

# FAQ — TUITION INCREASE 2018

## **Q. Why is a tuition increase necessary?**

**A.** At this point, only about 15 percent of WVU's more than \$1.07 billion budget comes from the state the University's academic operations, which serve as the foundation and catalyst for the \$3 billion enterprise that includes West Virginia University Hospital System. (NOTE: the athletic department is entirely self-sufficient.)

This means that WVU's budget is more reliant than ever before on tuition and fees – along with expense reductions and revenues generated from auxiliary accounts, funds from grants and contracts, private fund-raising and other sources – to balance the budget.

This year's budget continues to be affected by many factors – rising utility costs, infrastructure and cybersecurity needs, additional information technology costs, increases in graduate stipends and, of great importance, retaining and rewarding our outstanding faculty and staff in order to offer raises and competitive salaries in conjunction with the pay raise provided by the Legislature and the governor. As most of our employees are not funded by general revenue, we are required to find additional revenues for those compensation adjustments. (NOTE: While committed to raises, those are yet to be determined.)

Tuition increases and expense reductions are always difficult decisions; however, not doing so would be harmful to the academic programming and student experience WVU offers. In addition to support for the general operations noted above, quality academic offerings would suffer, undergraduate research opportunities would dwindle, course

sections would close causing students to take longer to graduate, and student success initiatives (like Project 168, Adventure WV) and other high-level student services and programming would be affected.

While state reductions have contributed to the University becoming more reliant on tuition and fees, WVU has continued to explore and implement many other strategies and tactics to keep overall costs low so that any tuition/fee increase is as low as possible. For example: increased fundraising devoted specifically to scholarships (see below for details); increased sponsored research to relieve pressure on tuition/fee income in that area; implemented operational economies, e.g. consolidating some “back office” functions and looking for partnerships where feasible that will bring funding to the University; and carefully review staffing in all areas. We also must continue to look at other ways to make higher education more affordable through continued efforts to look at different tuition models and working with students to make sure that required course materials are affordable and add value to the coursework and obtaining a degree.

As President Gee has said many times, “The future of this state depends on a lively, vibrant and strong West Virginia University.” And that is who we are. And that is what we will deliver.

## **Q. Is the University working on reducing expenses?**

**A.** Absolutely. In the budget discussed with the tuition increase, units generally will see a 2 percent reduction in their central allocations to help offset the costs of the compensation adjustments and other related increases.

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**Q. What will a 2018-2019 T&F increase look like?**

**A.** We know it is important to keep tuition and fees affordable and at reasonable levels while keeping our focus on quality; therefore, this year's proposal calls for an approximate 5.7 percent increase for both resident and non-resident students. On the main campus in Morgantown, that translates to:

- \$240 per semester increase for resident undergraduates.
- \$672 per semester increase for non resident undergraduates.
- \$270 per semester increase for resident graduate students.
- \$693 per semester increase for non resident graduate students.

In addition, residence hall rates (double occupancy) will see an increase of approximately 3 percent, or \$82 per semester, and meal plans will increase by 3.5 percent, or \$89 per semester.

The WVU Institute of Technology in Beckley and Potomac State College of WVU will also see an approximate 5.7 percent increase in tuition and fees for resident and non-resident students per semester at the following rates:

- Potomac State (associates/residents) – \$120 increase per semester
- Potomac State College (associates/non residents) – \$312 increase per semester
- WVU Tech residents – \$202 increase per semester
- WVU Tech non-residents – \$502 increase per semester

The meal plan at Potomac State will increase by 5.3 percent, or \$115 per semester. At WVUIT, the meal plan will increase by 2 percent, or \$43 per semester

Residence hall rates at Potomac State (double occupancy) will increase by \$59, or 3 percent, and remain at current rates at WVUIT.

NOTE: The new approved T&F rates will be posted on line at <http://tuition.wvu.edu> within the next few days.

**Q. What has been the average T&F hike been at WVU over the last several years, and what are other in-state schools doing?**

**A.** Tuition increases at WVU have ranged from a high of 9.6 percent in 2015 to a low of 2 percent in 2010. The last two years, the average increase has been approximately 5 percent.

We note that other colleges and universities in our state are facing the rising costs of operating that we described – for example Marshall University is increasing resident tuition by 4.2 percent and Fairmont State recently announced an increase in tuition of 3 percent for residents.

**Q. What is tuition like at our peer Big 12 schools, other peer institutions across the country?**

**A.** Tuition at Big 12 Peer Schools: Of the 10 universities in the Big 12, WVU's resident tuition is the lowest (around \$8,900 per year).

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Annual tuition at comparable nearby schools: Penn State, \$17,900; University of Maryland, \$10,181; University of Pittsburgh, \$18,618; Virginia Commonwealth University, \$13,130; Virginia Tech, \$13,620; and Ohio State, \$10,591 (FY18).

**Q. What is WVU's graduation rate compared to other West Virginia institutions?**

**A.** WVU's current in-state graduation rate is 63 percent, the highest of any other college or university in the state – although we want it to be much higher.

**Q. How does WVU's graduates student debt compare to other West Virginia institutions?**

**A.** The debt rate for in-state graduates is approximately \$21,960, compared to the national average of \$30,100 -- 27 percent less than the national average.

Also, in 2016, 46 percent of our resident full-time freshmen received non-loan aid that completely offset tuition and fees.

To further help mitigate the increase, WVU will increase its scholarship support by a percentage equal to the tuition increase.

**Q. The WVU Foundation just announced surpassing its \$1 billion campaign goal. Can some of that money help offset tuition increases? What else can be done?**

**A.** Yes. the just-completed State of Minds Campaign, which raised more than \$1.2 billion for all parts of the WVU system, generated almost \$568 million in gifts

to support resources for undergraduate students, and \$136 million more for our professional and graduate students.

During the Campaign, donors funded 844 new endowed scholarships (minimum of \$25,000 each); many were substantially larger endowments.

Working specifically with WVU leadership in light of the 2015 tuition increases, the Foundation emphasized scholarships in an effort called Dream First that was pushed between Jan. 1, 2015 – Dec. 31, 2017. This was part of the overall State of Minds effort. As a result of this strong push, more than 4,500 University donors made more than 11,066 gifts with a value of \$62.1 million only for student scholarship assistance.

Much of this aid gives preference for, or is completely restricted to, students from West Virginia.

Beginning in 2017 as part of our Day of Giving, the Foundation is emphasizing opportunities for our constituents to fund unrestricted scholarships to the University, or unrestricted scholarships to each of our colleges and schools. We recognize how important this is to the University system's efforts to recruit our best and brightest.

During the last two years, the WVU System granted \$320 million in total aid to our students.