

Tuition hikes to harm students

When is enough enough?

The answer is easy. When it comes to cutting grant aid for Oregon's neediest students and increasing tuition and fees by more than 15 percent on top of already rising tuition, students should stand up for their right to higher education access. In response to the article ("UO seeks to increase tuition, fees for 2003-04," ODE, July 8) on the State Board of Higher Education modifying tuition plateaus so that fees that students pay will increase when they take more than a certain amount of hours, students should be outraged and ready to seek action before a decision is reached next Friday. Certainly, a tuition fee hike of this magnitude will hit hard for many students, especially those who don't already receive state and federal aid. Not only will it limit some students' access to our University, but it will make our University less affordable to many low-income students.

There are many reasons why stu-

dents should oppose such a plan by the University and the State Board of Higher Education. The first and most important is that University students were not informed of the changes when they registered for classes for fall term. Moreover, students were not notified that by registering for more than 13 credits, they would be paying \$20 more for each credit. Under the proposed system, this means that students who want to graduate in four years will be charged an extra \$60 per term for taking 16 credits. Now, that amount may not sound unreasonable, but on top of the fee increases and raised tuition for the next year, it becomes a lot for the unsuspecting student who was not counting on paying more money to the University. This means it will take students longer to graduate to avoid spending more per term.

Second, the University and the State Board of Higher Education took until the summer to release this plan, and students who are attending the University in the fall have already made arrangements for federal and state aid. Grants are awarded by full-time status and do not take into account the extra costs per credit that

some students would be paying under the proposed policy. The Oregon Opportunity Grant has been diminished because of funding cuts, and under the proposed fee increases there would not be additional money within the program to cover increased fees.

The University and the State Board of Higher Education need to understand the concerns of students, who will be directly affected by the proposed tuition increases. For that, I urge you to write to the State Board of Education. Administrators need a reality check as to how they are affecting students, because many students will be affected by this proposed plan because they take classes during peak hours and work evenings to pay their tuition.

You can drop letters off in the ASUO office (Suite 4, EMU), as well as to find out more information about this topic and other ways to get involved. It is important that we have many student letters so that you are represented at the hearing next week.

Gabe V. Kjos, the ASUO legislative associate, is a junior majoring in planning, public policy and management.


GUEST COMMENTARY

ONLINE POLL

Each week, the Emerald publishes the previous week's poll results and the coming week's poll question. Visit www.dailyemerald.com to vote. **Last week:** Should Oregon's non-legal aliens graduating from high school be given in-state tuition rates? **Results:** 52 total votes

No, they should be deported — 48.1 percent or 25 votes
 No, they should still pay out-of-state tuition — 19.2 percent or 10 votes
 Yes, they've lived in Oregon long enough, regardless of citizenship — 19.2 percent or 10 votes
 Yes, if they want education, it should be adequately provided — 13.5

percent or 7 votes
This week: How do you respond to telemarketing phone calls?
Choices: Politely listen and buy something; Politely listen and buy nothing; Hang up; Say something rude and hang up; I screen my phone calls; Ask for their home phone number; Leave me alone!



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