

The Hawk Eye

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Student housing costs continue to rise



Construction of the Crimson Suites on the IUP campus proceeds, May 3, 2010. Photos by Ida Arici.

By Ida Arici and Chelsea L. Yurisc

INDIANA - Stephanie N. Bianco, a sophomore health and physical education major at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, lived in the Maple East suites for the 2009-2010 school year. She did not live there willingly.

"The only reason I stayed on campus was because it's convenient," said Bianco in an April 22 interview in the Stapleton Library. "They are expensive and cheaply made."

[IUP's on-campus housing costs soared when the new suites replaced the old dormitories.](#) And in academic year 2010-2011 the rents are going up again.

Take the price of a two-person shared semi-suite on campus. In academic year 2009-2010, the rent was \$3,070 per person per semester. For academic year 2010-2011, the rent will rise to \$3,162, a hike of 3 percent, according to the [IUP Office of Housing and Residence Life Web site.](#) That's substantially more than the 2 percent increase in the rate of inflation from 2009 to 2010, according to the federal [Bureau of Labor Statistics.](#)

In the 2010-2011 school year, the University Towers residence hall will be restricted to upperclassmen, Whitmyre Hall will house only honors college students, and Elkin Hall will be reserved only for freshmen, transfer students and students with severe financial difficulties, Lemasters said.

Since 2006, 10 traditional dorms with 3,658 beds have been demolished and replaced with eight suites with 3,520 beds, according to Michael Lemasters, IUP's director of housing and residence life, in an April 5 interview in his office, suite G-24 of Maple West.

A double-occupancy room that will cost \$2,065 in the three remaining traditional dormitories next year will cost \$3,162 in the suites, according to the [IUP Office of Housing and Residence Life Web site.](#) Instead of having the option of paying the cheaper cost, incoming freshmen and returning upperclassmen must pay \$1,097 extra -- 53 percent more -- to live in the suites.

Students are trying to find cheaper alternatives. In 2005, before the campus-wide residential renovation began, 3,707 students lived on campus, according to Lemasters. As of the spring 2010 semester, 3,548 students live on campus, a 4 percent decrease.

While campus housing provides electricity, heat, water, Internet and cable with no

additional costs, some students say it is not worth it. One of them is David J. Elfreth, a junior accounting major and a former occupant of the Suites on Maple.

"It looked like a white-collar prison cell," said Elfreth in a March 26 interview at the Commonplace Coffee House. "This year I'm living at Copper Beech."

Off-campus alternatives include University Square, Lazor Brothers, The Apartment Store and Copper Beech Townhome Communities.



Work on expansion of the off-campus University Square apartments proceeds, May 3, 2010.

[University Square](#), the closest to campus, provides houses and apartments with furniture, cable TV and Internet service, laundry facilities and parking close to campus, according to its Web site.

"Our apartments are less expensive now than the dorms," said University Square property manager Sally G. Kaufman in a March 29 interview in her office at 1163 Grant St.

A two-bedroom apartment for four tenants, two per room, rents for \$1,850 per person per semester at University Square, according to the [Web site](#). Similarly, a two-bedroom suite for four students, two per room, costs \$3,457 per person per semester on campus, according to OHRL's [Web site](#). The difference amounts to \$1,607 -- 87 percent more for IUP on-campus housing.

"The price of our apartments usually goes up 3 to 5 percent a year," said Kaufman. University Square pays for water and sewage. It also provides full security and video. However, tenants pay for electricity, garbage and parking.

"I've been here 13 years," said Kaufman. "We started with 50 apartments, now we have 293."

University Square has 13 off-campus buildings. An additional 20 apartments are being built in new construction atop the commercial strip that houses Domino's Pizza and The Commonplace Coffeehouse and Roastery on Grant Street.

The new on-campus suites have affected off-campus housing amenities as well. Apartments used to be two bedrooms with two students per room.

"Prices go up because students have become more demanding," said Kaufman. "Now everyone wants their own room. The new apartments even have rooms with their own private bathroom."

Additionally, [in 2006 OHRL made a new requirement that forces freshmen to live on campus](#), according to Lemasters. The requirement opened a new market for off-campus housing, such as University Square.

"The suites filled up, forcing juniors and seniors to find places off campus," Kaufman said.

One of those juniors is Roxanne N. Hotaling, an art education major at IUP.

"I would tell people to live off campus," said Hotaling in a March 26 interview at the Commonplace Coffee House. "I think off-campus living teaches responsibility."

Chelsea Yurisc, a sophomore majoring in journalism and hospitality management at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, is from Saxonburg, Pa.

Ida Arici, a sophomore majoring in journalism at the Indiana University

of Pennsylvania, is from Philadelphia, Pa.

Sidebar: Fast Facts

IUP on-campus housing-supply trends

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>% +/-</u>
# of beds, on-campus housing	3,658	3,520	-3.77%
# of students on campus	3,707	3,548	-4.28%

Source: Michael Lemasters, director, IUP Housing and Residence Life

IUP on-campus housing-cost trends

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>% +/-</u>
Traditional dormitory*	\$1,670	\$2,065	+ 24 %
New suites**	3,010	3,162	+ 5%

* Double occupancy

** Two-person shared semi-suite

Source: IUP Office of Housing and Residence Life

Sidebar: Fast Facts

Off-Campus Housing Options

Following are rental agencies catering to IUP students seeking off-campus housing:

The Apartment Store
1300 Oakland Ave
Indiana, PA 15701
Phone: 724 - 463 - 8080
Web: <http://indianapa.apartmentstore.com/indiana.php>

Has three apartment complexes throughout Indiana, including Carriage House Apartments, Essex Apartments and Regency Square. Specializes in graduate-student housing. Offers a two-semester lease. Deposit is required.

Copper Beech Townhomes
223 Medlar Drive
Indiana, PA 15701
Phone: (724) - 349 - 8025
E-mail: iupleasing@cbeech.com
Web: <http://www.cbeech.com/indiana.htm>

Offers a 12-month lease on single, two-, three- and four-bedroom townhomes. Furnished or unfurnished. The lowest rate is \$610 per month.

Lazor Brothers Student Housing
Chris Lazor
1227 Maple Street
Indiana, PA 15701
Phone: 724 - 349 - 4914
Web: <http://lazorbrothers.com>

Offers a two-semester lease on two-, three-, four- and five-person apartments. A \$200 security deposit per student and a parental consent and guaranty are required.

The Apartment Gallery
1935 Merry Place #3
Indiana, PA 15701
Phone: 877 - 636 - 5329
E-mail: WestgateGroup@theapartmentgallery.com

Offers apartments at three different locations: [Westgate Terrace](#), [Spring Meadow](#), and [Hampton Court](#). Apartments are pet-friendly. Westgate Terrace rents range from \$455 to \$730 per month; Spring Meadows, \$575 to \$820, and Hampton Court, \$700 to \$800.

Source: <http://www.iuphousing.com>

Sidebar: For more info

For more information about this story, contact the following sources:

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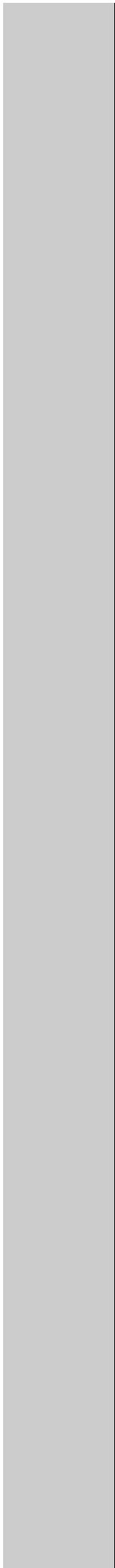
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