FRATRUSH

FROM SQUID TO BID

THE PARENT'S GUIDE TO

SEC FRATERNITY RUSH

Everything you need to know for the 2027 season

Free. Share with another rush parent if it helps.

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frat-rush.com

This One's for You, Not Him

Your son has been talking about rush. Maybe he hasn't said much - just that he's "thinking about it" - but you've been Googling. You've joined the parent Facebook groups. You've scrolled through threads at 11 PM wondering what you're supposed to do here.

Here's the thing nobody tells parents: there is almost zero useful information online about fraternity rush from the parent perspective. There are hundreds of guides for sorority rush. Consultants charging thousands for sorority PNMs. An entire industry built around helping daughters navigate recruitment. For fraternity rush? A few university FAQ pages that read like they were written by a committee and a handful of Reddit threads from 2019.

We built FratRush for the guys going through it. But every week, the emails we get from parents tell us we need to talk to you, too. So this is the guide we wish someone had handed us before our families went through it.

Here's the real information - pulled from months of research across all 16 SEC schools, conversations with current chapter members, and the actual questions parents ask us.

The Biggest Thing Parents Get Wrong About Fraternity Rush

You're thinking August. You're picturing your son showing up to campus during move-in week and walking around to fraternity houses for a few days. That's how it works in the movies.

That's not how it works at the SEC.

At schools like Auburn, Oklahoma, Texas A&M, Texas, and Missouri, the real recruiting happens over the summer. In 2026, chapters started hosting cookouts, lake trips, watch parties, and casual hangouts as early as late May. Brothers meet incoming freshmen, build relationships, and make mental notes about who fits. At Auburn, the 2026 IFC bidding window opened in early June, which meant chapters could extend official bids more than two months before fall classes started. Those are 2026 dates for reference. 2027 bidding windows are not posted yet.

Here's what should get your attention: at competitive SEC houses, most bid decisions take shape from summer events alone. By the time formal rush week starts in August, much of the class is already spoken for.

This means the timeline you're planning around is probably wrong. If the rushee's plan is to "figure it out when he gets to campus," he's showing up to the second half of a game that started months ago. That's not a scare tactic. That's just the system.

What this means for you as a parent: The planning window starts earlier than you think. In 2026, registration at most SEC schools opened in the spring, and summer event circuits at the summer-active schools started in late May. If your rushee is rushing at a summer-active school, he needs to be available for those events. If he's at a fall-formal school like LSU or Ole Miss, the make-or-break window is formal rush week itself, and the registration deadline may be days (or hours) before it starts. Some chapters will cover lodging for out-of-state guys. That's worth asking about.

What we know about 2027 dates
Most 2027 formal recruitment dates are not posted yet. We only list a date here when a school's official Greek life or IFC page has confirmed it. We last checked those pages on November 10, 2026.
Vanderbilt (confirmed): Spring Preference Night is January 15, 2027. Spring Bid Night is January 16, 2027. Vanderbilt runs deferred recruitment, so first-years go through formal rush in the spring. Source: Vanderbilt Greek Life.
The other 15 SEC schools: 2027 registration, bidding windows, and formal rush weeks are still marked to be determined. Last season's 2026 dates remain on frat-rush.com for reference, clearly labeled as 2026. Check the school's IFC page before you make travel plans.

What Rush Actually Looks Like (So You Stop Imagining the Worst)

Parents who went through sorority rush with a daughter know the drill: structured rounds, Panhellenic rules, quotas, formal everything. Fraternity rush is a completely different animal.

Fraternity rush is casual. Summer events are cookouts and lake days. Open house rounds are walk-around conversations in chapter houses. There are no choreographed door chants. No matching outfits. The vibe is closer to hanging out with guys and seeing if you click than anything resembling a formal interview.

Fraternity rush is less transparent. There's no app tracking mutual preferences. No centralized matching system. Chapters make their own decisions behind closed doors. After each round, brothers vote on every rushee by name. Someone in the room has to champion your son, or his name just doesn't come up again. There's no notification that he's been cut. He just doesn't get invited back.

Fraternity rush is longer. Sorority recruitment is compressed into a single intense week. Fraternity recruitment can stretch from May through September, with summer events, formal rounds, and continuous open bidding running in parallel. This is actually an advantage. It gives the rushee more time and more opportunities to make connections.

The two-phase structure: Phase 1 is summer recruiting (casual events, relationship building, early bids at some schools). Phase 2 is formal rush week (structured rounds, house tours, preference dinners, bid day). Both matter. At competitive houses, Phase 1 matters more.

The Information Problem (Why You Can't Just Google Your Way Through This)

If you've already started Googling, you've hit the wall. There's no IFC-published summer event calendar. There's no centralized place that tells you what every chapter is doing at Auburn this Saturday, or what Alabama has lined up next weekend. To even find out what events the rushee could be at, the only path is doing all of this by hand:

1. Track down each individual chapter's Instagram handle (some are public, some are private, some chapters don't have one at all).
2. Follow every IFC chapter at his school. That's 25-35 separate accounts at most SEC schools.
3. Manually scroll each account, every day, looking for new event flyers.
4. Decode which events are open to rushees vs. members-only.
5. Translate screenshots and Instagram graphics into actual calendar entries he can use.
6. Build the whole calendar by hand, then keep it updated as chapters change plans.

Multiply that by every school your son is considering and the daily volume of posts during peak summer rush. That is the parent experience right now. We know. That's exactly what we did our first time through it.

This is the problem FratRush solves. Our system pulls events from every public chapter Instagram across all 16 SEC schools as chapters post them. Cookouts, lake trips, watch parties, formal rush rounds, philanthropy events: all of it gets consolidated into one rush calendar. Your son taps once to drop it into his iPhone Calendar or Google Calendar. No more chasing 30 Instagrams trying to figure out where he's supposed to be Saturday night.

The live calendar on the site still lists 2026 events, updated as chapters post, and those rows are labeled as last season. 2027 chapter event dates are not posted yet. When they are, they go on the same calendar. School Pass and VIP include that calendar. Everything else (the school intel, the wardrobe guides, the culture profiles for every chapter) sits on top.

The Money Conversation You Need to Have Before Rush Starts

This is where parents get blindsided. Fraternity costs vary enormously across the SEC, and chapters aren't always upfront about the full picture. For the school-by-school writeup, see the free cost breakdown on our blog: frat-rush.com/blog/how-much-does-fraternity-cost-sec.

Registration fees range from free (Auburn, Tennessee, Missouri, LSU) to $200 (Ole Miss), based on what we documented for the 2026 cycle. These fees are paid to the school's IFC up front, whether or not a bid comes later. Budget for this now.

Semester dues are where it gets real. Here's what we've seen across 16 SEC schools:

High-end schools: Alabama can run $4,750/semester with in-house living. Ole Miss ranges $2,000-$4,000 depending on the chapter.

Mid-range: Georgia ($1,300-$4,500), South Carolina, Kentucky, and Tennessee ($700-$2,500).

Lower-end: Auburn, Arkansas, Texas A&M, Oklahoma, and Florida ($300-$1,500).

What dues typically cover: social events, house maintenance, meal plans (if the chapter has a house with a cook), insurance, national organization fees, and philanthropy contributions.

What dues don't cover: formals and date parties ($300-$500 each), rush wardrobe, chapter merchandise, and whatever he spends on gameday weekends.

The conversation to have: "We're supportive, but we need a number. Before you accept a bid, get the full financial breakdown from the chapter treasurer - not just dues, but everything. And let's talk about what we'll cover and what's on you." Some national organizations offer scholarship programs. Some chapters have payment plans. But you need to ask before bid day, not after.

Budget rule of thumb: Plan for $1,500-$4,000 per semester in total fraternity costs at most SEC schools. Always ask for the full breakdown.

The Wardrobe Situation (Yes, This Is Your Department)

Your son probably hasn't thought about this yet. You probably have. Here's the reality: what he wears to each round matters. Not because anyone's checking labels, but because showing up in the wrong thing signals that he doesn't know how the game works. You don't want him to be the guy in gym shorts at an invitational round.

The dress code escalates by round. For a complete breakdown with specific picks, see the free wardrobe guide: frat-rush.com/blog/what-to-wear-to-fraternity-rush.

Summer events and cookouts: Clean casual. Shorts (5.5" inseam, not basketball shorts), a polo or nice tee, and boat shoes. Not sloppy, but not overdressed. Think "I put this together in 5 minutes but it works."

Open house: Business casual. Khakis and a button-down or polo. Tucked in. Belt. Closed-toe shoes.

Invitational rounds: Step up from open house. Khakis, solid-color button-down tucked in, nice belt, leather shoes. No jeans. No athletic wear.

Preference night (the steak dinner): His best business casual. Some guys wear blazers - at competitive houses, this is the move. Navy blazer, pressed khakis, crisp white or light blue shirt, school-colored tie, polished shoes.

The one outfit mistake everyone makes: Wearing something brand new that he's never worn before. New shoes that give him blisters. A blazer that doesn't fit right. Buy the clothes early and have him wear them at least once so he looks comfortable, not costumed.

Every school page on FratRush has a curated wardrobe guide with specific picks at two price points: the premium option and the budget-friendly alternative. We've done the research on what works at each campus because dress culture varies by region. What flies at Auburn doesn't always work at Vanderbilt.

What New Member Education Actually Looks Like

Every parent has this question. Let's walk through it.

The framework: Every national fraternity and every SEC university has clear anti-hazing policies. Hazing is against the law in almost every state. Schools have dedicated reporting systems, and IFC organizations take these standards seriously. This matters because it means there are real structures in place to protect the rushee.

What it involves: After he accepts a bid, he enters what most guys call the pledge period (officially called new member education), typically 6-10 weeks. This includes learning chapter history and values, community service projects, study hours, and bonding activities with his pledge class. Most chapters pair new members with an older "Big Brother" who serves as a mentor. The goal is building real brotherhood, and the vast majority of chapters do it the right way.

What you can do as a parent: Have the conversation before he accepts a bid. Ask him: "What does the new member program look like at this chapter? How many hours a week? Who can you go to if something doesn't feel right?" Good chapters are transparent about their programs. If a chapter can't answer basic questions about what new members do, that's worth paying attention to.

Help him understand his resources. Every SEC university has a Greek life office, a student conduct office, and reporting channels. Those resources are published publicly. He should know where to find them before he ever needs them, and so should you.

The bigger picture: National research from the North American Interfraternity Conference reports that fraternity members are 20% more likely to graduate than non-members. That is a national finding, not an SEC-specific statistic, and it is not a guarantee for any one student. The new member experience, when done right, builds friendships that last decades. The best thing you can do is help him choose a chapter where the culture feels right, not just the chapter with the biggest house or the most Instagram followers. A strong culture starts at the top, and you can usually tell a lot about a chapter by how its members treat each other during rush.

What to Do If He Doesn't Get a Bid

This is the part nobody prepares parents for.

The reality: a small but meaningful percentage of guys don't get bids on the first try. If it happens to your son, here's how to handle it.

Fraternity rush has no quota system. Unlike sorority recruitment, there's no rule that says every chapter must fill a minimum number of spots. If a chapter doesn't want someone, they just don't extend a bid. There's no explanation, no feedback, no appeal.

Day one: Let him feel it. Don't minimize it. Don't say "it's their loss" or "you didn't want them anyway." Rejection from a social group hits differently than a bad grade. He's watching roommates and friends celebrate bid day while he's sitting in his dorm. That hurts. Let it hurt. Be there.

Day two: Reframe it. Spring rush exists at almost every SEC school, and it's often less competitive, with chapters actively seeking quality guys. Continuous open bidding (COB) means chapters can extend bids year-round outside of formal recruitment. The door isn't closed. It's just a different door.

Day three and beyond: Help him stay social. The biggest risk after not getting a bid isn't the rejection itself. It's feeling isolated from Greek life. Encourage intramural sports, student organizations, study groups, anything that keeps him connected. Greek life is one path to belonging at a big SEC school, but it's not the only one.

One thing to never do: Don't call the chapter. Don't call the IFC. Don't call the Greek life office to complain. This will make things worse for him, not better. The fraternity world is small, and word travels.

The 10 Things Parents of SEC Rushees Wish They'd Known

We've talked to parents who've been through this. Here's what they'd tell you over coffee.

1. **The timeline is earlier than you think.** In 2026, registration at most schools opened in the spring and often closed right before rush week. Summer events at the summer-active schools started in late May. 2027 registration dates are not posted yet. Vanderbilt's registration opens in the fall, ahead of Preference Night on January 15, 2027 and Bid Night on January 16, 2027. Whatever school he's headed to, start the conversation now.
2. **You can't do this for him.** The hardest part for parents isn't the process. It's watching from the sidelines. You can buy the clothes, pay the fees, and drive him to summer events. But the conversations, the connections, and the decision about where he fits? That's his.
3. **The "best" house isn't the best house for your son.** Every SEC school has a status hierarchy. He will hear about "top houses" within 48 hours of arriving on campus. The chapter that's right for him is the one where he feels most like himself, not the one with the most prestige. The guys who chase clout end up miserable. The guys who find their people end up with lifelong brothers.
4. **Rush is a two-way street.** He's evaluating them just as much as they're evaluating him. Encourage him to pay attention to how brothers treat each other when they think nobody's watching. That tells you more about a chapter's real culture than any recruitment pitch.
5. **Academic impact is real.** Research has found about a 0.25-point GPA dip after joining Greek life, often concentrated in the new-member or pledge semester (Davis, Mara, and Schmidt; also discussed in Inside Higher Ed's coverage of related work by Even and Smith). Those studies are not SEC-specific, and results vary by campus. Time commitments during new member education compete with study time. Talk about this before he commits, and set expectations about academic performance.

6. **Summer events are where it actually happens.** At Auburn, Oklahoma, Texas A&M, and Texas, the summer is the real rush. If he can attend summer events, find a way to make it happen. If he's out of state, chapters often cover lodging. Ask.
7. **His social media matters.** Chapters will look at his Instagram. Not for follower count, for red flags. Help him do a quick audit. Remove anything that looks problematic. His profile should look like a normal, social, well-adjusted person. Not a carefully curated brand. Just clean.
8. **One genuine connection is worth more than fifty handshakes.** The guys who get bids at competitive houses aren't the ones who talked to the most brothers. They're the ones who connected deeply with even one or two guys in the room. That brother goes to bat for him behind closed doors. Encourage quality over quantity.
9. **The financial commitment doesn't end with dues.** Formals, date parties, chapter trips, tailgate contributions, and the constant stream of "everyone's getting this" purchases add up. Set a budget and revisit it each semester.
10. **It can genuinely change his life.** For all the anxiety, for all the unknowns, Greek life at SEC schools creates real community. Alumni networks that lead to jobs. Friendships that last decades. Leadership experience that shapes careers. The parents who've been through it overwhelmingly say the stress was worth it.

Your Rush Prep Checklist (What to Do and When)

Now through spring:

- Talk to your son about whether he actually wants to rush (not whether his friends are).
- Start the wardrobe conversation. Don't wait until July.
- Set a budget together for rush costs and first-semester dues.
- Talk about what new member education looks like and what to expect.
- When his school's IFC registration opens, register. In 2026, most schools opened around May 1. 2027 registration dates are not posted yet. At Vanderbilt, registration opens in the fall, ahead of Preference Night on January 15, 2027.
- Follow the school's IFC and chapter Instagram accounts for event announcements.
- Help him do a social media audit.

June - July (summer-rush schools):

- Attend summer events if possible. These are where decisions happen.
- Ask about lodging for out-of-state students.
- Keep the lines of communication open without hovering.

August (fall-formal schools):

- Final wardrobe check: everything fits, everything's been worn at least once.
- Review the rush schedule and know what round format to expect. Use 2026 dates only as a reference until 2027 dates are posted.
- Let him take the lead. Your job here is support, not strategy.

Bid day and beyond:

- Celebrate with him (or support him if it doesn't go his way).
- Review the financial commitment together before he accepts.
- Ask about the new member education timeline and expectations.

The Part Where We Tell You About FratRush

We wrote this guide because the information should exist and it doesn't, not anywhere else, not for parents. Everything above is free. Share it in your parent Facebook group. Send it to the other mom who's been asking questions. That's the whole point.

If your son wants to go deeper, FratRush is the playbook we built for him. Sixteen SEC schools, 350+ chapter profiles with culture breakdowns, school-specific wardrobe guides, the live rush calendar (the current calendar still lists 2026 events, updated as chapters post, and drops straight into his phone), and the unwritten rules that nobody tells freshmen. Written by current fraternity members at each school. One-time purchase, no subscription, no auto-renew. It covers the 2027 rush season. Content is active through December 2027.

Every school page also has a Parent Prep Kit with curated links to official school gear, licensed fraternity merchandise, and custom chapter apparel for when bid day comes and you're ready to load up on letters. Some links on FratRush are affiliate links. We may earn a small commission if you buy through them, at no extra cost to you. See frat-rush.com/disclosure.

Three tiers, one-time pricing for the 2027 season:

- **The Guide ($29)** - the full universal playbook for any of the 16 SEC schools. Instant access.
- **School Pass ($79)** - everything in The Guide, plus the live rush calendar and the deep school-specific intel for the one school he's rushing. Instant access. Most parents pick this one.
- **VIP ($199)** - everything in School Pass, plus a 30-minute 1-on-1 video call with an active SEC brother.

Your son's got rush. You've got this.

FAQ: Questions Parents Actually Ask Us

Is fraternity rush worth it?

For most guys at SEC schools, yes. Greek life is a significant path to community at a large university, though it is not the only one. A few current, sourced figures: 37% of undergraduate men at Ole Miss are in fraternities (College Transitions compilation of 2024-25 Common Data Set figures). At Alabama, 30.5% of undergraduate men join fraternities (University of Alabama Common Data Set 2024-25). At Missouri, 25% of undergraduate men join fraternities (University of Missouri-Columbia Common Data Set 2024-25). We do not have a current, citable figure we trust for Vanderbilt, so we are not repeating an older percentage here.

My son is introverted. Can he still rush?

Absolutely. Fraternity rush isn't about being the loudest guy in the room. It's about finding your people. Smaller chapters and more accessible houses often value genuine connection over social flash. Some of the strongest fraternity brothers are the guys who were quietest during rush.

Do recommendation letters matter for fraternity rush?

No. This is a common misconception from sorority recruitment, where rec letters can be critical. For IFC fraternity rush at SEC schools, recommendation letters are not required. A letter from an alumnus can help, but if you can't get one, it won't hurt him.

How do I know if a chapter is safe?

Ask him to look at the chapter's track record. Has it been suspended or placed on probation? This is usually public information on the university's Greek life page. How does it treat new members? What do current members say about the experience? Trust his gut. If something feels off during rush, it probably is.

Should I be involved in his decision?

Be available, not directive. Ask questions. Listen more than you advise. The worst outcome is him joining a chapter because you pushed him toward it and resenting it by sophomore year. The best outcome is him choosing a place where he feels at home and calling you on bid day to tell you about it.

FratRush is an independent resource and is not affiliated with, endorsed by, or sponsored by the Southeastern Conference (SEC), any of its member institutions, any Interfraternity Council, any chapter, or any national organization. All information is based on publicly available details, community perspectives, and independent research. Chapter costs and timelines reflect general patterns and may vary by year and chapter. Individual experiences vary. This guide is for informational purposes and does not guarantee, promise, or influence any specific outcome, including bids, callbacks, or membership decisions.

Have a question we didn't answer? Email us at fratrushapp@gmail.com. That is the contact address used on frat-rush.com (footer, privacy policy, and the Parent Guide signup form).

Sources for the statistics in this guide

• GPA: Davis, Mara, and Schmidt, "Social Animal House: The Economic and Academic Consequences of Fraternity Membership," find about a 0.25-point GPA decline at one college. Related work is summarized in Inside Higher Ed (Jan. 7, 2019), "Study: Grades of Greek-affiliated students suffer after joining fraternity, sorority." These are not SEC-specific findings.

• Graduation: North American Interfraternity Conference, "On Greeks and academic performance, national data tells a different story," reports that fraternity members are 20% more likely to graduate. That is a national figure, not an SEC-specific finding.

• Ole Miss participation: College Transitions, "Greek Life by Campus" (compilation of 2024-25 Common Data Set figures and institutional websites): 37% of undergraduate men in fraternities.

• Alabama participation: University of Alabama Common Data Set 2024-25, section F1: 30.5% of undergraduate men join fraternities. Official PDF: oira.ua.edu (CDS 2024-25).

• Missouri participation: University of Missouri-Columbia Common Data Set 2024-25, section F1: 25% of undergraduate men join fraternities (28% of first-year men). The university posts its CDS at muanalytics.missouri.edu/mu-data/common-data-set/.

• Vanderbilt 2027 dates: Vanderbilt Greek Life, "Join Interfraternity Council," last checked November 10, 2026. Preference Night January 15, 2027; Bid Night January 16, 2027.

• Cost ranges and 2026 registration fees: FratRush research for the 2026 cycle, also published in our free cost breakdown blog post. Confirm current figures with the chapter treasurer and the school's IFC page.

PRICING

One-time purchase. No subscription, no auto-renew. Covers the 2027 rush season. All content is active through December 2027. The rush calendar included with School Pass and VIP still lists 2026 events. 2027 chapter event dates are not posted yet, aside from Vanderbilt's confirmed January formal dates.

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