



## PAYING MORE FOR COLLEGE, GETTING LESS

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*As students at the nation's public colleges and universities return to school this fall, they will pay more for an education that in some cases will offer them less.*

Due to the sluggish economy and state budget deficits, many students will pay record-breaking tuition increases to help universities compensate for cuts in state funding.

States are low on cash due to increased spending on programs such as welfare and health care, while taking in less tax revenue due to the high level of unemployment and the slowdown in the business sector.

"The states are responding to the budget crisis by passing major cuts on to colleges and universities, and colleges and universities are responding to these reductions by passing on the cost to students and families," said Patrick Callan, president of the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education. "This is all happening at a time when student financial aid is not keeping pace with increases in tuition."

More than 25 state colleges or university systems increased their tuition between 10 and 20 percent. Four colleges raised tuition by more than 30 percent, according to a survey conducted last month by the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges.

The highest percentage tuition increase of the 75 schools surveyed was at Northern Arizona University, where tuition for in-state residents rose from \$2,583 to \$3,593. At the City University of New York, tuition for residents increased from \$3,200 to \$4,000.

### **Noteworthy Changes**

Even with the extra money from tuition hikes, however, budget cuts are still visible on campuses nationwide.

The University of California system will have to wait until 2005 to open their new campus -- a year later than planned. At the University of Missouri, students can expect larger classes, limited course availability and restricted library and recreation center hours as a result.

Many schools have reduced costs by offering fewer sections of certain classes, making it harder for students to take the classes they need to graduate on time.

"There is a negative impact on quality of learning experience, some cases make it harder for students to get courses they need to graduate on a schedule they might have otherwise had," said Thomas Hardy, executive director of the Office of University Relations at the University of Illinois.

With a 5 percent tuition increase, modest by comparison, the University of Illinois has had to offset its shrunken budget with approximately 800 cancelled classes, fewer faculty teaching assistants and a decreased number of administrative staff.

"Everybody involved is feeling the effects of a tight budget, but we are doing a very good job keeping our eye on the ball and we remain focused on having a high level academic program," Hardy said.

This year, the enrollment at the University of Illinois' three campuses, plus online students, has swelled to an all-time high of 70,000 students, making reduced staffing even harder on students and their families, especially those waiting for financial aid to be processed.

### **Financial Aid**

While financial aid has offered relief to many students in the past, only 14 states increased their spending in student grant aid by more than 10 percent, and 17 states decreased their total aid, according to a report released by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education.

At the same time Massachusetts decreased its aid by 24 percent, tuition went up by 24 percent. In Missouri, tuition increased by 20 percent, but the state decreased financial aid by 5 percent.

"The cumulative effect is a major assault on college affordability," said Callan. "This comes at a time when unemployment is high, personal income is basically flat, and college-level education and training is a requirement for most well-paying jobs."

*By Sheryl Silverman, Online NewsHour*

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