

Frequently Asked Questions Greek Life, Residence Life & Greek Bursar Billing Process

Questions represented below were submitted through the Interfraternity Council on behalf of its member organizations. These do not represent an exhaustive list of questions but do represent those deemed most important by IFC leadership.

Responses to questions represent information available at the time of response and subject to change based on further exploration of topics presented or issues that might emerge in the future.

If further clarification is needed and/or additional questions spawned by the responses are discovered, please send comments to Jessica Wickiewicz, Assistant Dean, Office of Fraternity and Sorority Affairs.

❖ Policy Questions

- How would opt into counting as on campus for housing grants change or status in other school policies?

The relationship between Rensselaer and Greek chapters would not change if one chooses to opt into the Bursar billing process.

- Will fraternity houses in the system be considered on campus for public safety's jurisdiction, alcohol policy, and other applicable policies?

Public Safety's jurisdiction includes Greek chapters because the chapter is a recognized Institute organization being maintained and operated for and on behalf of Rensselaer students. Institute policies for and on behalf of Rensselaer students including student conduct and Alcohol Policies remain in effect as they do now.

Moving Greek life from DOSO to Residence Life improves programming opportunities for students equivalent to similar opportunities afforded to students living in on-campus residential units.

- Will counting as on campus be used as reasoning for Live-in Housing Directors, or RAs in the future? (been told to me in informal settings that it will not be but in writing will give them more credibility)

No. There is no plan to impose or require live-in directors or resident assistants. However, a live-in housing director will be required if a chapter is placed on a disciplinary suspension resulting from judicial action.

- Can the school fill empty rooms with non brothers without the prior approval of the house? (I know you have already answered this but is important to have in a FAQ because it comes up so often)

No. Chapter houses are owned and operated by the chapter's alumni and/or house corporation board. Rensselaer will not arbitrarily place students into a chapter where they are not welcome.

- Can the school withhold money collected for housing costs from a fraternity?

Payment to cover room and board expenses collected on behalf of the student cannot be withheld from the chapter. If a student's bill (the entire bill which includes tuition and all fees, not just housing related charges) is not paid or fully covered, funds are uncollected so a payment will not be made until a student's account is paid in full.

- Would this authorize the school to do random uninvited spot checks for infractions?

Random spot checks for infractions are not conducted. Random checks for health and safety may be conducted if warranted or reason to believe a student's safety and/or health is at risk.

❖ Housing Grant Questions

- If reclassified to on campus for RPI Housing Grants will it count towards on-campus recruitment for ROTC and for other Housing Grants (like the state of New York)

ROTC room and board can be considered for fraternities and sororities who are enrolled in Bursar Billing. There are no other housing grants from NYS or any other independent entity.

- Will fraternities living in a consistent location but is renting it from another individual be able to count as on-campus housing for housing grants? Or is it only for houses with housing corps, nationals, or undergraduate chapters owning their facilities?

No chapter may obtain housing grant funds except those owning their property or leasing said property from Rensselaer.

- Can meal plan cost and room costs be lumped together and that amount be what the housing grant is applied for?

Housing grants are considered 'room & board'.

- If a fraternity is suspended, does the house still count as on campus for members currently living in the house with housing grants?

No. If a fraternity is suspended it is no longer a recognized Greek chapter and forfeits all opportunities to be considered part of Residence life or the Institute.

- What about for brothers who don't live in the house at the time but move in after the suspension has started?

Not eligible for reasons given above.

- Will fraternities be allowed to have portions of the housing grant go to contingencies funds for if something happens that is unexpected? If so would there be any restriction on the percentage that could go to that point?

Housing grants are expenses related to room and board. It is expected that chapters have a contingency fund established to cover emergency or unanticipated repairs that might emerge affecting the chapter house. How a chapter sets up its contingency fund is left to the chapter leadership and house corporation board.

- If a brother with a housing grant (or sophomore if sophomore on campus housing becomes reality) gets de-brothered can he/she be evicted or is the fraternity and the individual forced to live together for the rest of the year?

Membership is solely the discretion of chapter. A student no longer residing in the chapter house and is awarded a housing grant must move into a residence life facility in order to retain his/her housing grant.

❖ **Bursar Billing Questions**

Disbursement Dates

- Why are the disbursement dates set up the way they are?

Disbursement dates are set according to billing and receivable deadlines AND financial aid disbursement (federal, state and private) including non-institutional loans. Additional consideration is the Add and Drop deadlines, 5th week enrollment verification, and request for leaves of absence/withdrawal. This is relatively consistent for each semester.

- Is there any way to charge part of room and board at an earlier date so the money is available for repairs during work week and purchasing for rush?

As of this writing, the dates cannot be changed or moved earlier. This might be adjusted in future depending on timely payment of students' bills.

Letting the School know who lives in a fraternity house

- If a fraternity initiates their spring class after April 1st (which is around the 6th or 7th week of several fraternities 8 week pledge process) would they need to have them commit to living in the fraternity house before they commit to become a brother?

The key is knowing by April 1 as is humanly possible the number of students and who the students are residing in Greek housing for the following semester. It is understandable that there will be some fluctuation based on student needs and plans.

- If a brother goes on co-op or drops out of RPI over the summer or in the first few weeks of classes can they be removed from what the fraternity's roster of living in the facility?

Yes.

- If a brother who expects to go on co-op doesn't unexpectedly due to uncontrollable circumstances and registers for classes over the summer can they be registered into the system for an empty room after the initial live in list is submitted?

Yes.

❖ *Use of Pro forma Reviews*

- Will billing amounts be confidential (aka will the room and board for fraternities be posted online like Residence Life Facility amounts are)?

Pro forma reviews are confidential and not intended for any public release.

- Also, does confidential imply all information from the proforma will not be used for any purpose other than for assisting chapters in setting billing (aka not used for review of the entire Greek system finances)

Pro forma review is to inform and assist chapters with setting and managing room and board expenses. It will not be used to punitively insert the Institute into the affairs of Greek life or individual chapters.

❖ *Flow of Money- Where it goes, how much can*

- What are the "applicable fees" mentioned in Section 8 of the Greek Billing Information Packet?

Not aware at this time of any 'applicable fees'. Need clarification.

- Can billing go directly to a national organization, housing corporation, etc.? Or does it need to go through the undergraduate chapter first?

Funds are issued to the undergraduate chapter, who then can disburse required funds to other entities.

- If a chapters alumni owe the school money can the school deduct this from the amount collected the bursar system?

Absolutely not.

❖ **Assorted Important Policy Questions**

- What does the term "assist" mean in "Chapter will provide confidential proforma for review [by 5 departments of RPI] to **assist** Chapter in setting appropriate billing to members."? Can a house turn down the suggested amount and still stay in the system as long as they pass the inspection?

"Assist" means that RPI, through its respective departments, can and will provide assistance to chapters in setting reasonable room and board rates that are competitive, provide support to chapter infrastructure, and provide reasonable assurance that RPI funds are not used to continue support of substandard housing and/or unreasonable food services. It also means that there be assurance that some funds are held in reserve to address emergency or unanticipated housing needs that might emerge over the course of the year.

- Can a fraternity or its alumni provide its own housing scholarships for brothers whose financial aid does not cover the entirety of the room and board.

Yes.

❖ *Opting in or out of the agreement*

- Who needs to agree to opt into this agreement? Undergraduates or Housing Corp or both?

Opt-in requires Housing Corporation and the advisor/alumnus advisor approval.

- What would be the process to opt out of the system if a fraternity so desires?

The chapter, through its Housing Corporation and advisor/alumnus advisor, must formally submit written documentation declining participation in the Bursar Billing process.

❖ *Alternatives*

- Can different bill collection agency be substituted for the Greek Bursar Billing System (like Omega)?

Don't know at this point. Chapters using a third party billing agency need to provide documentation to explain how billing occurs, fees assessed individual and/or chapter, and the disbursement process.

When such documentation is obtained and shared with RPI, then a determination can be made as to whether such an arrangement can succeed between RPI, the chapter and a third party billing agency.

This is open for further discussion.

- Could a house only use the collection method for brothers with housing grants or needing to live on campus? AKA if 20 brothers lived in but only 10 had housing grants could a house only file to collect the room for the 10 with housing grants through the bursar?

Need documentation from the third party billing agency to compare with RPI Bursar billing. Not sure.

- If the school creates a different agreement for theme housing or outside contractors will fraternities be allowed to consider a similar system to what those groups are being offered to count as on campus?

There appears to be no circumstance under which this scenario would occur.