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Tuition Decision Delayed by Winthrop Board of Trustees

Winthrop University

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Tuition Decision Delayed by Winthrop Board of Trustees

Quick Facts

- A small tuition increase – likely about 4 percent – is planned.
- Employees are not expected at this point to take any more furlough days without pay.

ROCK HILL, S.C. - **Winthrop University trustees** opted Friday to delegate approval of a final budget for the university to its executive committee, which will have the remainder of the month to act.

President Anthony DiGiorgio recommended the deferral, noting that this week's court activity regarding federal stimulus funds and an upcoming General Assembly veto session still leave some elements of the budget picture in flux, even as the July 1 start to a new fiscal year approaches.

"Even now that the court has ruled that the General Assembly can compel the governor to ask for the funds, the timing of access to those dollars remains to be determined precisely. We also believe it will be prudent to see if anything unexpected arises during the veto session before making our final budget recommendation to the board," DiGiorgio said.

Once **stimulus funds** are available as revenues, DiGiorgio said he believes a combination of continued operational savings and a small tuition increase – likely about 4 percent – would enable Winthrop to move into the new fiscal year on July 1 without employees under a mandatory furlough pay reduction program for the first time in six months.

Without stimulus funds, the tuition increase would have likely been at least 10.7 percent – a point that DiGiorgio said affirms the wisdom of General Assembly leaders in pressing to bring the federal dollars back to South Carolina.

"This way, we can do with the stimulus funds exactly what was intended by Congress and the General Assembly: keep tuition increases as low as possible," the president added.

A 4-percent tuition increase would bring tuition and required fees for fall 2009 to \$5,805 for in-state students and \$10,775 for out-of-state students. The 4-percent level reflects the inflationary rate for 2008 for master's-level institutions like Winthrop, and will allow Winthrop to meet inflationary and other mandatory cost increases, even as the institution continues to pare its operating spending across all units.

"Stimulus funds will help the situation tremendously, but we have never viewed them as either a permanent fix or even a total fix for one year," DiGiorgio said.

DiGiorgio said that it is important for the public to realize that state support for Winthrop was reduced by 23.8 percent – more than \$5.1 million – in just the past eight months, and that reduced level of support will continue in the fiscal year ahead.

Stimulus funds, at most, will address about \$3 million of that, "so we still have a funding gap to address through other means this year, and we also need to plan for when federal funds go away."

University officials said they will continue to update Winthrop students and parents about budget and tuition matters through both e-mails and Web postings until such time as official tuition notices are

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