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BACK TO CAMPUS 2004

Oregon universities received an "F" on the state report card under affordability.

"[The University] had to increase tuition to maintain the quality Oregon students need and deserve," Saunders said.

Redding said the University of Oregon already has a hard time offering enough classes so that students can take the requirements they need to graduate. Compared with other schools, he said UO's tuition isn't that high. Plus they don't have enough money to give all the students the financial aid they need.

"Financial aid that's available is very low," he said. "That's one of the reasons why students are struggling."

Elizabeth Bickford, director of the Office of Financial Aid, said that federal financial aid is still helping pick up some of the slack. Between 1999 and 2003, more than 1,000 students received federal Pell Grants than in previous years.

But campus-based financial aid, which comes from the federal government and is distributed by UO, has not increased. And while tuition has risen, the mathematical formula the university uses to determine how much financial aid students get hasn't changed.

State funding is also down resulting in fewer Oregon Opportunity Grant recipients in 2003-2004. In the 2002-2003 school year, 50 percent of full-time freshman received financial aid and approximately \$15.6 million was given in need-based scholarship and grants. In 2003-2004 more freshman actually received financial aid (53 percent), but the total amount decreased to \$14.6 million meaning each student got less money.

Barnhart said Oregon needs a "much better scholarship fund."

"Tuition is much higher than it should be," he said. "We could lower tuition by bringing state support where it ought to be."

In the meantime, students are still struggling.

UO junior Sasha Hood is receiving financial aid through loans and a 15-hour-per-week part-time job just so she'll have money to live on while she's trying to make it through school.

If her parents hadn't taken out a loan to help her, she said she wouldn't be able to afford school at all.

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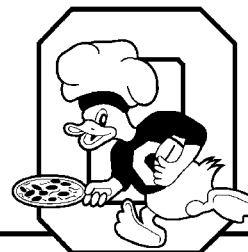


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