

7/8/2014

Board of Governors approves modest tuition increase, assuring State System universities will remain lowest-cost in Pennsylvania

\$198-a-year increase matches inflation rate for eighth time in 10 years

Contact: Kenn Marshall, (717) 720-4054 or (717) 329-0809

Harrisburg – The Board of Governors of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education today approved a modest \$198 tuition increase – \$99 a semester – for the 2014-15 academic year, virtually assuring the 14 State System universities will remain the lowest-cost option among all four-year colleges and universities in the Commonwealth.

The Board also approved nine new flexible pricing plans for six universities beginning either this fall or in fall 2015, bringing to 18 the number of proposals that will be implemented on a pilot basis over the next two years, and a new Associate of Arts in sustainability studies degree program to be offered by Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania beginning this fall. The Board also extended the contracts of 10 university presidents through June 30, 2017, and re-elected its officers for the 2014-15 year.

2014-15 tuition rate \$3,410 per semester

The base tuition rate for full-time, resident undergraduate students will be \$3,410 a semester, \$6,820 for the full academic year. Tuition rates will vary somewhat at those universities that have had flexible pricing plans approved by the Board. Nearly 90 percent of PASSHE students are Pennsylvania residents and about 85 percent attend full-time.

“PASSHE universities offer tremendous value to students and their families, providing a unique combination of high-quality educational opportunities and the most affordable cost available,” said Board of Governors Chairman Guido M. Pichini.

The tuition increase approved by the Board essentially matches next year’s projected rate of inflation of about 3 percent. It marks the eighth time in the last 10 years the State System has been able keep the increase at close to the inflation rate. It has been able to do so despite the fact that funding from the state has been held steady for four consecutive years and now stands at just slightly above the amount that was received in 1997-98 – 17 years ago.

As funding support has declined over the last decade, the universities have eliminated or avoided more than \$250 million in operating costs from their combined budgets through efforts such as strategic sourcing, energy management, automating processes and services, reducing staffing levels and eliminating noncore and lower-priority programs and functions. The universities will need to make additional combined reductions totaling about \$30 million this year in order to balance their budgets.

The 2014-15 state budget passed by the Legislature last week and awaiting Gov. Tom Corbett’s signature includes about \$412.7 million for the State System, the same amount it has received each year since 2011-12, and about \$90 million less than the System received in combined state and federal funds in 2010-11.

"Our university leadership, especially our presidents, should be commended for the tremendous work they have done to contain their institutions' costs and to become even more efficient in their operations during these challenging times," Mr. Pichini said.

While struggling to keep their costs under control, the universities have continued to enhance the quality of programming they offer, with the vast majority of their academic programs earning or maintaining accreditation from professional organizations nationally. The universities also are offering more advanced professional degrees in response to growing workforce demand in areas including healthcare and science-related fields.

"The universities are doing what they need to do to meet the needs of students and their future employers," said Chancellor Frank T. Brogan. "As those needs change, our universities are realigning and redesigning programs and developing new programs that will help ensure students gain the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in their careers and personal lives."

With the tuition and other anticipated fee increases, the average total cost of attendance for a full-time, resident student at a State System university next year – including combined tuition, fees, room and board – will be about \$18,500.

Full-time, nonresident tuition will range from about \$7,160 to \$17,050.

Flexible pricing plans offer discounts to active military and veterans

The Board approved a third round of flexible tuition and fee proposals submitted by various universities. The universities can submit proposals to adjust their tuition rates and certain fees charged to students under two-year pilots.

The programs will be evaluated over the two-year period to determine their effectiveness. If successful, the programs could be continued, and even duplicated at other universities. The first six pilots were approved by the Board in January; three more in April.

"We are committed to being the most flexible, collaborative, and student-centered university system in America," said Chancellor Brogan. "And this moves us another step in that direction."

Cheyney University will provide a 10 percent tuition discount to military personnel, both active duty and veterans, beginning in fall 2015. Mansfield University will provide a similar discount to veterans enrolled in its online programs, similar to an earlier proposal approved for California University of Pennsylvania, beginning this fall.

Cheyney and East Stroudsburg universities will provide a 10 percent discount to students who enroll in their classes offered at PASSHE Center City beginning this fall. Both Millersville and West Chester universities, the other two State System universities that offer classes at the facility, had received approval earlier to offer a similar discount.

Mansfield also will reduce tuition to out-of-state students who meet certain academic standards. The reduced rate would range from 5 percent to 50 percent above the in-state rate. Additionally, Mansfield will charge a \$100 per course fee for high-cost courses in art, biology, chemistry, respiratory therapy, nursing, nutrition, math, computer information systems, music and psychology.

Millersville University plans to charge tuition on a per-credit basis rather than a flat rate beginning this fall. A similar plan was approved earlier for Clarion University for fall 2015.

Edinboro University will charge a 5 percent per-credit fee for studio art courses this fall and a 25 percent fee for nursing students beginning in fall 2015.

Lock Haven University will revise its undergraduate educational services fee to better reflect actual costs.

Lock Haven to offer degree in sustainability studies

The new Associate of Arts degree in sustainability studies to be offered at Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania will produce graduates for “green jobs” in fields including construction and manufacturing and with government and non-profit organizations.

Demand in the field is growing, with about one out of every five companies in Pennsylvania employing such workers, according to a recent survey conducted by the state Department of Labor and Industry.

The program was developed by faculty at LHU by repackaging existing coursework currently offered at the main campus and Clearfield branch campus. It will utilize existing resources and faculty and will be available online and via other distance education methods, making it more accessible to working adults.

For more information about the program, please contact the university.

10 presidential contracts extended to June 30, 2017

The Board voted to extend the contracts of 10 university presidents through June 30, 2017.

Those receiving one-year extensions were David L. Soltz, Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania; Karen M. Whitney, Clarion University of Pennsylvania; Marcia G. Welsh, East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania; Julie E. Wollman, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania; Michael A. Driscoll, Indiana University of Pennsylvania; Michael Fiorentino Jr., Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania; Francis L. Hendricks, Mansfield University of Pennsylvania; John M. Anderson, Millersville University of Pennsylvania; Cheryl J. Norton, Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania; and Greg R. Weisenstein, West Chester University of Pennsylvania.

PASSHE university presidents initially receive a three-year “rolling contract,” which is subject to annual review. As a result of that performance-based review, a president’s contract can be extended by a year.

California, Cheyney, Kutztown and Shippensburg Universities of Pennsylvania all are being led by acting or interim presidents, who usually serve until a permanent president is hired.

Pichini re-elected Board chairman; Ellsworth, Henry vice chairs

The Board re-elected Guido M. Pichini to a fourth consecutive term as its chairman. Laura E. Ellsworth of Sewickley and Ronald G. Henry of Bryn Mawr were re-elected vice chairs.

Mr. Pichini of Wyomissing is president of WSK and Associates Consulting Group and its subsidiaries. A 1974 graduate of Kutztown University of Pennsylvania, he is in his second term on the Board of Governors, having first served from June 2005 to October 2009 and then being reappointed in October 2010. He also is a member and former chair of the Council of Trustees at Kutztown University and is former chair of the Pennsylvania Association of Councils of Trustees (PACT), the statewide organization that comprises the trustees from all 14 PASSHE universities.

He earned a bachelor’s degree in education/political science, and completed graduate studies in public administration at Kutztown. He also graduated from Wilson College with certification in the minor judiciary, attaining the highest grade in the history of Pennsylvania. He served two terms as a councilman in the Borough of Wyomissing Hills and four terms as mayor. Mr. Pichini serves on the Pennsylvania Workforce Investment Board and was a member of the Governor’s Advisory Commission on Post-Secondary Education.

Ms. Ellsworth is partner-in-charge of the Pittsburgh office of the international law firm Jones Day. She has experience across a wide range of complex litigation matters on both the state and federal levels.

She was appointed to the Board of Governors in October 2012 and is a member of the Finance, Administration and Facilities and Executive committees.

Mr. Henry is a senior consultant with Capitol Strategies Group, LLC, of Harrisburg, and is an independent consultant in the areas of public finance, organization and management. He is a member of the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and American Bar Associations and the Bar Association of the District of Columbia. He was appointed to the Board of Governors in May 2011 and is chair of the Finance, Administration and Facilities Committee and a member of the Human Resources and Executive committees.

The Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education is the largest provider of higher education in the Commonwealth, with about 112,000 students. The 14 State System universities offer degree and certificate programs in more than 120 areas of study.

The universities are Bloomsburg, California, Cheyney, Clarion, East Stroudsburg, Edinboro, Indiana, Kutztown, Lock Haven, Mansfield, Millersville, Shippensburg, Slippery Rock and West Chester Universities of Pennsylvania. The universities also operates branch campuses in Oil City (Clarion), Freeport and Punxsutawney (IUP) and Clearfield (Lock Haven), and offer classes and programs at several regional centers, including the Dixon University Center in Harrisburg and in Center City in Philadelphia.