of the largest university housing systems in the US, 21 buildings comprise NYU's undergraduate housing system, with many residence halls being converted apartment complexes or old hotels. Third Avenue North is the largest all-freshman residence hall at NYU, housing over 950 students.

Third Avenue North Residence Hall at NYU

3. Fordham University - Lincoln Center - New York, NY

Resident students live in McMahon Hall, a 20-story residence building that houses over 740 Undergraduate and 140 Law students. The residence hall adjoins the world-renowned Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts and is just minutes from Central Park. The building is equipped with multiple study lounges, a social lounge, tennis and basketball courts and a fitness center. A controversial expansion project is in the works that will bring more dorm units to the college.

McMahon Residence Hall at Fordham's Lincoln Center campus.

Photo credit: Craig Califate - One time use only, only authorized for this story.

4. Fordham University - Rose Hill - New York, NY

Situated on 85 acres in North Bronx, the Rose Hill campus is among the largest privately owned green spaces in New York City. The Collegiate Gothic architecture, expansive lawns, ivy-covered buildings, and cobblestone streets make it one of the most beautiful campus settings in the nation. There are 10 residence halls on campus, including four residential colleges and six Integrated Learning Communities for such disciplines as science, business, and leadership.

Martyrs' Court at Fordham's Rose Hill campus

5. St John's University (Queens) - New York, NY

St John's has some of the newest and most modern student residence halls on the East Coast.

Each Hall Council receives funds to provide students with free or discounted tickets to major NYC events, such as Yankee games, museums and Broadway shows.

O'Conner Hall at St. John's University - Queens campus

6. Suffolk University - Boston, MA

The majority of incoming students get assigned to the Suffolk University Residence Hall at 150 Tremont Street. Students residing in the newer Miller Hall, another popular dorm for freshmen, enjoy magnificent views of Boston.

150 Tremont Street Dorm at Suffolk University.

The Common Room at Miller Residence Hall with sweeping views of Boston.

7. Manhattanville College - Purchase, NY

Generally occupied by first-year students, Spellman is the largest of Manhattanville's four residence halls with 211 rooms and 434 students. The building is co-ed by room, meaning that female students might live next door to male students.

Spellman Hall at Manhattanville College.

8. Pace University - New York, NY

The majority of incoming students in a standard double are placed in Maria's Tower at One Pace Plaza. Located in the same building where Pace students take most of their classes, dorm rooms are on floors 5-17, making it just a short elevator ride away from classes, the library, and the cafeteria. Theme floor options include film, wellness, green, honors, and world cultures. A typical student here can expect to pay \$14,230 for room and board.

Freshmen who live in a double at the John Street Residence, where rooms come equipped with a flatscreen TV and private bath, pay \$16,700 with the bronze meal plan (the minimum required meal plan for freshmen). Pair a double room at the John Street Residence with a platinum meal plan and you'll be looking at room and board costs of \$17,790.

Dorms are floors 5-17 in Maria's Tower at One Pace Plaza.

9. University of California - Berkeley - Berkeley, CA

At Cal there are many housing environments to choose from: traditional high-rise residence halls, suites, and theme programs with each having its own unique style and amenities. Students living in the residence halls have access to academic services centers, live-in health workers, computing centers, security monitoring programs, tutoring, and advising. Out of all the living options at Cal, the Unit 1 and Unit 2 complex hold the most freshmen (over 1400+ each).

The Unit 1 complex at Cal consists of six halls with approximately 230 students in each hall.

10. Marymount Manhattan College - New York, NY

Marymount Manhattan College's 55th Street Residence Hall is one of the tallest college dorms in America. Student rooms are in the first 32 stories of a 46-story skyscraper in Midtown Manhattan, offering great views of NYC. The dorm has seven themed floors: Academic Achievement, Early Risers, Green, Leadership, Creative and Performing Arts, Vegetarian, and Substance Free.

55th Street Residence: Dorms are floors 1-32. The top stories are private luxury apartments.

The Top 20

College Room/Board

1. The New School \$18,080
2. New York University \$15,181
3. Fordham University - Lincoln Center \$15,000
4. Fordham University - Rose Hill \$14,925
5. St. John's University (Queens) \$14,700
6. Suffolk University \$14,624
7. Manhattanville College \$14,520
8. Pace University \$14,230
9. University of California - Berkeley \$14,046
10. Marymount Manhattan College \$14,030
11. Franklin W. Olin College of Engineering \$14,000
12. Sarah Lawrence College \$13,958
13. Dominican University of California \$13,900
14. University of California - Santa Cruz \$13,869
15. Harvey Mudd College \$13,858
16. Cooper Union for Advancement of Science \$13,700
17. University of California - Santa Barbara \$13,694
18. American University \$13,684
19. Claremont McKenna College \$13,625
20. Vanderbilt University \$13,560