

OU Board of Regents to hear tuition increase proposal

The OU Board of Regents will meet March 8-9 to hear a final proposal from the OU Student Government Association and Division of Student Affairs on the proposed tuition increase.

In a [January 31 webinar](#), the OU SGA and Division of Student Affairs presented a fee simplification process including a tentative 3% tuition rate increase. Some students, especially those from out of state, believe the increase is unnecessary because of the extra fees and charges they already have.

“We do have a placeholder right now for a tuition rate increase,” Associate Vice President of Budget and Finance Stewart Berkinshaw said during the webinar. “That’s always been part of our budget. Nothing’s been finalized for that. I just do have a placeholder there just to be transparent about what we’re thinking.”

During the spring 2022 semester, out-of-state fees totaled nearly \$8,000, four times more than in-state student tuition, which is just under \$2,500, according to the [University of Oklahoma Bursar Services](#). These fees require many students to rely on scholarships and grants to get to college.

Freshman advertising major Abbigail DeWall said scholarships are the only way she was able to get to OU.

"I was seriously considering community college just to save money, but I got good scholarships that helped make the decision easier," DeWall said.

There has been a recent push by student leaders and Regent Rick Nagel to add a student to the Board of Regents. The student would hold a non-voting position but would allow the Board to hear students' thoughts and concerns more effectively.

"If there was a student in some capacity on the Board of Regents, then they would be able to more effectively lend a student voice and represent student concerns to the board," South said in an interview with the OU Daily.

Not all students are sold on the idea of a student joining the Board. As the most prestigious group of people on campus, DeWall wants to ensure the Board will genuinely listen to and respect the ideas and challenges of a potential student Regent.

"I'm really hesitant about a student filling the position on the Board," DeWall said. "Students need to be heard, but also if they're not respected it's not going to be effective."

During COVID, tuition increases were paused, but now the University is working to provide new opportunities to students. Senior Vice President and Provost André-Denis Wright said the tuition increase would be used to support students who may not have access to opportunities to further their education like research or study abroad, due to the financial costs associated with them.

"So, although [the budget plan] looks like it may prohibit students from taking those programs, it would actually look at improving their experiential learning and give them more experiences," Wright said.

These new experiences were not enough for some students to get behind the proposed tuition increase. Josh Babione, a former OU student, said the university is moving in the wrong direction.

"I had to drop out because the loans were becoming too much," Babione said. "My parents aren't helping me pay for college, and even with a scholarship school is expensive."

Babione is now working full-time at Crest Foods to pay back the loans he already took out. He said his intention is to build up his savings and then go back to school, but with the cost continually increasing, it's getting less and less likely.

"I really value my education and I want to get a degree someday, but until I can comfortably afford tuition, it's just not a feasible option for me," Babione said