

Michigan tuition hike is daunting

By Amit Agarwal

Michigan colleges, to the chagrin of overburdened students and parents, recently announced substantial tuition hikes. Tuition has increased nearly 10 % at several higher-education institutions.

The Michigan State University Board of Trustees announced that a 9.6% tuition increase will be effective this fall. This means a typical undergraduate will have to cough up \$800 more for education at Michigan State University (MSU). For Michigan residents already paying \$8,600 a year for tuition, the hike is steep. Tuition increases are also expected at other public schools in Michigan. This may place the state in the top slot for highest tuition increases in the United States.

Universities, however, blame the increase in tuition on a decrease in state aid. While Michigan provided \$6,800 per student for financial aid in 2000, that figure stands at \$5,800 today. Legislators have recently delayed \$83 million for universities until the next fiscal year, amidst speculation about another \$26 million that universities will not receive immediately. When the state chooses to decrease aid to colleges, it leaves Michigan college trustees with little choice but to increase tuition to meet the ever-increasing cost of education.

The double-digit tuition increases at several state universities have not incited much protest from voters. However, some reaction has come from the big three universities —the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, and Wayne State University — who have called for a separate appropriations bill for their campuses.

Michigan's governor, Jennifer Granholm, along with other state leaders, views the funding request by the big three as an opportunity to better the state's economy. This might be achieved through a number of actions in addition to granting the universities a separate appropriations bill:

- Both the University of Michigan and MSU, particularly, could increase their numbers of in-state students.
- The campuses can help influence grants for programs and aim to get more urban students prepared for higher education.
- The colleges, especially Wayne State University, can commit to retention programs to curb the number of students leaving school before completing their four-year degrees. Michigan has been losing a lot of money on college students who never graduate.
- The universities could do more for the state's economic development. The Research Triangle in North Carolina, which is a website, could be turned into something more tangible.

Both the state and the colleges, especially the big three, need to work together to boost higher education in Michigan.

On the Net

Michigan must revamp higher education policy

www.detnews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070716/OPINION01/707160314/1008

College tuition costs on the rise

abclocal.go.com/wjrt/story?section=local&id=5478864

Michigan legislature to be blamed for tuition hike, not MSU

www.statenews.com/op_article.phtml?pk=41605

Higher tuition rates cause concern in Michigan

www.mlive.com/newsflash/michigan/index.ssf?/base/news-45/118427561063910.xml&storylist=newsmichigan