TOPEKA (AP) — In an effort to make the cost of getting an education predictable, the University of Kansas has proposed a plan that would freeze tuition rates for incoming freshmen for four years.

If the plan is approved by the Kansas Board of Regents, first-time freshmen also would have the option of paying a fixed rate for student housing for two years. The "Four-Year Tuition Compact" was presented Thursday to the regents, who will vote on tuition proposals next month. Kansas State on Thursday proposed a 7.9 percent increase in tuition and fees for resident students; Wichita State, 6.4 percent; Emporia State, 9.5 percent; Pittsburg State, 7.1 percent; and Fort Hays State, 5.1 percent.

The University of Kansas plan, which would begin next fall for incoming freshmen, would increase tuition rates at the university nearly 16 percent over current levels but keep that rate the same for four years.
TOPEKA — The cost of an education at state universities could significantly increase again next school year.

With that in mind, one institution unveiled a plan to the state Board of Regents Thursday to make college costs more predictable for students and their families.

University of Kansas officials proposed hiking tuition charges by about 16 percent for all incoming freshmen next year in return for freezing their rate for four years.

The board will vote on the plan and all universities' tuition increases at a June meeting.

University of Kansas officials proposed hiking tuition charges by about 16 percent for all incoming freshmen next year in return for freezing their rate for four years.

The board will vote on the plan and all universities' tuition increases at a June meeting.

At KU, a mandatory “four-year tuition compact” with each incoming group of freshmen would prevent year-to-year tuition spikes for that class of students, Provost Richard Lariviere said.

Over the past 30 years, the university's tuition has increased by an average of 9 percent a year but has seen some yearly jumps as high as 25 percent.

‘‘We are looking at something more predictable and regular, I think,’’ Lariviere said of the new proposal.

KU officials also want to set out a four-year schedule for fees and allow all students to fix their on-campus housing costs for two years.

But the tuition compact would only be for new freshmen this fall. Returning and transfer students would see a 6 percent increase in tuition next year and would be subject to future yearly increases approved by the Board of Regents.

Resident incoming freshmen would pay a single tuition rate of $213 per credit hour for four years while non-residents would pay $560. Those figures are averages of the rates students would pay if the university increased tuition by 6 percent every year for four years.

Each subsequent year's freshmen would be required to enter into the four-year compact with the university, which could be based on different tuition rates.

However, students lose their compact rate once they've completed four years.

KU Chancellor Robert Hemenway said in a written statement that allowing students to earn a degree in four years is a top priority.

‘‘By offering no tuition increases for four years, we are giving students a powerful incentive to finish their degrees on time,’’ he said.

Tuition and fees for in-state residents attending KU and Kansas State University have more than doubled since 2002 as the percentage of state support has waned. Still, state officials argue their institutions remain a bargain compared to others schools around the country.

Officials have covered rising costs, enhanced technology, provided additional financial aid and increased faculty and staff salaries with the new tuition revenue.

Hannah Love, KU student body president, said she supported the compact proposal because it could help hold down large year-to-year increases students have been facing.

“I think it is a good response,” said Love, a Dodge City junior. “It's one way, I hope, of correcting the increases.”

Board of Regents Vice Chairwoman Christine Downey-Schmidt of Inman said she didn't know if the state's other institutions would develop similar programs.

“I think every university will be looking to see how this works and if it fits in with their needs,” Downey-Schmidt said.
Proposed tuition and fee increases starting fall 2007

The following figures show what a resident undergraduate student taking 15 credit hours would pay for a semester at state Board of Regents institutions under proposals released Thursday.

University of Kansas incoming freshmen, $3,572, up $496 or 16.1 percent from 2007 rate

All other KU undergraduates, $3,229, up $223 or 7.3 percent

Kansas State, $3,117, up $227 or 7.9 percent

KSU-Salina, $3,111, up $244 8.5 percent

Wichita State, $2,402, up $144 or 6.4 percent

Emporia State, $1,963, up $170 or 9.5 percent

Pittsburg State, $2,030, up $135 or 7.1 percent

Fort Hays State, $1,677, up $81.75 or 5.1 percent

KU tuition plan information: http://www.tuition.ku.edu/
London — Don Worster stands with his back to a video screen turned gray with an ominous 1930s image of dark dust clouds.

The elder University of Kansas history professor looks into the young faces of students seated in the campus auditorium.

He poses a challenge to them: Kansas recovered from the Dust Bowl, but will it heed the lessons from that environmental disaster?

Kansans today are mining groundwater just as they are mining fossil fuels.

By 2020 some two-thirds of the irrigated acreage in Kansas will no longer enjoy a reliable water supply, state officials predict.

“That’s a mere 13 years away,” warns Worster, KU’s Hall distinguished professor of American history and a Hutchinson native.

Seven decades since the “Dirty Thirties” buried farms in silt and scattered topsoil from the Great Plains to the Atlantic, today’s signals from nature - the abundant evidence of climate change - should be spurring dialogue and action among Kansans, Worster said.

International scientists predict a warming planet could bring long-term drought and economic fall-out in a region now consuming water far beyond sustainability.

Meanwhile, Kansans burn more and more of the coal and oil that help fuel climate change.

Human and economic loss

In the early part of the 20th
Warming: Continued from Page 1

Century, dust storms swept through the High Plains, leaving farms buried in silt. The ecological nightmare came after years of plowing up fragile grassland for economic benefit, Worster said in his recent speech, “Feeling the Heat: Global warming and the Great Plains.”

Today, the state’s pursuit of wealth through coal-fired electricity poses a similar problem, he contends. Power plants’ carbon dioxide releases are contributing to global warming.

His words echoed what the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a multi-national panel of scientists, announced in April.

North America will face more severe storms with human and economic loss, the report states.

It can expect more hurricanes, floods, droughts, heat waves and wildfires, it said. Coasts will give way to rising sea levels.

Notable in Midwest farm country, the short-term expectations are for crop yield increases of 5 percent to 20 percent from a longer growing season.

But that will quickly decline if temperatures rise by 7.2 degrees late in the century, the IPCC concludes.

Matter of faith

It has been 70 years since the Dust Bowl’s temperatures rose as high as 120 degrees some days. Worster wonders whether Kansans in 70 years will see the same.

“If these climate predictions are right, we’re going to see a hotter, drier climate without a water source,” Worster said.

“We’ve used it up.”

He recalled a conversation with a member of the state’s board of agriculture a few years back.

The elder farmer’s approach to intensive irrigation was one of complacency, Worster said.

“‘So what? My kids don’t want to be here anyway,’ ” the man told him.

“Many realize their children won’t be here to farm,” Worster said, “so why worry about a resource that’s not going to be here?”

But Worster senses people might be waking up. He is willing to hit the speaker’s trail and address groups across the state about the issue.

“We have to assume this is a mining mentality. The old coalmine towns, they disappeared. But some were remade though American ingenuity. Aspen, Colorado, is a former mining town.”

What will happen to Kansas’ signature places, its small farming towns, he said, is up to Kansans today.

“This comes down to a matter of faith ... in human rationality,” he said. “People are pretty innovative, creating a pretty good life on a very difficult planet.”

Home on the range?

As for the predictions for the planet’s future: “Most of us in Kansas think it won’t be a problem for us,” Worster said.

“Maybe in the Netherlands or Bangladesh ... but not here in the ‘Garden of the World’ as we once called ourselves.”

Higher temperatures mean less soil moisture, however, as evaporation rates climb. When large-scale irrigation ends, the Great Plains could shift back to dry praire or to dryland farms, which probably won’t draw the same level of income, Worster said.

The IPCC’s report indicates that central North America could see temperature changes that are higher than the global mean. Drought is predicted to center in a spot over the Oklahoma and Texas panhandles.

On the report’s map, drought emanates throughout Kansas, Worster notes.

“Those were the conditions of the Dust Bowl days of the ’30s.”

Farming practices and soil conservation have changed since then. But water depletion has vastly increased.

“The pursuit of wealth has made us aggressive sodbusters, but also aggressive miners of natural resources,” Worster admonishes. “The consumption has made us one of the most economically vulnerable regions in the United States.”

But it’s about more than just economics.

The “get it while you can” approach, he added, makes us less concerned about our neighbors or future generations.”

***

Worster is general editor of the Cambridge University monograph series Studies in Environment and History.” His most recent book, “A River Running West: The Life of John Wesley Powell” (Oxford University Press, 2001), won the Byron Caldwell Smith Award.
LAWRENCE—The University Honors Program at the University of Kansas will commend more than 150 graduating students at a ceremony from 1 to 3 p.m. Saturday, May 19, at the Crafton-Preyer Theatre in Murphy Hall.

Laura Ashleigh McMurray, daughter of Jim and Linda McMurray, Burlington, will be one of the students recognized. The Burlington High School graduate will receive a BSB degree in marketing.

The ceremony recognizes KU seniors who have completed the University Honors Program and the University Scholars Program, a mentorship program students participate in during their sophomore years. During the ceremony, students will receive gold cords to wear during commencement activities.

The university's formal commencement takes place at 2:30 p.m. Sunday, May 20, in Memorial Stadium. Nearly 4,000 students are expected to attend.

University Honors Program students must complete a freshman tutorial and a combination of honors courses and out-of-classroom experiences such as study abroad, internships, community service or undergraduate research to graduate from the program. Students must also maintain a minimum 3.25 grade-point average.
KU to graduate more than 4,000

LAWRENCE—The names of more than 4,280 candidates for degrees at the University of Kansas this spring - representing 97 Kansas counties, 44 other states and the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, and 52 countries - have been announced by the KU registrar.

Local students graduating are John Thomas Cuffe Jr., Burlington, son of John Cuffe Sr., bachelor of science in education; Kaylene DeAnne Devena, Burlington, daughter of Tammi Hanson, bachelor of science in education; John R. Fletcher, Burlington, son of John and Carol Fletcher, bachelor of science in business/business administration; Laura Ashleigh McMurray, Burlington, daughter of Jim and Linda McMurray, bachelor of science in business/marketing; Nicholas Troy Salava, Burlington, son of Dan Salava and Tammy Salava, bachelor of general studies/human biology; Jennifer C. Smith, Burlington, daughter of Brad and Colleen Smith, bachelor of science in business/accounting; Jennifer Luvene Wailer, Burlington, daughter of Jan Martin, bachelor of science in education; Travis Richard Wallace, Lebo, son of Londa Wallace, bachelor of science in education; Sarah Rebecca Hallinan, Hartford, master of science in education; and Casey D Spencer, Melvern, master of social work.

KU's Class of 2007 numbers more than 6,400, including 2,125 who completed degree work in summer and fall 2006. Because KU conducts only one formal commencement ceremony each year, many of these candidates for degrees will return Sunday, May 20, for the university's 135th commencement procession into Memorial Stadium. More than 4,000 members of the Class of 2007 are expected to participate.

Faculty and candidates for degrees will assemble about 2 p.m. along Memorial Drive for the procession, which begins at 2:30 p.m. The program begins about 3:30 p.m.
Manhattan native makes nationals in debate

Staff reports

University of Kansas senior from Manhattan recently made a run at this year’s National Debate Tournament.

Nate Johnson, a 2003 Manhattan High School graduate, and his debate partner made it to the Sweet 16 of the tournament, nearly upsetting a Wayne State University (Mich.) team that advanced to the Final Four. The nation’s top 78 teams participated in the tournament.

Johnson, a political science major, is in his third year at KU. He is the son of Betty and Ron Johnson, Manhattan.
Tuition Costs — Still a Bargain

Trust us on this — college tuition is a bargain in Kansas.

Yes, we know tuition costs are going up faster than the price of gasoline.

We know over the past 10 years tuition and fees have skyrocketed — a whopping 166 percent at The University of Kansas, 144 percent at Kansas State University and, closer to home, 82 percent at Washburn University.

We know college students are piling up debt as they grapple with ways to absorb those annual tuition increases.

We know Washburn already has approved charging students $10 more per credit hour for the 2007-08 school year, and we know KU and K-State are poised to raise their tuition, as well.

So, it's understandable that parents forced to dig deeper and deeper each year to send their sons and daughters to college might be excused for asking: What bargain?

The answer is relative. Compared to 10 years ago when in-state tuition was around $3,000, next year's projection of $5,500 at Washburn doesn't sound much like a bargain.

But compared to institutions in our neighboring states, as well as across the country, it is.

The national average for tuition during the current 2006-07 school year was $5,836, and both Kansas and Kansas State were significantly lower than their Big 12 Conference brothers in both resident and non-resident tuition.

Granted, that won't ease the pain when checks have to be written for the fall semester, but at least there won't be the feeling students are being gouged.

Besides, even with the higher tuition, a college education remains a proven investment. Studies show college graduates earn enough more in their lifetimes than non-college graduates to pay for their education many times over.

Studies also show, unfortunately, that most students incur a significant amount of debt paying for that education. While the rule of thumb for college students is to not take on more debt than your expected first-year salary, the escalating tuition costs make that a daunting challenge.

That's where advance planning comes in. It has never been more important for parents to start putting away money early for college.

Likewise, students must do their share. "Live like a student when you're in school so you don't have to live like a student after you graduate," says Ivan Nalibotsky, a financial adviser with Capital Solutions Group in Bethesda, Md.
Area Students Received University of Kansas Diplomas

More than 4,000 students were candidates for degrees to graduate in the 135th commencement ceremonies Sunday at the University of Kansas.

Area students and their degrees include:

From Osawatomie — Jon-Michael Lee Brand, bachelor of science in chemical engineering; and Nicholas V. Kessler, bachelor of general studies in anthropology and geology.

From Paola — Rebecca Jane Anthony, bachelor of science in education; Trenton Sidney John Foster, bachelor general studies in economics; Thomas Wayne Fulbright, bachelor of science in education; Christie L. Guenther, bachelor of general studies in American studies; Amanda J. Hanf, bachelor of science in education; Katherine Jo Humphrey, bachelor of science in nursing; David Gene Kane, bachelor of science in education; Lacey Anne Ketzner, bachelor of science in journalism; Sheila K. McNerney, bachelor of arts in literature, language and writing; Joseph Dillon Ondorf, bachelor of science in business in finance; Jess Tyler Randall, bachelor of arts in biochemistry; Manuel F. Richey, master of science in computer science; Anne M. Sims, bachelor of arts in communication studies and leadership studies; and Marie Elizabeth Sullivan, bachelor of arts in French and co-major, European and international studies.

From Louisburg — Nathaniel Lee Henderson, bachelor of arts in anthropology; Lauren Evan Hutchison, bachelor of social work; Cris Michael Pritchard, bachelor of science in nursing; Mary Therese Sellers, master of science in nursing; and Juliane Terrill Hall, bachelor of general studies in communication studies.

From Spring Hill — Abigail Lee Adams, bachelor of arts in political science; James R. Burbridge, bachelor of general studies in English and film studies; Jenna Lynn Caldwell, bachelor of arts in psychology; Kathy L. Frankenfield, master of arts in English; Barbara Jean Haney, bachelor of arts in applied behavioral science; Amy Elizabeth McVey, bachelor of science in atmospheric science and mathematics; Kyla Rae Mustain, bachelor of social work; Amber Rose Otto, bachelor of science in microbiology; and Amos Shay Weaver, bachelor of science in business in business administration.

From Bucyrus — Elizabeth Louise Albright, bachelor of arts in biology; Sarah Danette Brooks, bachelor of science in education; Craig Lamar Coulitis, bachelor of general studies in economics; Luke Joseph Scott, bachelor of science in business in finance; Jessica Christine Spinks, bachelor of science in education; Michaela Christine Walsh, bachelor of science in nursing; and Stephan Thomas White, bachelor of arts in political science.

From La Cygne — Ryan W. Vancura, doctor of medicine.

From Rantoul — Natalie Christine Burkdoll of Rantoul, bachelor of science in nursing.

From Richmond — Ashley Sutton Dunbar, master of science in dietetics and nutrition.

Students listing out-of-town addresses but graduates from area high schools are Emily Renee Luce Haas of Wellsville, Paola High School graduate, bachelor of science in education; Devin P. Shea of La Cygne, Louisburg High School graduate, bachelor of science in education; Amanda Marie Perkins of Mission, Paola High School graduate, bachelor of fine arts in history of art; William Russell Donovan of Olathe, Osawatomie High School graduate, master of science in aerospace engineering; Steven Michael Sullivan of Olathe, Paola High School graduate, bachelor of general studies in communication studies; and Kurtis Bradley Cowman of Olathe, Paola High School graduate, bachelor of science in business in finance; Paul Thoburn Dundee, bachelor of arts in psychology, Sabatha High School.
TOPEKA — The cost of an education at state universities could significantly increase again next school year.

With that in mind, one institution unveiled a plan to the state Board of Regents Thursday to make college costs more predictable for students and their families.

University of Kansas officials proposed hiking tuition charges by about 16 percent for all incoming freshmen next year in return for freezing their rate for four years.

The board will vote on the plan and all universities’ tuition increases at a June meeting. Proposed hikes for Kansas residents at other institutions ranged from a 5.1-percent jump in tuition and fees at Fort Hays State to 9.5 percent at Emporia State.

At KU, a mandatory “four-year tuition compact” with each incoming group of freshmen would prevent year-to-year tuition spikes for that class of students, Provost Richard Lariviere said.

Over the past 30 years, the university’s tuition has increased by an average of 9 percent a year but has seen some yearly jumps as high as 25 percent.

“We are looking at something more predictable and regular, I think,” Lariviere said of the new proposal.

KU officials also want to set out a four-year schedule for fees and allow all students to fix their on-campus housing costs for two years.

But the tuition compact would only be for new freshmen this fall. Returning and transfer students would see a 6-percent increase in tuition next year and would be subject to future yearly increases approved by the Board of Regents.

Resident incoming freshmen would pay a single tuition rate of $213 per credit hour for four years while non-residents would pay $560. Those figures are averages of the rates students would pay if the university increased tuition by 6 percent every year for four years.

Each subsequent year’s freshmen would be required to enter into the four-year compact with the university, which could be based on different tuition rates.

However, students lose their compact rate once they’ve completed four years.

KU Chancellor Robert Hemenway said in a written statement that allowing students to earn a degree in four years is a top priority.

“By offering no tuition increases for four years, we are giving students a powerful incentive to finish their degrees on time,” he said.

Tuition and fees for in-state residents attending KU and Kansas State University have more than doubled since 2002 as the percentage of state support has waned. Still, state officials argue their institutions remain a bargain compared to others schools around the country.
Controlling the cost of higher education

The cost of a college degree increases year after year. Under a new proposal from the University of Kansas, the university would freeze tuition for four years. Even though the plan includes a 16 percent increase next year, it appears to be a positive step toward controlling the cost of higher education.

The KU plan, which could begin next fall, will raise current tuition rates by 16 percent. The plan also would lock that rate in place for that freshman class for the next four years. Freshmen also would receive a schedule showing any annual increases in course and campus fees. This means that students would know about 80 percent of their college costs up front. This is a far cry from how current students deal with college tuition and the unknown increases they face every year. While financial planning might be good, it’s not the only benefit of this program.

Possibly the best thing to come out of this new tuition program is the incentive for a student to finish their degree in four years. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, only 35 percent of college students finish a four-year degree in four years. The biggest benefit to finishing in four years is obviously the cost savings. At $3,400 per semester, those extra years add up fast. The other benefit to the program is that it moves students through the university providing more room for incoming freshmen.

EDITORIAL

But if the university is going to give people an incentive to graduate, it must be prepared to accommodate them. With all the general and prerequisite classes required to move toward a degree, there are a lot of hoops to jump through. One of those hoops is making sure that the classes they need don’t fill up. This could prevent a student from taking a class they need to complete their degree.

Another hoop is class schedule flexibility. For some students, it is necessary for them to hold down a job just to be able to afford college. Class schedules must be flexible enough for students to hold jobs and still acquire their degree in four years.

The new tuition plan being proposed by KU seems logical as long as the university can live up to its end of the bargain. It must give the students the tools they need to get their degrees in four years. According to KU Provost Richard Lariviere, if a student takes more than four years to complete his degree it will cost him an extra $1,000 per semester. As long as the students are given every chance to complete that degree in four years then the plan is a success. But, if the student is penalized because the university couldn’t meet his needs then the plan needs to be reevaluated.

— Darren Wert
Editor and publisher