

Penn State tuition up 5.9 percent

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In-state undergraduate tuition on the Penn State University (PSU) main campus will increase 5.9 percent this fall, to \$14,412 a year for freshmen and sophomores, making the school one of the most expensive public universities in the country. With room, board and other fees, the total cost comes to more than \$26,500 a year.

For juniors and seniors on the main campus, tuition will range from \$15,582 to \$18,604 depending upon the major, bringing the total cost from \$28,000 to \$30,000 a year.

Tuition on Penn State's 22 satellite campuses will increase 3.9 percent. Graduate students will also see their rates go up.

Out-of-state students will see their tuition go up 4.5 percent to \$26,276 a year on the main campus for freshmen and sophomores and to \$27,616 for juniors and seniors. With room, board and fees, the cost will rise to nearly \$40,000 a year.

The tuition increase was part of a \$4 billion budget passed by university trustees last Friday. PSU has 94,000 graduate and undergraduate students, half of whom attend the main campus in State College, Pennsylvania.

The 5.9 percent increase is far greater than inflation and is the third time in four years that tuition has increased more than 5 percent a year. In less than 10 years—since the 2001-2002 school year—tuition has more than doubled from the base main campus rate of \$7,054. Graduate students will also see their tuition go up with most graduate programs costing \$20,232 a year plus fees. The master's of business administration program will cost \$20,074 a year. The law school will cost \$35,928 a year, and the medical school will cost a staggering \$37,326 a year, not counting fees, room and board, and other expenses. Out-of-state students will have to pay about \$12,000 more.

The PSU trustees approved the school's budget and

tuition increase only a few days after state lawmakers approved the state's \$28.05 billion budget. State lawmakers kept flat Pennsylvania's allotment to the school at \$334 million. This includes the \$15.8 million in federal stimulus funding due to expire next year. Last year, the state cut 6 percent from PSU's allotment.

State support accounts for only 17 percent of PSU's budget, with the vast majority, 75 percent, coming from student tuition. For the past several years, lawmakers have been referring to PSU, the University of Pittsburgh, and Temple and Lincoln Universities as state-related or state-supported universities in order to justify the budget cuts. Pitt, Temple and Lincoln have not yet announced their tuition rates but are expected to follow suit.

Tuition at the 14 state-owned universities will be announced on July 22 after the State System of Higher Education's Board of Governors set their new rates. Earlier this year, the Board of Governors voted to phase out 71 of the degree programs that they felt were not attracting enough students to be profitable. Fifteen of those programs will end immediately, while the other 56 will no longer accept new students and will be abolished when those students currently enrolled have finished.

Some of the degrees that will be immediately eliminated are the master's degree in computer and information technology at Indiana University; the bachelor's degrees in biological and physical sciences, liberal arts and studies, humanities studies and geology-earth science at East Stroudsburg State University; and the bachelor's degree in Latin American studies at Lock Haven University, to name a few.

PSU, like other institutions, lost tens of millions of dollars on its investments during the housing and stock market collapse of 2008-2009. Last year, Penn State froze wages for all its faculty and staff, and this year's budget includes only a 2 percent increase in the salary

pool given to departments. This means that many faculty members may go another year without a pay raise, since department heads may chose to divide the money unevenly.

Pennsylvania is not alone in cutting programs and hiking tuition. Many states across the country have taken similar measures as government funding for education is being cut. Among many others, the University of California has increased tuition a whopping 30 percent; Florida State, 15 percent; Ohio State, 7 percent; and Nebraska, 6 percent;. Many programs and faculty throughout the country are being cut.



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