OSCA Co-op Information for New Students

The Oberlin Student Cooperative Association (OSCA) is an alternative to the College-sponsored dining and housing program. There are eight OSCA dining co-ops (Brown Bag, Fairchild, Harkness, Keep, Old Barrows, Pyle Inn, Tank, and Third World), four of which are connected to housing co-ops (Harkness, Keep, Old Barrows, and Tank).

OSCA offers significant savings over regular campus dining and housing. At the end of each school year, any leftover money is refunded to the membership.

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<th>OSCA 2015-16 Savings on Dining &amp; Housing</th>
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<td>Dining:</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double room</td>
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<td>Single room</td>
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OSCA Co-ops: We Own It!

OSCA rents its co-op buildings, so by “we own it”, we are referring to the fact that members take responsibility for all aspects of day-to-day operations and decision making. We determine how we live in our buildings, what food we eat, and we oversee all functions of the organization.

All-OSCA and individual co-op policies are determined democratically through a consensus-based process. Because the membership changes each semester, each co-op continually reinvents its policies to meet the needs, wants, and philosophies of the current community.

OSCA Co-ops: A Way of Life

The benefits of OSCA membership come with responsibility. Members of OSCA do all of the cooking, cleaning, food buying, composting, and other tasks within their individual co-ops. Each co-op decides at the beginning of each semester how much time members need to put in (usually about four hours a week). For those who hold jobs outside of the co-op, we offer “time aid” which reduces the number of co-op hours required for those members.

Since OSCA is a cooperative, you are expected to do more than just pay your board bill and do your jobs. You are responsible for participating in your co-op’s decision-making processes, as well as those of OSCA as a whole, and to be considerate of your fellow co-opers. Everyone being actively involved in the co-ops is the key to making everything work.

There are no meal cards or cafeteria trays in co-ops. Communal meals are prepared at least for lunch at 12:20 pm and dinner at 6:20 pm, and the kitchens are open 24/7 to accommodate everyone’s schedule. Guest policies are set by members so they can bring friends and professors to meals without a hassle. Many co-ops are vegetarian and vegan-friendly, and allergy awareness among the membership is always a priority.

What is Available

OSCA has a total membership of 615 students – 441 members dine in co-ops and 174 members both dine and live in co-ops. OSCA reserves 100 spaces for new students – 50 dining-only and 50 housing and dining. Spaces in OSCA are assigned by random lottery. If you do not get a space at the beginning of the year, then you will be put on a wait list and will still have a good chance of getting into a co-op during the year. If you decide you want to join OSCA during the school year, you may sign up for the same wait list online. New members are admitted twice per month throughout the year as space allows.

How do I Apply?

More information about OSCA and the application for new students is available at OSCA’s web site, www.oberlin.edu/osca. If you have questions about any aspect of OSCA, call or e-mail us at the phone number and e-mail address provided.

Deadline is June 15 to participate in the OSCA new student lottery. Late applications will be put on the co-op new student wait list.
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The Co-ops

Although co-ops change their membership and their policies between years, each one forms a unique community:

**Brown Bag Co-op (BBC)** is the only grocery-style co-op in OSCA. Because of its unique set-up, BBC is only available to upperclassmen who have off-campus or village housing.

**Fairchild**, more colloquially known as “Fairkid,” is located in the basement of the Fairchild residence hall. Despite the relaxed atmosphere, Fairchild members are very passionate about their food politics, and strive to serve primarily vegan food that incorporates as many local and fair-trade elements as possible.

**Harkness:** Described variously as colorful, nonconformist, and eclectic, “Harkies” are known for maintaining a vibrant and tight-knit community. With 64 housing members, Harkness is the largest housing co-op, and its dining co-op, which tends to have just over 100 members, serves primarily vegan food with vegetarian options.

**Keep** is known as one of the more energetic and enthusiastic co-ops in OSCA. It is also one of the most musical co-ops, with many a night filled with the sounds of banjo strumming wafting from the sprawling front porch. In addition, Keep is the home of the Bike Co-op, Oberlin’s co-op-run bicycle repair shop. Keep’s dining policies lean towards vegetarianism with the occasional meat dish.

**Old Barrows:** As one of the oldest co-ops in OSCA, “Old B” has cultivated a dynamic and gourmet food policy. Their meals are known to be some of the finest in OSCA, and Old Barrows has also been known to have an in-house ice cream maker. Old B housing is a safe space for students who may feel oppressed due to their gender. The space serves primarily trans students, with a focus on trans women and trans feminine people. It also serves as a space for gender nonconforming people and other trans people (including non-binary people). Cis women are allowed into the house as the lowest priority, after trans people and gender nonconforming people. Housing membership is by application.

**Pyle:** Located on the bottom floor of Asia House and comprising over 100 members, Pyle is conveniently located in the middle of campus, slightly further north than most co-ops, and serves primarily vegetarian food with some meat as well, depending on who’s cooking. Members of Pyle are also known for their lively mealtime discussions and their weekly theme meals.

**Tank:** Tank’s membership, known affectionately as “Tankers,” is approximately 80 people, with 42 dining-only members. Members of Tank enjoy a primarily vegetarian diet, with some meat. It’s common to see Tankers congregating on the porch and the lawn when the weather is nice. Tank also hosts an annual pig roast in the Spring, a tradition that brings many OSCA members to enjoy good times and good company.

**Third World Co-op (TWC)** is a safe space for Persons of Color, low-income students, international students, and first-generation college students. It is a community that promotes coalition building through work and dialogue among people of different socioeconomic, cultural, racial and ethnic backgrounds. Its mélange of different cultural foods and styles of cooking has earned it a reputation of having some of the best food on campus. Membership is by application.

**Independent Co-op**

**Kosher Halal (KHC)** is a co-op that is not governed by OSCA. It is a proudly interfaith community that follows Jewish and Muslim dietary laws while facilitating interfaith cooperation, education, and friendship at Oberlin. Members are Jewish, Muslim, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, nonreligious, and so much more, and come together every day for laughter, learning, and above all, good eating.

If you’re interested in joining KHC, fill out an application: [http://goo.gl/w4tZ9](http://goo.gl/w4tZ9). Inquiries: send an e-mail to [khc.oberlin@gmail.com](mailto:khc.oberlin@gmail.com).