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# Maricopa County Community Colleges' tuition increase OK'd

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By Mary Beth Fallor

The Republic | azcentral.com

Wed Mar 27, 2013 10:39 PM

With drastic declines in state funding, the Maricopa County Community College District's tuition increase seemed nearly inevitable.

There was almost no opposition when the district governing board voted to raise tuition \$5 per credit Tuesday night, a 6.5 percent increase.

Students at the 10 colleges will pay \$81 per credit starting in the fall.

But it's likely that the district's vote to raise property taxes in May will draw more attention. It would be the third tax increase in five years.

Both increases together would raise about \$20 million in revenue for the district. That amount would partially offset the decrease in funding provided by the state, which dropped from \$45 million in 2010 to a projected \$8 million for 2013-14.

Only one student group, Associated Students of Mesa Community College, spoke on the tuition increase Tuesday, and the president, Andrew Kuhn, said student opinion seemed to be divided.

"We do agree that tuition increases as a continuous source of income is not an option," he said. "We call for the state Legislature to align itself with Arizona's constitutional values of keeping education as free as possible."

Chancellor Rufus Glasper said state funding now accounts for only 1 percent of all revenue for the community colleges. "We probably will not get any material increase in state aid for the next three or four years," he said. "The state does not have the wherewithal."

He said the district's new "corporate college," which will launch this summer for workforce training, could be a revenue source for the district but not for a while.

The tuition and potential tax increase would pay for initiatives to improve the colleges' graduation rates and transfers to universities, as well as technology updates, additional full-time professors and more police officers.

Glasper said the colleges committed themselves to doubling the number of degrees awarded by 2020, and a report last fall established for the first time definitive metrics for measuring student success.

The district's statistics showed that the percentage of students who completed degrees within six years has been steady at about 20 percent for several years.

"We need sustainable funding to make the changes that are necessary," he said. "Our education institutions have been left to fend for themselves."

Board member Dana Saar cited the report in voting against the increase. "My concern is that we're not

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identifying what return the students are going to get on that greater investment in their education," he said. "We haven't moved the bar far enough along to justify that increase in tuition."

Maricopa County Community Colleges' tuition increase OK'd

Saar was the only vote against the tuition hike. Board President Doyle Burke joined members Randolph Lumm and Ben Miranda in approving the tuition increase. Board member Debra Brimhall Pearson was absent. The board members said the colleges' tuition was lower than the national average for two-year institutions.

After the increase, a full-year resident tuition at an MCCCDC college will be \$2,430, compared with a national average of \$3,313. The rate also is much lower than tuition at Arizona State University, which has requested increasing the in-state annual tuition for incoming freshman to nearly \$10,000 for the next school year, a 3 percent hike.

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**Drew Ryan** · Top Commenter · Litchfield Park, Arizona

I have a question. When are the students of the Arizona going to wake up to the fact that our grandparents and parents are asking us to pay more than they themselves did to go to college? How many legislators are U of A and ASU grads that enjoyed a lower tuition rate during their college years and are now causing the state universities to raise tuition rates because of their votes to lower state funding levels for higher education in Arizona? The state of Arizona currently funds higher education at the lowest levels in all of its state history and is 24% below the national average per student. Meanwhile, our demand for schooling is higher than the national average. We have the potential of becoming an educated workforce powerhouse with relatively lower labor rates, but our short-sighted legislators continually cut funding to education, the one resource that can raise the quality of life of all Arizonans. Because for every dollar invested in education has been shown to return \$7 dollars in increased tax revenue, decreased prison populations, decreased unemployed populations, and decreased public health spending.

[http://www.asu.edu/budgetcuts/documents/Education\\_Funding\\_in\\_Arizona\\_Constitutional\\_Requirements\\_and\\_the\\_Empirical\\_Record.pdf](http://www.asu.edu/budgetcuts/documents/Education_Funding_in_Arizona_Constitutional_Requirements_and_the_Empirical_Record.pdf)

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**Charles Chambers** · Top Commenter · Paradise Valley High School

And the Board of Regents is asking for \$910M for the three universities, plus an additional \$76.5M to balance per-student revenues at ASU and NAU to that at UofA.

One can tell who the Legislature likes and who they don't.

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**Este Bon** · Top Commenter · Phoenix, Arizona

Unfortunately the state has dropped funding dramatically over the past five years to the colleges and the universities. It's either raise tuition or have some giant bake sales...

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**Drew Ryan** · Top Commenter · Litchfield Park, Arizona

Tha would be because that historically the Board of Regents was full of U of A graduates. Few people remember that ASU had to petition statewide just to change the name from Arizona State College to Arizona State University because of the opposition in the Legislature and Board of Regents. The new formula for funding is based on per student throughout the state university system.

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