
Docket Item:

University Tuition-Setting Updates

Summary:

The following is a brief update of the tuition-setting process at all seven public universities. The focus of this update is on the process and work that HECC staff and the Commission have undertaken since the last Commission meeting in February, as well as an update on the proposed timeline for completion of the process and a brief update on each institution.

Docket Material:

Six of the seven public universities are currently engaged in the tuition-setting process, with all seven anticipated to complete their work by mid-May. The delay from the original timeline for completion of early to mid-March is due to uncertainty about the final legislatively-adopted funding level for the Public University Support Fund (PUSF).

The only university whose tuition review body has completed its work so far is [Oregon State University](#), which proposed a combined tuition and fees increase of 4.4% at its Corvallis campus and 4.3% at its Cascades campus, which is below the 5% review threshold and therefore not subject to HECC review. OSU's board will be considering this recommendation at its upcoming April board meeting.

Eastern Oregon University has also released its [draft tuition recommendation](#), which was discussed by the Finance and Administration Subcommittee of its Board of Trustees on April 3. EOU's draft recommendation is for a combined tuition and fees increase of 4.99%, below the 5% review threshold and therefore not subject to HECC review.

Western Oregon University has additionally released its [draft tuition recommendation](#), which was discussed by the Finance and Administration Subcommittee of its Board of Trustees on April 4. WOU's draft recommendation is for a combined tuition and fees increase of 2.13%, below the 5% review threshold and therefore not subject to HECC review. It is worth noting that WOU had a guaranteed tuition program (known as the Promise Program) which resident undergraduate students could opt in to and, in return for higher initial tuition rates, be guaranteed no tuition increases during their time at WOU. WOU is phasing out this program, but about 20-25% of WOU's resident undergraduate students are in one of these Promise cohorts and therefore will see no tuition increase (although they are subject to any potential fee increases).

Commissioners and members of the HECC staff have now observed tuition committee meetings at all seven institutions in person. In total, Commissioners will have attended 19 meetings and staff will have attended 23 meetings (either in person or remotely).

[Eastern Oregon University](#)

EOU's tuition committee has met five times so far. As noted above, EOU has published a draft tuition and fees recommendation and will formally adopt a recommendation later this month. Tuition forums for student leadership and campus-wide open forums are planned to allow the tuition committee to present its recommendations to larger campus audiences. EOU has provided charts on how different tuition level increases and PUSF levels would impact their budget gaps and fund balances.

Oregon Institute of Technology

OIT's tuition committee has met six times so far, streamed between both of their campuses, with two additional meetings planned. OIT has already held two public forums on its tuition increase and has two more planned. The committee anticipates making its formal recommendation at its May 7 meeting. OIT has provided the charts of how various tuition increases at PUSF increase levels of \$40.5M and \$60M would impact their budget gap.

Oregon State University

OSU utilized their existing university budget committee process in making their formal recommendation (as previously noted). This group has met biweekly since November and has held multiple forums to gather student input. OSU's formal tuition recommendation includes a chart on how the various funding and tuition increase levels would impact the university's budget and remission level.

Portland State University

PSU's tuition committee has met nine times so far and has held three public forums on the tuition increase (two student focused and one intended for faculty and staff), with at least one more student focused forum planned. The committee is in the process of scheduling additional meetings and anticipate making their formal recommendation by the end of April/early May. PSU has provided a chart on how various tuition and PUSF increase levels would impact the university's budget gap and remission levels.

Southern Oregon University

SOU's tuition committee has met eight times so far and is in the process of scheduling additional meetings and public forums. SOU anticipates making their formal tuition recommendation by the end of April. SOU has provided a chart as to how various PUSF and tuition increase levels would impact budget and remission levels.

University of Oregon

UO's tuition committee (TFAB) has held ten public meetings (with plans for two more) and has held two student forums with plans for one more in May. Recommended tuition and fee increases for all categories of students except resident undergraduates were approved by their board in early March. Resident undergraduate tuition recommendations are scheduled to be considered at the May Board of Trustees meeting scheduled for May 22nd and 23rd.

Western Oregon University

WOU's tuition committee has met seven times so far, held two public forums and presented to the ASWOU senate. As noted above, WOU has presented its proposed tuition increase to its board's Finance and Administration Subcommittee and will present it to the university's full board for adoption later this month.

For any institution which included a chart linking tuition increases to budget gaps and/or remissions at certain PUSF/tuition increase levels, these charts are included as an appendix to this docket item.

Although the tuition-setting process is not yet complete, these institutions actions, among others, represent a strong attempt by all seven institutions to meet both the letter and spirit of tuition criteria focus area #1 (Fostering an Inclusive and Transparent Tuition-Setting Process) as well as HB 4141 which requires the following ([adapted from SOU's HB 4141 checklist](#)):

1. Creation of a tuition advisory body, which must create a written document describing its role and consist of at least the following members:
 - Two Administrators
 - Two Faculty
 - Two Students representing Student Government
 - Two Students representing historically underserved students

2. The university must provide training on the following:
 - The budget of the university
 - The legislative appropriation process
 - Data showing the relationship between tuition and fees to state appropriations
 - The university must provide the council with:
 - A plan for managing costs
 - A plan for how tuition and fees could be decreased if the university receives extra appropriations
3. The council must also provide the following opportunities:
 - Provide opportunities for students to actively participate in the process and deliberations
 - Provide a written report to the president with recommendations, deliberations and observations about tuition and fees for the upcoming academic year including any sub-reports requested by members of the council or other documentation produced or received by the council
4. The university must ensure that the process is described on the University's website and include downloadable materials such as:
 - The council's role and relationship to the Board
 - Any documentation, agendas, and data considered during deliberations
5. If the council feels a recommendation greater than 5% annually is necessary, the council must document its consideration of:
 - The impact of that increase on students, especially historically underserved students
 - The impact of that increase on the mission of the university
 - Alternative scenarios involving smaller increases

All six remaining public universities have indicated they will base their tuition recommendations on the Co-Chairs budget framework (which sees a \$40M increase above the Governor's Recommended Budget for the PUSF), even as they continue to advocate for increased investment. The universities have stated that a PUSF increase of \$120M above GRB will be enough to keep resident undergraduate tuition increases at all universities below the statutory 5% review threshold.

However, absent such an increase in the PUSF, HECC staff is anticipating that at least one institution will exceed the 5% review threshold and any institutions that exceed this threshold will have their requests presented to the HECC at its June meeting. HECC staff will continue to monitor all universities to determine whether their tuition increases exceed the statutory review threshold, and if so, whether an institution has met the Commission-established criteria (which include many of those in HB 4141).

Staff Recommendation:

No action recommended, discussion only.