



NEWS RELEASE

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New Report Examines College Affordability for Nebraska's Students

LINCOLN, Neb. – Despite rising tuition costs, a new report that studies postsecondary tuition, fees and financial aid shows that student enrollment continues to rise at Nebraska's colleges and universities, with the majority of increases showing in the community college sector.

Produced by the Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, the *2008 Tuition, Fees and Financial Aid Report* provides an analyses of how public policy affects issues relating to tuition, fees and financial aid for postsecondary students in Nebraska. It also serves to show how Nebraska's public postsecondary educational institutions compare with their peers in other states on these issues.

Some of the report's major findings include:

- Total student enrollment has increased by almost 8,000 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) students over the last 10 years. The community college sector has seen the largest increase (39 percent) – most likely due to its lower costs – while the University of Nebraska and Nebraska State College sectors have seen slight declines.
- From 1997 to 2007, tuition and mandatory fees have increased 62 percent to 132 percent for a full-time, undergraduate, resident student at Nebraska's public postsecondary institutions. In comparison, the median family income of Nebraskans only increased 8 percent from 1997 to 2005, which was the latest year that data was available.
- Student borrowing continues to increase. The total amount borrowed to attend Nebraska's public postsecondary institutions increased almost 75 percent from 1996-97 to 2006-07.
- Higher education at Nebraska's public institutions is becoming less affordable, especially for students from low-income families.

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- State appropriations per FTE student have increased over the last 10 years. However, state funding is increasingly being constrained – especially in the last five years – by other state obligations such as Medicaid, corrections, K-12 public schools and other social services.
- Students at all of Nebraska's public postsecondary institutions (except UNL) paid less in resident undergraduate tuition and mandatory fees in 2007-08 when compared to the national average.
- In 2006-07, over \$10 million was awarded to low-income students through the Coordinating Commission's Nebraska State Grant program. However, the Commission estimates that an additional 14,780 students qualified for grant funds but were not able to receive them because sufficient funds weren't available to meet all needs.

"Since having a well-rounded, educated population helps to enhance the economic and social well-being of the state, we are encouraged by the level of spending the state has committed to higher education institutions and students in Nebraska," said Marshall Hill, executive director of the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education. "But, as this report shows, it's getting more and more difficult for students and parents to pay for higher education in Nebraska. To help those most in need, we encourage State legislators to continue to increase funding for the Nebraska State Grant program, which focuses directly on those students."

To view the full report, please go to
www.ccpe.state.ne.us/PublicDoc/CCPE/Reports/tuition-and-fees.

About Nebraska's Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education

Nebraska's Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (CCPE) is a state constitutional agency that serves as an independent voice within Nebraska's higher education system to promote sound policies that apply to the best interests of taxpayers, students and Nebraska's postsecondary institutions. The CCPE recommends policy to the legislative and executive branches to improve and support postsecondary education. The CCPE also reviews and recommends operating budgets, administers the Nebraska State Grant program, approves academic degree programs, and reviews for approval new tax-funded building projects proposed by Nebraska's public institutions. The CCPE is governed by 11 commissioners appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Nebraska State Legislature. For more information about the CCPE, please visit www.ccpe.state.ne.us.

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