

New Hampshire University System Approves Tuition and Aid Increase

By Amit Agarwal



The University System of New Hampshire's board of trustees has approved a budget that includes a nearly 7% tuition hike for 2007-2008 in-state students. The budget also includes a 5.2% increase in tuition for out-of-state students along with an 11.3% increase in student financial aid. The university system has been increasing tuition and aid since 2000. Since then, tuition has risen by about 6% each year, while financial aid has increased by about 12%.

Tuition for in-state students will be up by 6.9% at the University of New Hampshire, where students will have to pay \$19,238. Plymouth State University and Keene State College will witness similar percentage increases; their students will have to cough up almost \$16,000. Tuition for out-of-state students at UNH will be approximately \$32,000, while Keene and Plymouth students will pay about \$23,000.

The board approved a \$384 million operating budget for 2007-2008 and a 5.1% increase from the current budget. It also voted to establish a doctoral education program at PSU. State funding increased by 4.1% to \$96 million.

The financial aid increase includes funding for the Affordable College Effort (ACE) and grants for New Hampshire residents. Recipients of ACE awards need to be eligible in-state students who in the coming fall will be full-time freshmen or sophomores. Combined with other financial aid, the awards will pay for students' direct costs of attendance for their first two years. Last year, ACE helped about 130 incoming freshmen, who received around \$4,625 each.

The trustees want to direct as much support as possible to assist lower-income state residents while expanding the demographic of college graduates in New Hampshire. According to vice chancellor and treasurer Edward MacKay, the board struggles every year to balance its increases in financial aid with fee hikes. This year, the legislature has granted \$10 million less to the university system than the board requested. MacKay added that if their request had been fulfilled, tuition hikes would have been about 2% lower.