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# PERSPECTIVES

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## Tuition freeze would warm students' hearts

*Rising college costs outpace inflation, meaning a national tuition freeze is necessary for families to "catch up"*

Generation X. Children of the '80s. The Y2K Kids. The current generation of college students has been given numerous nicknames. None of them is particularly flattering, nor were any of them chosen by the people they describe. Now it's time to add another one to the list: The Broke Bunch. And students sure as heck didn't choose this one.

According to figures released by the College Board, the price of attending a university rose an average of 4 percent this year — more than double the rate of inflation. During the course of the last decade, tuition at public four-year institutions has risen 50 percent, while family income has gone up a scant 1.5 percent.

In an Associated Press interview, College Board analyst Lawrence Gladieux said the potential to earn higher wages with a college degree makes the expense "worth every penny." Furthermore, the College Board pointed out that Congress recently approved an increase in Pell Grants.

While it may seem that students should "have no fear, Congress is here," the College Board does admit the increase in grants may be offset by an increase in the number of students who need them.

How could the College Board think otherwise? According to The Associated Press, sending a child to a private university would require 162 percent of a low-income family's earnings and 44 percent of a middle-income family's earnings.

Those are national statistics. If they seem unbelievable, look at the story across the United States: College students in Florida have endured three straight years of almost 7 percent increases. Mississippi has



Giovanni Salmeria/Emerald

ended its six-year sabbatical and increased college costs by 10 percent.

To fight the rising expense of a college education, something needs to be done — and fast. The best solution would be to establish a national tuition freeze. By eliminating price increases for at least a few years, families (and the inflation rate) might have a fighting chance to "catch up" to university prices.

Believe it or not, Oregon is an example of one such tuition-freeze success story.

The average increase in tuition and fees this year in Oregon was 1.3 percent. Without the freeze, said The Associated Press, Oregon tuitions would have soared to 3.7 percent, much closer to the national 4

percent average.

Not every state has the luxury of freezing college tuition. If a tuition freeze is indeed not possible, university administrations must at least try to make the rate of college costs comparable to the inflation rate.

This year the inflation rate was 2 percent. If university costs had increased at an identical rate, students would be paying a comparable amount. So why such a disparity between the two? Did the cost of educating a college student really increase over the summer?

The College Board's Gladieux said it is attributed mainly to a decline in state support. He also noted that as colleges compete for students by promising bigger and better pro-

grams, the need for bigger and better funding goes up. With schools competing against one another, the well of college funds dries up quickly.

And students are left to squeeze water from the rocks. In other words — that's all, folks; time for a loan.

A college education is a great investment. Unlike the stock market, a degree will not crash and send students into a depression. But if the cost of college is not frozen or reduced, the depression of unending loans will strike soon enough.

*This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses may be sent to ode@oregon.uoregon.edu.*

### Thumbs



**THUMBS UP**  
**To foresight:** Robert Guberman, planning for his future, trademarked the phrase "Year 2000" several years ago. Others have trademarked slogans such as "Y2K," "2000" and "millennium." For those interested in their great-grandchildren's finances, the phrase "Y3K" is still up for grabs.

**To Boot Camp:** Leaders of the United States Marine Corp have decided to issue new softer-soled boots to recruits. The new footwear will cost more, but it replaces a standard-issue boot known for causing stress fractures. These boots are made for walkin'...



**THUMBS DOWN**  
**To indolence:** The latest session of Congress passed the fewest laws in decades. Richard Gephardt called it "the worst Congress that has ever sat in this building." Now there is an impending government shutdown. What have you done for me lately?

**To the UO Bookstore:** Week three is upon us, and some students are still without books. The problem is the Bookstore's habit of ordering too few textbooks for large classes. The solution may be Amazon.com.

### Question of the Week

*Yes or No: Do you believe it is realistic to have a tuition freeze and maintain the quality of education at the University?*

Responses may be called in to 346-5511, dropped off at the Emerald in Suite 300 of the EMU or sent to ode@oregon.uoregon.edu. Results will be posted next Monday.

### Letters to the Editor

#### Frustrating freebies

It's about time someone took a closer look at the tactics credit card companies use to sign up students (ODE, Oct. 6). I am a firm believer that students are adults capable of making their own decisions, but the free Frisbees in exchange for credit make me angry.

Signing up for a credit card is a big task, one that should be thought through. The methods that credit card companies use are completely structured to discourage the thought process. The result is that many students sign up for a credit card and get themselves into deep water. The Emerald has done the campus a service by choosing to cover this matter.

**Merriah Fairchild**  
Political Science

#### Elections apology

Last spring's ASUO elections were a mess. This year, we are going to fix this process. After the rules violations, grievances and Constitution Court rulings of last spring's elections, it was obvious that campus elections rules and regulations needed to be clearer. As candidates, even the ASUO president and vice president unknowingly were found guilty of a campaign violation.

To prepare for a smoother and more effective election this spring, the ASUO elections coordinator is clarifying and editing the election process in conjunction with the ASUO Constitution Court.

Hopefully, this streamlining will create fairer and smoother ASUO campus elec-

tions. Please contact the ASUO elections coordinator at asuoelec@gladstone with any suggestions. Thank you.

**Geneva Wortman**  
ASUO president

#### Ballot information

As the person who manages public information for Lane County, I want to call attention to the many ways voters can learn about Ballot Measures 20-05 and 20-06, the community safety and justice system levy and bond.

In any election, it is important for us to get the information we need to cast an educated and responsible vote. Most people wouldn't buy a car without first checking it out. Most wouldn't bite into a turnover without first asking "What's inside?" And most

wouldn't jump into the lake without first doing the "toe test." So why would people want to vote on something they don't completely understand?

Here are five easy ways you can learn more about two measures that address a county-wide plan to improve community safety and justice: by telephone (682-4511), by Internet ([www.co.lane.or.us/measures](http://www.co.lane.or.us/measures)), by e-mail ([pio@co.lane.or.us](mailto:pio@co.lane.or.us)), by mail (Lane County Administration, 125 E. 8th Avenue, Eugene, OR 97401) and by having us come and talk to your group.

Call for a brochure. Check out the website. Ask questions. Do your own toe test.

**Mike Moskovitz**  
Lane County public information officer