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The cost of college for Michigan students is expected to shoot up this year. However, the hike won't be as steep as in past years. While last year, the state's public universities had increased tuition by 7 to 18.5 percent, this year's increase is expected to be much lower. Students and their families can also take into account the state's proposed 3 percent increase in financial aid.

For the 2006-2007 academic year, tuition will rise by 5.9 percent for in-state undergraduates at Michigan State University. The hike has been recently approved by a vote by the Board of Trustees of MSU. The increase will cost students \$453 more than last year, bringing tuition and fees to about \$8,170.

Though some colleges are still in the process of setting their tuitions for fall, the highest increase in a year so far has been at Michigan Tech, which is slated to raise tuition by 8.7 percent. The lowest, a 4.8-percent tuition increase, has been reported at Northern Michigan University.

More Aid In Or

The Oregon State Board of Higher Education has accepted a proposed budget request for \$988 million to aid the state's seven public universities. In a meeting at Portland University, the Board agreed to ask for a \$256-million increase from the current \$732 million budget. In the meeting, Gov. Ted Kulongoski spoke of an enhanced model for financial aid that would expand the Oregon Opportunity Grant program by expanding eligibility requirements and making post-secondary education affordable to more students.

According to the proposed model, students would pool in towards their college cost a similar amount of their salaries by working 40 hours per week in summers, and part time for the school year. The amount would be about \$4,750 from a minimum-wage job. A four-year school student would have to contribute an additional \$2,750.

The families of the students would then be asked to contribute, and the students would need to fully utilize the federal grant programs and tuition tax credits. Even after this, if the student falls short of the money required, the state would step in to fill in the space. The funding would be partly made from the governor's enterprise funding budget, and is expected to start by school year 2008-2009.

Hispanics Need More Aid Info

According to a survey conducted by the Tomas Rivera Policy Institute last month, Hispanic youth are under-informed about financial aid. A total of 400 Hispanic youth aged 18 through 24 were interviewed; half of the respondents had never attended any college or university.

Though the Institute focused its survey on California Latinos, other geographical areas can apply the same data due to the diversity of California's Hispanic population.

More than half of the respondents believed that U.S. citizenship was a prerequisite to applying for financial aid, although this assumption is incorrect. They also reported a distressingly high lack of knowledge about financial aid, including eligibility for grants such as the federal Pell Grant.

Although a full 98 percent of those surveyed admitted the importance of obtaining a college degree, a mere 62 percent said they thought the benefits of higher education would outweigh the costs.

The Tomas Rivera Policy Institute is a nonprofit research organization headquartered at the University of Southern California.

Update On New Bill

Over the past week, Northwestern University officials have been trying to contact around 17,000 students and applicants to the school whose personal information may have been compromised after hackers broke in to nine on-campus desktop computers.

In May, another hacker-related incident resulted in a breach of I.T. security in the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid. However, it is currently unknown whether this month's hackers have gained access to students and applicants' personal information, including Social Security numbers. Chuck Loebbaka, the school's director of media relations, stated that the hackers may not have even known this information was available on these particular computers.

FL Goes To Summer School

In five years, Florida public universities will see an additional 65,000 students attending each year. Mark Rosenberg, chancellor of the state's public universities, recently told InsideHigherEd.com that he is proposing a year-round system that may help 30,000 more students to enroll each summer.

Thousands of students already take summer courses in the state; Rosenberg feels that core classes could be offered more systematically, allowing more students to graduate on time.