



Summer 6-26-2007

Fewer State Dollars Require Winthrop Tuition Increase

Winthrop University

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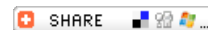
Winthrop University, "Fewer State Dollars Require Winthrop Tuition Increase" (2007). *Winthrop News 2007*. 63.

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06/26/2007



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Fewer State Dollars Require Winthrop Tuition Increase

Quick Facts

- Winthrop's Board of Trustees executive committee approved a tuition increase for fall 2007.
- For freshmen, semester costs will be up 6.42 percent overall.
- The increase is a response to fewer state budget operating dollars for Winthrop.

ROCK HILL, S.C. - The state budget approved by the **South Carolina General Assembly** last week will provide Winthrop University fewer state operating dollars than in the current fiscal year, causing university officials to go back to their calculators to retally next year's tuition increase.

The result: Funding the legislative reduction as well as other needs will cost S.C. freshmen entering Winthrop for fall 2007 \$355 more than last year. Out-of-state freshmen will pay \$735 more.

Members of the **Winthrop Board of Trustees executive committee** Tuesday approved that tuition increase and a related budget during a conference call, noting that the plan might have to be modified if the budget changes again later this week when lawmakers take up any vetoes issued by Governor Mark Sanford. Winthrop's full board on June 8 delegated authority to finalize tuition and budget plans to the executive group because legislators had not finished their work on the state budget by the end of the regular General Assembly session June 7.

According to the plans approved, semester costs for typical Winthrop S.C. freshmen next fall will be up **6.24 percent overall** – they will pay \$5,105 for tuition and fees and \$2,900 for their room and meal plan. (About 90 percent of Winthrop entering students live on campus.) Academic fees taken alone will increase 7.47 percent for in-state undergraduate students, and 8.37 percent for out-of-state undergraduate students. Out-of-state undergraduate students will pay \$9,517 in academic fees this fall. Academic fees for full-time in-state graduate students will be \$4,917, and \$9,140 for out-of-state students. Room and board charges, which receive no state appropriations support, were set by the full board of trustees in April.

Winthrop University President Anthony DiGiorgio explained that about \$1.1 million of Winthrop's annual operating appropriation for the current year had been funded by legislators with non-recurring dollars. Instead of annualizing those dollars for each institution that received them for next year, the legislators chose to use a funding formula that returned only \$863,900 of the \$1.1 million to Winthrop, leaving it to the university to address the shortfall through its own management efficiencies and a tuition increase that is more than it otherwise would have been. Five S.C. four-year universities were similarly affected.

"As every business and every family knows, it's a tough time to just keep up with inflation," DiGiorgio said. "Fuel costs are up – which drives up the cost of virtually everything else we buy. Postage and technology costs are up. Security expectations are higher, reflecting the world we live in these days. New minimum wage increases accrue for student workers and graduate assistants, who are not covered by state employee salary increases. Meanwhile, our own standards and public expectation demand that Winthrop keep pace with how the 21st-century world needs students to be prepared for the world of work and citizenship. That remains our solid commitment to students entering the university this fall, and to students who will be entering the university five or 10 years from now."

In addition to funding overall inflation drivers, Winthrop's budget next year will invest new dollars in preparing students via hands-on biology and chemistry research, in library acquisitions, and in bringing on line its newest academic buildings – the **Lois Rhame West Health, Physical Education and Wellness Center** and **Owens Hall**, a general purpose academic classroom building. Both facilities

will begin hosting classes this fall. Personnel costs of Winthrop's new master's degree program in social work are also a new item on the budget for the coming year. Winthrop in the year ahead also will continue its participation in a national four-year accountability study tracking collegiate student learning outcomes, and continue to invest in the distinctive residence hall programming that is designed to guide traditional-age students in achieving personal and academic success, increased maturity, community awareness and leadership capacity.

Aside from its operating appropriation, Winthrop also is designated to receive a one-time legislative allocation of \$1.2 million for on-going and deferred maintenance of its historic buildings.

Trustees, administrators and students will be keeping an eye on Columbia later this week, when legislators return to deal with any gubernatorial vetoes affecting the budget. Sanford last year vetoed the entire budget, but his veto was overridden by the **General Assembly**. The new fiscal year begins July 1, so the process should be finalized by then.

Winthrop has been recognized repeatedly in Governor Sanford's annual budget messages as having the highest level of administrative efficiency of any university in its sector. Earlier this year, Winthrop received national reaffirmation of its quality and value when Princeton Review again included the 121-year-old university in its 2008 edition of "America's Best Value Colleges." Winthrop also is listed in the latest edition of Barron's "Best Buys in College Education," and is an annual fixture in U.S. News and World Report's listing of "America's Best Colleges," where it is ranked among the Top Ten Regional Public Universities in the South.

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