

Study: U.S. college costs rising at slower rate

By JUSTIN POPE
ASSOCIATED PRESS

College tuition rose at a somewhat slower rate this year, climbing 10.5 percent at public four-year colleges and 6 percent at private ones, a study found. State budget cuts have forced public colleges to pass on more of their costs to students in recent years.

The College Board reported Tuesday that the average tuition for in-state students at four-year public schools is \$5,132 this year. Last year, tuition rose 13 percent, the first double-digit increase in a decade.

Including room and board, the overall cost for in-state students at four-year public schools rose 8 percent to \$11,354, following a 9 percent increase last year that was the highest since the early 1980s. At private four-year

colleges, tuition, room and board rose 6 percent to \$27,516 this year, the College Board said.

Most students do not pay the full sticker price. If they were to get the same level of student aid as last year — those figures are not yet available — the average student would pay about \$8,000 at a public four-year college this year.

David Ward, president of the American Council on Education, which represents public and private schools, welcomed the easing of tuition increases but called for a public debate on the "quiet cost-shifting from state support to tuition that continues in far too many states."

James Boyle, president of the group College Parents of America, said continued tu-

ition increases may cause families "to turn away from higher education options for their children."

The College Board study also shows that loans, as opposed to grants, are playing an increasing role in helping students pay for college.

"Last year we reported that for the last five years ending in 2002, grant aid had grown more rapidly than loans, and that was really encouraging news," said Sandy Baum, senior policy analyst with the College Board, who presented the findings at a news conference in Washington. "Now, we really can't say that anymore."

Federal student aid rose 10 percent above inflation last year. Funding for Pell Grants, the primary support for low-income students

and a topic in the presidential campaign, rose 6 percent above inflation.

Loans through banks and other private sources accounted for 16 percent of education loans in 2003, compared with 7 percent in 1998. The study does not include credit card debt, which as many as one-quarter of college students may be relying on to finance their education. There has also been sharp growth in unsubsidized federal loans to students and parents.

Baum said the average student loan debt, about \$20,000, is reasonable for college graduates given their increased earning power. But she said poor students, who do not benefit as much from tax breaks that help wealthier students, could be vulnerable if the trend toward loans continues.

After two years, Minneapolis NAACP chapter still in turmoil

By Isaac Peterson III
Special to Sentinel-Voice

MINNEAPOLIS (NNPA) — Claudie Washington, president of the Minnesota-Dakota NAACP State Conference, has written a letter to Minneapolis Branch President Brett Buckner informing him that that: "The Special Committee on Internal Affairs (SCIA) reported their findings of the investigation of the [complaint] filed against you.

"As a result of their investigation the SCIA recommended to the Minnesota Dakota State Conference Executive Committee to remove you as President of the Minneapolis Branch and that you further be removed from the Minneapolis Branch Executive Committee.

"The Minnesota Dakota Executive Committee voted to approve the recommendation coming from the SCIA to remove you as President of the Minneapolis Branch and from the Minneapolis Branch Executive Committee."

This action follows a directive in April that Buckner was to "cease and desist" (see MSR April, 28, 2004, "National NAACP Administrator Chastises Mpls Branch President.")

The branch had previously been placed in receivership and under the direction of an administrator, Carl Breeding, who sent Buckner the above-cited "chastisement."

The status of internal operations since Buckner's removal is uncertain; we have not been able to obtain a response from Breeding.

Also uncertain is the impact of operations on the Branch's upcoming elections scheduled for next month.

In the two years since the previous election, the Branch has been rendered essentially ineffective, due to many fac-

tors.

One factor is a still-ongoing dispute over the legitimacy of the last election, which saw Ron Edwards defeated by then-incumbent president Shalia Lindsey by a lopsided margin.

That outcome was challenged in the courts, and the result remains uncertain.

Lindsey left the office soon after the election for a position with the Colorado NAACP.

She was replaced by Rev. Al Gallmon, whose tenure was plagued by internal challenges to his legitimacy every step of the way.

Gallmon resigned last fall, to be replaced by Buckner.

Fractious infighting marred the branch's operations under the terms of Lindsey, Gallmon and Buckner.

Apart from the dispute over Lindsey's re-election, neither Gallmon nor Buckner was elected by the general membership.

Gallmon was first vice president, and on Lindsey's

departure automatically became Branch president.

Buckner, first vice president under Gallmon, similarly ascended to the presidency when Gallmon resigned. NAACP rules apparently allowed them to occupy the office without input from the membership.

Buckner's abrasive and particularly secretive management style seemed to lead to the branch's complete ineffectiveness over the last year.

One of Buckner's most divisive practices was an initial tendency to have armed security at Branch meetings.

Each of the previous three presidents has had to contend with charges and suspicions by the membership of financial mismanagement.

A major source of the acrimony has been the state of the branch's finances, which no one seems to have knowledge about.

Many calls from the general membership for a full accounting and audit have been met with indifference,

at best, from Branch officers.

Branch member Jesse Overton told the Spokesman-Recorder that Breeding had informed the membership that the National office has done a Branch audit, but also said the membership has yet to learn the results.

Overton has introduced a motion that branch operations be suspended until such time as the branch's financial situation is completely straightened out, with a complete accounting of all outstanding business.

The motion passed the membership overwhelmingly but has yet to be acted on. The Parent Information Centers is still the subject of bitter and intense internal dispute.

The membership had voted in August 2003 to not accept federal money channeled through the state to run

the center. The branch officers, under Gallmon, proceeded against the member's expressed wishes.

Aside from the concerns about the financing of the centers, there are lingering concerns about their corporate tax status.

These concerns and disputes, among many others, remain obstacles for the next group of leaders to overcome if the Branch is to return to its role as a viable, useful civil rights watchdog and advocate.

The candidates for office have not been ascertained yet, at least not publicly. NAACP policy requires that candidates pass through a formal nominating process, or present a petition signed by three current members in good standing.

It is not yet known whether Andy Martin or Barbara

Bearman, secretary and assistant secretary, will seek to retain their positions; both are also the targets of acrimony and vituperation from the Minneapolis Branch membership.

Each was in office during the tenures of the above-named presidents.

Overton, a former NAACP president himself, asked the question: "You can elect new officers, but how do you restore the public trust if you don't clean up the financial disclosure issues? This is the only way to get back to normality."

"Our customer is the African-American community and the public at large. I feel that all of the issues raised need to be resolved in that forum."

Isaac Peterson III writes for the Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder.

Yes I'll Vote

We must vote for what is right. I challenge all GOD fearing people to focus on the moral issues. I thank GOD this is a new day in which the saints of GOD will not vote for a man, race, or a political party. GOD is touching the hearts of men & women to vote as He leads them by prayer & the word of GOD. Politically speaking no group is perfect. Our political system is built on the opinions of men. Spiritually speaking, however there are some things in life have nothing to do with our opinions. The Democratic Party had their Convention in Mass. after they passed a same-sex law. They support & promote homosexuality & higher taxes. All these are an abomination to GOD. They want to keep us in bondage, GOD brought us out with the help of Martin L. King Jr. (Prophet & Christian). If we endorse this party, you stand against GOD's principles. When government leaders say its ok to kill babies & when politicians try to change the definition of marriage, I must take a stand. Please do not allow the Devil to use you and when you stand before God He will not say depart from me I never knew you. Trust GOD, do not trust man. I will stand & vote, will you?

Gwendolyn J. Mabry

Paid political view by Gwendolyn J. Mabry

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