



NEWS Bulletin

UT Tuition hike will be “only” \$300

- Regents cut increase by 1/3 after protests
- Total since 2003 is 77%
- State funding slowdown squeezes staff, students

The Tuition Policy Advisory Committee released a proposal on November 13 that would raise tuition at UT by 7.8% in 2008 and 6.9% in 2009. That would have raised tuition by 90% since 2003. The Board of Regents acted on December 8 to reduce the increase to 4.95% – \$150 – in each of the next two years. Average tuition at UT will rise to about \$4365 per semester.

The regents action came after the proposed increases were protested by students and some legislators. UT President William Powers and UT Student Government President Andrew Solomon continued to support the higher increases after the regents' action.

UT officials cited reductions in state funding, compared to the cost of operating the university, for the squeeze. Kevin Hagarty, Vice President and CFO told the *Austin American Statesman* that “Increases in tuition are directly related to the lack of adequate funding [from the state].” Tuition and fees cover about 25% of UT's current budget.

Tuition & fees skyrocketing at most Texas public universities: Average tuition at all of Texas' public universities increased about 45% since 2002, including 55% at UT Dallas, 60% at the University of Houston, and 50% at Texas State University (San Marcos).

Employees also squeezed: The other victims of the pull-back in state funding is university employees. They were left out of state-wide pay raises for other state employees in 2005 and 2007. For the previous 20 years or more, university employees received all statewide pay raises adopted by the Legislature.

Privatization of higher education: The share of university budgets covered by appropriated state funds has been falling for over a decade. One analysis shows state funding has fallen from almost 40% of UT's budget in 2002 to less than 24% now, while the share covered by tuition and fees has increased from 36% to 46%. At the same time, oversight of universities by the Legislature is also declining. The message from the Texas Legislature to universities is “You're on your own. Find your funding where you can, and spend it as you please” by the Texas Legislature. This trend is causing the gradual privatization of universities as they cease to be state agencies and become more like private corporations.

TSEU'S POSITION: **Affordable, accessible, quality higher education is crucial to our state and its people. The Texas Legislature – as the elected representation of the citizens – should take responsibility. Higher education should be fully funded by the Legislature, and the Legislature should take responsibility for the policies – including tuition levels – at our state universities.**

WHAT TO DO NOW

1. Join the union. It will take the united voices of many thousands of Texans to restore the “public” in our public universities. The time to start is now.
2. Tell your legislators, now, during the coming elections, and in the next session, that Texas can afford to fund quality higher education.

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