

California State University raises tuition

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The California State University's (CSU) Board of Trustees voted on Tuesday 13 to 2 in favor of increasing tuition by an additional 12 percent for the 23-campus system.

The 12 percent increase in tuition, amounting to an extra \$588 in expenses for students each year, will be in addition to the previously approved 10 percent increase.

The latest hike will bring the upcoming year's tuition to \$5,472. Including the mandatory fees that average around \$950, students will be paying about \$6,422—double the amount required in 2007. This number does not include the cost of books and housing.

These tuition increases will mean that thousands of students will be priced out of attending the state's major universities. The cost of education is dramatically higher even as the employment situation, particularly for young people, is disastrous.

On June 30 the US Department of Education released several College Affordability Lists. The reports include data on the public, four-year schools throughout the US that have seen the steepest increases in tuition and fees. Of the 32 campuses on the list, 22 were part of the CSU system.

The CSU system has seen its state funding cut by \$650 million in the latest budget passed by the Democratic Party-controlled legislature, a decrease of more than 20 percent. Since 2008 more than 4,125 employees have been laid off, bringing the total for all of the campuses down to less than 43,000.

Despite the dramatic tuition increases, Elliot Hirshman, the new president of San Diego State University, will receive a \$400,000 compensation package. The earnings of Hirshman's predecessor, Stephen Weber, was \$299,435.

The Board of Regents at the University of California, the state's other main public university system, will be voting today on a 9.6 percent tuition increase for the

fall, or more than \$1,000 a year. This will be in addition to the 8 percent increase passed earlier this year, yielding a total tuition increase of nearly \$2,000.

Governor Jerry Brown, who is pushing through the draconian cuts to public higher education, cynically criticized the vote in favor of Hirshman's compensation package. Lieutenant Governor Gavin Newsom, a member of the CSU board, voted against both the tuition increase and Hirshman's compensation package, worried that this would damage the public image of the university. "There are plenty of people watching, and people we need as supporters."

Both Brown and Newsom understand that the compensation package is a public relations problem for the campaign being carried out by both parties, and led by the governor's office, to slash funding for public services and social programs to meet the budget deficit while refusing to raise taxes on the rich.

The claims that there is "no money" or that there will be "shared sacrifices" are total fabrications. The obscene wealth of California's financial elite—with the 19 richest Californians holding a combined net worth of \$135 billion—is untouchable, while the public services and social programs relied upon on by millions of Californians are sacrificed to meet the budget deficit.

Soaring tuition at public universities in California is part of a nationwide attack on public education, led by the Obama administration. The very concept of public education means nothing when high fees place attendance out of reach for a growing percentage of working class students.



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