

Tuition, Fee Increases Needed to Keep Langston Running

Contributed by Lisa Riley -- Black College Wire
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Administrators say economy is forcing hikes

The cost of a college education at Langston University rose a bit higher this academic year through an increase in tuition, housing costs and student fees.

The tuition increase varies between the university's three campuses.

Undergraduate tuition on the main campus for in-state students increased from \$80.30 per credit hour to \$88, a difference of \$7.70. Out-of-state students' tuition increased from \$250.50 per credit hour to \$274, a difference of \$23.20. Undergraduate tuition on Tulsa's campus only increased for in-state students-\$83.20 per credit hour to \$89.25-a difference of \$6.05.

There is no tuition increase for graduate students on the OKC campus, but undergraduate out-of-state students are paying \$12.75 more per credit hour.

On-campus housing is 3 percent higher than last semester. For example, a student staying in Scholars' Inn is now paying \$80 more than they paid in the spring.

Student activity and facility fees were also raised by \$2.60 on the main campus.

Angela Kelso-Watson, vice president of fiscal and administrative affairs, says that the increases are necessary in order for the university to continue to function, and that the economy almost always plays a major part in the university's budget.

"From last year to this year alone with the cost increases in fuel, electricity and other utility type expenses, our increase in the budget was \$1.5 million," Watson said. "We are state supported, but the state only provides about 60 percent of the budget that is required to run the university operations. So you have to make up for the difference somewhere."

According to Watson, tuition increases are almost required because the state only gave the university an additional \$47,000.

Watson said the tuition increases were also needed because the tuition structures among Langston's campuses were different-with students on the main campus paying less than others-and there needed to be parity.

"Two years ago we developed this plan to have similar structures in our tuitions and fees on all three campuses. Each year we have worked towards that, so some campuses increased to catch up with others while some didn't get increased because they were higher than the others," Watson said.

Watson said that the money generated from this year's increases, approximately \$711,450, will be used for a variety of academic related necessities, ranging from electricity to instructors' pay.

Even with the increases, Watson says she is proud of the fact that the university was able to keep its increases relatively low compared to other universities. LU's tuition increase ranks with the lowest tuition increase among four-year institutions in Oklahoma.

"Langston is always cognizant of our customers' ability to pay, so we always strive to keep our costs low and affordable," Watson said. "This is indeed a priority for the university and the students we serve. Many of our students struggle to find ways to afford an education, so our objective is that we not price ourselves out of the market, but enable many students to obtain an education who may otherwise not be able to afford college."

However, many students are still upset about the increase. LaMonte Williams, a sophomore from Davenport, La., said the increases are "ridiculous."

"I don't feel that they should be raising it up anymore because we're all out here struggling. For people like me that can't get a loan and that don't have a cosigner, I feel like nobody cares,"

Roderick Preston, a freshman from Dallas who was unaware of the increases, feels that tuition should be the last thing that students have to worry about.

"Education is what we need to put ourselves in a position to battle the recession. As students we already have so many

other expenses to worry about."

A major expense for students that was not affected is meal plans.

"We could not impose such a thing with the relocation and construction that the University is presently going through," Watson said.

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Lisa Riley writes for the Langston Gazette, the Langston University student newspaper, which originally published this article.