

ASPSU

**ASSOCIATED STUDENTS
of Portland State University**

We, the Associated Students of Portland State University (ASPSU), have prepared the following document to communicate our recommendation regarding student tuition fees for the academic year 2018-2019. This document is intended to share a deliberate conclusion with the Finance and Administration subcommittee of the Portland State University Board of Trustees. Contributions to our conclusion were informed by the voluntary sentiments of students, members of the Associated Students of Portland State University and their respective committees, the Tuition Review Advisory Committee, and independent economic analysis.

Our official recommendation regarding 2018-2019 Tuition Rates is as follows:

- Resident, Undergraduate student tuition rate - 0% Increase
- Non-resident Undergraduate student tuition rate - 0% Increase
- Graduate student tuition rate - 0% Increase

We make the following recommendations with the understanding that the Office of Finance & Administration (FADM) does not agree with our conclusions. FADM has expressed the following explanations for budgetary increases - increased wages for hourly employees according to municipal and state law, new contractual obligations to increase pay for graduate students at Portland State University, outstanding obligations for uncollected revenue to the State of Oregon's Public Employees Retirement System, a linear pattern demonstrating declining enrollment, and increased variable expenses due to economic inflation.

We do not disagree with the explanations provided for increased costs to university education. We vehemently reject the transfer of these expenses to university students at Portland State University.

ASPSU has concluded that increasing tuition rates at this university is a short-term solution which has failed to resolve declining enrollment; furthermore increased tuition rates will continue to diminish the quality and access of education to students at Portland State University.

We have concluded that established patterns have emerged in the public university system in the United States. To raise tuition rates consecutively will only alleviate budgetary concerns in the

short-term. The failure of the State of Oregon and the University to address these emerging patterns in a constructive manner is detrimental to the economic livelihood of our constituents.

In the preceding 18 years the following patterns have emerged (all statistics regarding monetary values are controlled for inflation). Public university costs have more than doubled*. Average student loan debt has increased by \$8,000 per borrower for a bachelor's degree*. Access to federal and private loans have more than doubled*. Income has stagnated*. State funding for public universities remains approximately 18% lower in 2017 for the state of Oregon than it did in 2008*.

*Sources: Institute for College Access & Success, College Board, US Census

In the preceding 30 years the following patterns have emerged – Salaries for University CEO's have increased 75%*. The number of professional and non-academic professionals have doubled*. The number of part-time and adjunct faculty have doubled and full-time academic positions have been reduced*. University enrollment has consistently decreased in the United States each year for the past five years. The economic value of a bachelor's degree has decreased consistently (aside from occasional singular year aberrations).

*Report on the Economic Status of the Profession, American Institutes for Research

The above information suggests a scary trend – since the 1970s the state has consistently reduced the access and support for higher education. Education is a right with far-reaching benefits. We understand our “representatives” have felt comfortable abandoning their responsibility towards education and leaving us poorer in the process. The state has forsaken our education and left the United States with the world's highest tuition fees*. This will not change until we demand our education no longer be dependent on exploitative loans and rising tuition rates.

*Forbes

Portland State University has reduced the number of full time instructors, increased the number of part-time instructors, employs campus workers at the minimum wage, have maintained high costs for students receiving classes in trailers, have increased the salaries of administrators and the university president (from approximately \$400,000 - \$600,000 gross salary in less than 5 years, absent additional allowances and privileges), have consistently raised tuition, and have expanded the number of non-academic professionals employed at the university.

The avenues presented for students' recommendations for the most part have been inaccessible and disregarded. Students have communicated they want direct agency in their tuition process, and they do not want higher tuition. In response the university has created a Tuition Review Advisory Committee. When this committee of students asked for a proper uncensored budget, one was not received. When they asked to see how wages were divided up amongst university employees (without individual names revealed), it was not provided. When the committee voiced the inequality of raising student tuition, this advice was rebuffed.

We as students are asked by the administration – how else can PSU finance our budget? The response we receive: PSU must increase its tuition! Upon analysis of the Tuition Review Advisory Committee, presentations to ASPSU, and the budget town hall forum, ASPSU has come to the following conclusion:

- All measures taken so far have had negative impacts on the most economically disadvantaged individuals attending Portland State University.
- We recommend a three year tuition freeze and the opportunity for the financial administrators of our University to examine reconciling economic patterns that will lower the quality of our education at a higher expense.
- We also believe if the top 25 salary earners at Portland State University had an economic incentive to maintain low tuition, they would prioritize the affordability of our education.
- We recommend these top 25 salaries should be frozen until tuition raises and academic cuts are significantly mitigated. Should tuition raises be implemented we also recommend these respective salaries be proportionally reduced.

We make these demands with the understanding any administration of our university should be the most effective steward of our tuition and state dollars. We recognize even if these demands are met, the most efficient administration does not resolve the largest issue. Our education is not affordable. We want this to change. We want to stop subsidizing the state's responsibility. We want to breathe.

Education is a right. Not a privilege.

Respectfully,



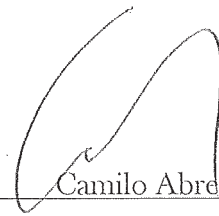
Brent Finkbeiner

ASPSU President



Donald Thompson III

ASPSU Vice President



Camilo Abreu Assad

ASPSU Senator