



Proposal would increase Ohio State tuition by 3.3 percent

Tyler Arnold

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A proposal introduced to the Ohio State University Board of Trustees on Wednesday would increase tuition rates by 3.3 percent from last year for the incoming freshman class. That equals about \$358 annually for in-state students.

To prevent this rate increase from hurting financially vulnerable students, the university would also increase its financial aid by \$358 annually for eligible freshmen.

If the plan is approved by the board, tuition and fees would total \$11,084 for freshman students at the main campus in Columbus; with the common housing and dining plans included, students would pay about \$23,792 annually. These new rates would still keep the university at about the median cost for public Big Ten schools.

Tuition costs for the Lima, Mansfield, Marion and Newark campuses would be \$7,912. For the Agricultural Technical Institute in Wooster, tuition would be \$7,874. Students at regional campuses usually live off campus.

This rate will be frozen for the freshman class, which means that students in this class will not see their tuition raised over the next four years, per the school's Ohio State Tuition Guarantee. Tuition for the university's sophomores and juniors are also subject to this tuition guarantee, which means that their tuition will remain the same as it was in their freshman year.

Ohio State will also continue to freeze tuition for students who enrolled before the tuition guarantee, which it began doing for the 2012-2013 class. This year's graduating class will be the fifth straight class to never have a tuition rate increase.

"Ohio State faces the same inflationary cost increases that exist across the economy, and tuition is the primary source of funding that supports undergraduate education," Rob Messinger, the director of communications at the university, told The Center Square via email. "Our focus on access, affordability and excellence is a balance, and we are continually investing in all three areas."

Messinger said that the university has many affordability initiatives to help keep tuition costs low. Some of these include the Ohio State Tuition Guarantee program, an additional \$150 million for need-based aid programs since 2015 and book cost reductions through the CarmenBooks program.

The university also seeks government assistance to keep costs low.

“We are continually working with our leaders in the Ohio General Assembly and the federal government to support access, affordability and excellence,” Messinger said.

Russell Rhine, a policy analyst for the Cato Institute’s Center for Educational Freedom, told The Center Square via email that tuition increases are expected, as the prices for higher education have risen greater than inflation. However, he said that tuition increases are avoidable, but through less government involvement, rather than more.

“While there are many components to rising tuition, they are all enabled by easy access to government (taxpayer) money,” Rhine said. “By freezing or reducing government student aid, colleges and universities will lose the luxury of seamlessly moving tuition increases to student debt or taxpayers (higher subsidies), thereby, increasing pressure to keep tuition low through cost-containment policies.”

When states intervene to keep tuition low, such as in Virginia, Rhine said that taxpayers often foot the bill. Although Virginia successfully provided incentives to freeze in-state tuition, the total cost of higher education still increased. The only difference, he said, is that taxpayers will pay the increased cost instead of students.

“If the goal is to lower education costs, it’s not a good program,” Rhine said.

Along with the Ohio State tuition increase, the plan presented to the board would increase housing and dining rates by 2.2 percent, healthcare costs would rise two percent and the undergraduate non-resident surcharge would increase 4.8 percent.