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Access to Stimulus Funds Lessens Tuition Increase for Winthrop Students

Winthrop University

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Access to Stimulus Funds Lessens Tuition Increase for Winthrop Students

Quick Facts

- Tuition increase will be 4 percent for South Carolina students.
- Most operating cost reductions from the previous year will continue.



Anthony DiGiorgio

ROCK HILL, S.C. - Winthrop University will use a mix of internal budget cuts, federal stimulus funds and an inflation-only tuition increase of 4 percent to cope with a \$5.1 million loss in state support in the coming year, officials said today.

The Executive Committee of the [Winthrop University Board of Trustees](#) adopted the 4 percent tuition increase during a morning telephone conference that will allow the university to begin preparing to mail tuition notices for fall semester, which begins in late August. South Carolina undergraduate students will pay \$5,803 per semester, an increase of \$223, while out-of-state students will pay \$10,798 per semester, an increase of \$443 (4.3 percent). See here for [tuition and fees](#).

The in-state increase is in keeping with the nationally tracked **Higher Education Price Index** annual inflation rate for public institutions of Winthrop's type. This year, Winthrop's operating budget must cover such third-party determined costs as minimum-wage increases, insurance increases, postage rate increases and seasonal fuel cost increases, as well as the continuation of Winthrop's conversion to a mission-critical administrative computing system that maintains everything from academic and personnel records to purchasing and financial management systems.

[Winthrop President Anthony DiGiorgio](#) credited federal officials and state legislative leaders for taking action over recent months that is allowing Winthrop to adjust to the global economic downturn while avoiding a double-digit tuition increase for the upcoming academic year.

"Without federal stimulus funds to provide an adjustment period for us, replacing the lost state funds would have required an 11 percent increase – almost \$600 per semester – and we know that could have been cost-prohibitive for some of our students," DiGiorgio said. The S.C. General Assembly constructed a statewide budget for next year that incorporated federal stabilization funds adopted by the U.S. Congress for public education and law enforcement, and legislatively directed Governor Mark Sanford to seek those funds over his objections. The S.C. Supreme Court upheld the General Assembly's actions in a key court ruling, clearing the way for the funds to come to South Carolina.

Administrators will continue to keep a wary eye on Columbia in the months to come, DiGiorgio said, noting that state economic advisers already have lowered revenue estimates for the fiscal year that starts July 1 by 2 percent. During the fiscal year that is now concluding, state officials cut appropriations three times, totaling 23.8 percent of Winthrop's state support, or \$5.1 million. Those cuts will carry over to the appropriation for the new fiscal year as well, but about \$3 million in federal stimulus funds that Winthrop will receive will fill part of the gap.

"We're continuing to trim everywhere we reasonably can. We will begin this year without employees being under a furlough salary reduction; however, and we will continue to adjust operational spending throughout the year as dictated by state revenue reports to stay within our means."

Winthrop announced a series of budget cuts earlier in the current academic year, and those will be continued into the coming year as part of its spending plan.

They include:

- Cancelling, combining or using Web-based replacement publications to trim costs.
- Managing travel, with trips involving students making presentations to professional conferences given first priority.
- Deferring the “Create Carolina” arts festival, which likely will become an alternate-year event.
- Cancelling Winthrop co-sponsorship and other costs related to the annual “Shrinkdown” regional wellness event.
- Holding a number of staff and faculty vacancies open, and redistributing the work from those positions among other employees.
- Increasing some class sizes, typically by 2-5 students, to decrease the number of sections offered, which in turn reduces the number of part-time instructors needed.
- Delaying rotation of computers for faculty and staff to four years from three years.
- Delaying acquisition of the next phase of replacement vehicles for the university maintenance fleet.
- Limiting hours of operation for some university facilities, as well as expanding energy management techniques.
- Offering some elective and upper-level courses less frequently.

For more information, contact Rebecca Masters, Office of the President, at 803/323-2225.

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