

Greek Life by Kara Porter

Many U.S. colleges and universities have fraternity and sorority houses on campus. This tradition is commonly referred to as “Greek life”, because each fraternity or sorority house is named with 2-3 Greek letters. You may see participation in Greek life on our own campus, but it is also portrayed in movies, television shows, and other pop culture related to U.S. Universities.

Most fraternities and sororities have large houses. Fraternity houses are for male students, and sorority houses are for female students. Hundreds of students can belong to a single fraternity or sorority, but not all of them live together in the fraternity/sorority house. Some fraternities and sororities have academic, cultural, or religious affiliations, but not all of them do.

At the University of Illinois, there are 91 different fraternities and sororities, and over 7,700 students are affiliated with a fraternity or sorority (statistics provided by [Fraternity and Sorority Affairs](#)). Whether or not you belong to the Greek life community, you’ll probably hear the following slang around campus:

- **Bid:** an invitation for membership that fraternities and sororities send to new members. This often occurs at the end of recruitment, which can be called “Bid Day”.
- **Big brother/big sister:** new members are paired with more senior members in a mentorship role. The more senior member is referred to as a “big brother”, “big sister”, or sometimes just “big”. The mentee is referred to as the “little”.
- **Rush:** a recruitment period when fraternities and sororities hold social events and gatherings for those who are looking to join Greek life. Typically, this occurs at the beginning of each semester, although fall semester is the most popular. Some social gatherings include a dress code (i.e. formal wear, costumes, etc.).

Sweetest Day by Jennie Avery



Most people are familiar with Valentine’s Day, a holiday celebrated in the United States each February 14th to show our affection for our loved ones, and more specifically for our significant others and romantic interests. It’s a nice idea, celebrating people who warm your heart during the coldest part of the winter.

But what happens if you fall madly in love over the summer - Do you have to wait until February to celebrate your new love?

And what if you are too scared of frostbite to leave your apartment during the Polar Vortex - Is losing feeling in your face and extremities the only way to prove that you love your partner?

The answer to both questions is no! You don’t have to wait until February because in the Midwestern United States there is another day – Sweetest Day – when you can shower your sweetheart with love and affection. Sweetest Day was lovingly created by a candy company in 1921 so that they could sell more candy. Isn’t that sweet?! (pun intended) Since then the day has been celebrated by some as a second Valentine’s Day, while others treat it as a reverse Valentine’s Day when women shower men with love, affection, and chocolate.

So this October 21, don’t forget to celebrate Sweetest Day. And if you don’t have a sweetheart to buy flowers and candy for, the advisors at ISSS wouldn’t mind getting some chocolates!

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Autumn Foliage Fun by Kara Porter

Some would say that autumn is the most beautiful time of the year in the Midwest. As the weather cools, the trees turn to vibrant shades of red, orange, yellow, and brown. Autumn colors inspire artists, photographers, poets, and even many community festivals and outdoor activities. Whether you're an autumn enthusiast, or you just want to capture a few pictures of trees at their peak colors, here is your information headquarters for all things autumn leaves!

Stay Updated

Both the [U.S. National Weather Service](#) and the [Illinois Department of Natural Resources](#) have excellent websites for fall foliage information! Learn more about local species of trees, why leaves change color, review local color updates and optional "color tours", and much more!

Enjoy Arts & Crafts

These crafts aren't just for kids. These ideas can inspire some beautiful works of art!

[Leaf rubbing](#)
[Leaf prints](#)
[Framed foliage](#)

See it For Yourself

Here are some local places where you can see some great autumn colors. Hint: colors reach their peak around mid-October in Central Illinois.

[The University of Illinois Arboretum](#)
[Busey Woods/Anita Purves Nature Center](#)
[Meadowbrook Park](#)
[Allerton Park & Retreat Center](#)
[Kickapoo State Park](#)

Like running in nature? Check out these upcoming events!

[Aruna Run](#) (October 21)
[Dirndl Dash](#) (October 7)



Underhyped Illini Sports Teams Overachieve! By Nick Dunn

The University of Illinois is known for a lot of things: Nobel laureates, top ten academic programs, corn, and more. Something we deserve to be better known for is our sports teams. Not football or basketball, which deserve their mid-level reputation, but our incredibly high level but underhyped teams like volleyball, wrestling, and golf.

Illini Golf is above par any way you look at it. The women's team had a great year last year, and the men excelled in the post-season. Coming off three years running as Big Ten conference champions, the Illini men's golf team earned third place for the third year in a row at the NCAA national golf championships. Two Individual Illini men have won national championships in the past ten years.

Wrestling is another team/individual sport in which the Illini excel. For the second year in a row, the Illini had 3 wrestlers on the podium at the national championships (they won first, second, or third place). Isaiah Martinez, 2015 and 2016 national champion, came up just a bit short with a second place finish. U of I wrestling matches are especially fun to watch at Huff Hall and are free to enter with an ICard. Each team will match its best wrestler in each weight class against each other, and there are almost no breaks in the action. The season starts in November, so you'll have to wait just a little while to support your fellow Illini on the mats.

Illinois Volleyball is consistently near the top of the game. Our women's team is often among the top in the country, with national championship tournament Round-of-16 appearances 7 of the past 10 years. Huff Hall games are packed, as our volleyball team is always in the top-ten most watched volleyball teams in the country. You'll be in good company cheering on Illini volleyball starting 8/19 with a scrimmage match (the team splits in two to play each other), and our home debut on 9/8 against Stanford.

Visit fightingillini.com for more information about these and many other Illini sports!

Free and Cheap Fun Around Campus by Lauren Karplus

◆ Fighting Illini Athletics!

Illini sports teams offer special student prices for tickets, and many events are completely FREE. Club sports such as water polo, ice hockey, and wheelchair basketball are not listed on the official website, but are also popular with spectators.

◆ Krannert Center

The Krannert Center for the Performing Arts has a show on pretty much every night, and guess what? Student tickets are usually only \$5-\$10! In addition to the regularly scheduled local orchestras, student theater, dance performances, and operas, internationally acclaimed traveling musicians perform regularly at Krannert. For completely FREE fun, take a tour of the Krannert Center, attend one of their free community concerts, or visit “Krannert Uncorked” every Thursday evening for free wine, cheese, and entertainment.

◆ Free “Lunch on Us” at the Cultural Houses

Who doesn't like to try exciting new cuisine for free? Every day of the week, you can eat for free on campus while learning something new about one of the many diverse populations here on our campus. Hosted by the various cultural and resource houses on campus, this is one of the best-kept free secrets on campus. With an exciting and diverse array of speakers and topics, it will quench your appetite for knowledge and food!

◆ Nature right next door at Japan House and the Arboretum

Need some relaxing green space but don't have a car? Want to do a dramatic photo-shoot with friends? Take a stroll through the Arboretum and the Japanese Gardens (adjacent to one another).

◆ I-Card discount at local businesses

Did you know just showing your I-Card gets you discounts at tons of businesses? Check out the website above to see a complete list.

◆ Illini Union Events

The Illini Union hosts an amazing array of free events all year round, from movie screenings, to soccer tournaments, to performances in the Courtyard Café. During the first week of the Fall semester, they go all-out with a hypnotist, vendor fairs, Quad Day, Poster Sales, and more. Always check the Illini Union calendar to see what movie/performance/fun activities are available that week.

◆ Spurlock and Krannert Museums

Campus is home to two free and eclectic museums, both of which house the eccentric collections of former faculty members. The Spurlock Museum focuses on world cultures, and has rotating exhibits as well. The Krannert Art Museum has a lot of neat artwork with rotating exhibits as well. Sometimes a student of classic music will hold a recital at Krannert Art Museum, and you will feel very cultured listening to them play in the gallery!



Festival Fun! by Lauren Karplus

The University of Illinois is surrounded by two bustling towns filled with all kinds of exciting festivals and events. Fall music festivals include The Pygmalion Festival (which has a bit of a cult-following in the US among indie music lovers) and the Ellnora Guitar Festival.

Other local festivals are not based around music. The Taste of Champaign and the Urbana Sweetcorn festivals are both annual festivals in late August where you can sample delicious food, listen to live music, and enjoy the fair atmosphere.

Come summer, Champaign is filled with free weekly outdoor concerts, including the Neighborhood Nights concert series in various Urbana parks and the Sounds at Sunset concert series in various Champaign parks. There's also Friday Night Live in downtown Champaign on Friday evenings, and the Folk and Roots Friday Concerts on Fridays at lunchtime at Crystal Lake Park in Urbana.

Both Champaign and Urbana offer weekly farmers' markets three seasons of the year, and they're always entertaining.

Summary:

Late August- Taste of Champaign and Urbana Sweetcorn Festival

September- Pygmalion and Ellnora Guitar Festival

All summer- Neighborhood Nights, Sounds at Sunset, Friday Night Live, Folk and Roots Fridays

May-November- Farmers' Markets (Saturday mornings in downtown Urbana, Tuesday afternoons in downtown Champaign)

Helpful links:

<https://urbanasweetcornfestival.com/>

<https://champaignparks.com/taste/>

<http://www.thepygmalionfestival.com/>

<https://krannertcenter.com/ellnora>



Ask Igor the I-20!

In this advice column, our resident “agony aunt,” Igor attempts to answer some of your burning questions about life, love, and America. If you have a question for Igor, email: askigortheittwenty@gmail.com

Dear Igor,

I am in a major with a high percentage of international students. I also chose to live with people from my home country when deciding on a lease, because it was just easier to organize that way. Now, I want to try and meet American friends, but I find that they keep to themselves and don't want to talk to international students. How do I make American friends?

Sincerely,

Americans Wanted

Dear Americans Wanted,

Due to your major and your living situation, you are right that you will have a harder time meeting American friends in a natural way, so you will have to put in some extra work to make American friends. Consider joining an RSO (registered student organization) aligned with one of your hobbies, or join an RSO where you can learn something new from the current members. There are over 1,000 RSOs on campus, so you can learn anything from photography to baking to ultimate frisbee. Another great way to meet Americans is to volunteer. There are many service-based RSOs and service fraternities on campus you can volunteer with. Try to find a group with predominantly American members in order to maximize your exposure to Americans.

You may be right that Americans keep to themselves, but trust me when I say they are just as shy towards you as you are towards them. If you meet someone interesting, don't be afraid to “break the ice” by asking them to study or grab a coffee with you. If you like to exercise, you can also ask if they'd like to visit ARC or CRCE with you to exercise.

Happy Hunting!

Yours,

Igor



Dear Igor,

Recently, my roommate told me I smell and asked me to shower more. I was shocked at how rude this was, and then I worried that maybe I do smell? I take a shower at least every two or three days and more if I get sweaty. For what it's worth, she's an American and I'm not, and I think that this might have something to do with it.

Signed,

I'm Not Smelly

Dear Not Smelly,

This is a tough one! Americans are pretty renowned for feeling compelled to shower at least once a day. Americans who exercise or have physically demanding jobs often shower more than once a day. Most Americans also use a strong deodorant or antiperspirant under their arms every day, in addition to washing their clothes after each time they wear them, even if they don't look dirty yet. *That's not to say there aren't plenty of smelly Americans and lots of Americans who don't follow these strict hygiene standards- this is just speaking generally.* If this is the first time you are hearing that you smell, maybe your roommate is observing your bathing habits and reacting accordingly. However, maybe you've always had body odor and everyone was just too polite to tell you in the past. Another thing that could be impacting your body odor is the time of day you shower: if you like to shower in the evening before bed, you may be sweating in your sleep, making your body odor stronger the next day than it would be if you showered in the morning. Sometimes the food we cook influences the odors our clothes and bodies have, so maybe your roommate is just smelling a stronger spice that you use in your cooking.

Obviously, you have the right to smell however sweet or pungent you would like to. However, sometimes having an odor can hold you back socially or professionally, as not everyone wants to spend time with someone who is a bit on the smelly side. I see your roommate as having done you a favor by letting you know, and if you find their request to shower more often to be reasonable, then I suggest you try to do it for a week and see how you like it. If your roommate still doesn't notice a difference, you might seek the opinions of other friends or a doctor to find out if your body odor might have a medical cause. Smell you later!

Yours,

Igor

ISSS Favorite Halloween Costumes!

Halloween is a great time to show off your creative side! If you need some inspiration to get started, the staff at ISSS can help! Here are some of our all-time favorite Halloween costumes!



Kara: My favorite Halloween costume was a butterfly. My grandma actually made this costume from scratch, so it will always have sentimental value for me. I still have it 20 years later!



Leo (vampire and wolf): My wife is German and never trick or treated when she was growing up. So last year we dressed up and visited our neighbors to ask for candy. With her mask on nobody could tell how old she was!



Will: Will's favorite Halloween costume is actually when someone dressed as him.



Jennie: Though I now LOVE this costume, for my very first Halloween I was a VERY unhappy clown.



Rhonda: Prince in 2016

Other entries (no photos, very sad):

- ◆ **Dylan:** In the frozen Tundra of my Canadian home, it is not uncommon for the occasional Halloween to see temperatures drop below zero degrees. I remember one such year when I was about 7 or so, when that October 31st was a terribly cold day with snow covered streets. My sister and I refused to let this minor hindrance stop us from collecting our mandated treats! My Dad drove us around the neighborhood in our old van for about an hour, and me-oh-my did we clean up that year. The neighbors were giving out bountiful amounts, as very few of the other kids had the grit to face the harsh climate. There was probably a valuable life lesson to be learned from that experience but I did not really care at that point ... I had the biggest bag of candy on the block - nuff' said!
- ◆ **Kirby:** One of my favorite costumes was the Grim Reaper (I'd be dressed in a long black outfit with a hood that hid my face). When I was in middle and high school, my childhood friend and I would set up these elaborate Halloween scares on our front porches and yards. She would dress up as a Scarecrow and sit on the front porch with a bowl of candy and scare kids when they reached for it. On their way from the front porch, I would pop out of a nearby bush or shadow and scare the kids and their parents. It was delightful.
- ◆ **Lauren:** My favorite costumes from my childhood were when I was a panda and when I was a pirate.
- ◆ **Martin:** My favorite Halloween costume is a t-shirt and jeans, watching tv in a room that can't be seen from the street with all the other lights off to make it look like I'm not home. The costume is "Guy Who Does Not Enjoy Halloween" and when you consider the amount of candy you don't have to buy, it is a good economical choice.
- ◆ **Nick:** Was I a bit old to be trick-or-treating in seventh grade? Yeah, but I needed that sweet, sweet candy, so I threw on a toolbelt and flannel to become Al Borland from *Home Improvement*, the long-running documentary about the making of the famous television show *Tool Time* (1991-1999).

Have anything that you'd like to see in future Cultural Spotlight editions? Sports, holidays, local wildlife? Let us know! Email Jennie Avery at jsavery@illinois.edu with your suggestions for future content!