

Tuition Advisory Council (TAC) Executive Summary Report

Executive Summary

The Tuition Advisory Council (TAC) convened to begin the annual tuition review process and to provide members with a comprehensive overview of the university's financial context, tuition-setting framework, and factors influencing future tuition recommendations. The meeting focused on building a shared understanding of the university's financial structure, the role of tuition revenue in sustaining operations, and the considerations required to balance institutional financial stability with student affordability.

Council members were introduced to the tuition-setting timeline, key financial drivers, enrollment considerations, and tuition modeling scenarios that will inform future deliberations. The meeting served as an orientation and foundational discussion to prepare the council for upcoming meetings where specific tuition rate proposals will be evaluated and ultimately recommended to the President for consideration by the Board of Trustees.

Purpose of the Tuition Advisory Council

The Tuition Advisory Council serves as a consultative body responsible for reviewing financial data, evaluating tuition rate scenarios, and providing a formal recommendation to the President regarding annual tuition levels.

The council's work is designed to ensure that tuition decisions are:

- Transparent and data-informed
- Inclusive of campus stakeholder perspectives
- Aligned with the university's financial sustainability
- Mindful of student affordability and access

Following the council's recommendation, the President reviews the proposal and presents a final tuition recommendation to the Board of Trustees for approval.

Institutional Financial Context

During the meeting, university leadership provided an overview of the institution's financial structure and the central role tuition revenue plays in supporting operations. Tuition and fees represent a major component of the university's operating budget and directly support academic programs, student services, and institutional infrastructure.

Key revenue sources discussed include:

- Tuition and mandatory student fees
- State appropriations
- Grants and external funding
- Auxiliary and enterprise revenue
- Philanthropic support

Because state funding and other revenue sources remain variable, tuition revenue continues to be a critical element in maintaining financial stability and program quality.

Major Cost Drivers

The council reviewed several factors contributing to the university's overall cost structure. These cost drivers influence the financial planning process and must be considered when evaluating tuition levels.

Primary cost pressures include:

- Personnel costs, including faculty and staff salaries and benefits
- Inflationary increases in operational expenses
- Academic program delivery costs
- Facilities maintenance and infrastructure needs
- Technology investments and digital infrastructure
- Compliance and regulatory obligations

Understanding these drivers allows the council to evaluate whether proposed tuition adjustments are necessary to sustain core institutional functions.

Enrollment and Revenue Considerations

Enrollment trends play a significant role in tuition revenue projections. Council members reviewed how changes in student enrollment and credit hour production affect institutional revenue.

Key concepts discussed included:

- Student Credit Hours (SCH) as a primary tuition revenue metric
- Enrollment projections used in financial planning models
- The relationship between enrollment stability and tuition rate adjustments

Fluctuations in enrollment can significantly affect revenue projections and may require tuition adjustments to maintain balanced budgets.

Affordability and Financial Aid Considerations

A central theme of the discussion was the need to balance institutional financial needs with student access and affordability. Tuition increases can affect students differently depending on financial need, aid eligibility, and overall cost of attendance.

The council discussed:

- Institutional financial aid commitments
- The role of tuition revenue in supporting scholarships
- The potential impact of tuition changes on student affordability
- Strategies to maintain access for students from diverse economic backgrounds

Council members acknowledged that tuition decisions must carefully weigh financial sustainability alongside the university's commitment to student success and equity.

Tuition Modeling and Scenario Analysis

The meeting introduced the tuition modeling tools used to evaluate potential tuition adjustments. These models project the financial impact of different tuition scenarios under varying enrollment and revenue assumptions.

The models allow the council to assess:

- Revenue outcomes under multiple tuition increase scenarios
- Sensitivity to enrollment changes
- Impacts on operating budgets and institutional sustainability
- Alignment with strategic financial priorities

Future meetings will focus on reviewing these scenarios in detail as the council moves toward developing a formal recommendation.

Next Steps in the Tuition Advisory Process

The Tuition Advisory Council will continue meeting throughout the tuition planning cycle to review updated financial projections and refine potential tuition recommendations.

Upcoming steps include:

- Reviewing detailed financial projections and budget forecasts
- Evaluating proposed tuition rate scenarios
- Engaging with campus stakeholders and gathering feedback
- Refining recommendations based on affordability and financial sustainability
- Providing a formal recommendation to the President

The President will then present a final proposal to the Board of Trustees for consideration and approval.

Key Takeaways

- The Tuition Advisory Council has begun the annual process of evaluating tuition levels for the upcoming academic year.
- Tuition revenue remains a critical component of the university's financial structure.
- Budget pressures, enrollment variability, and inflation continue to influence financial planning.
- Affordability and financial aid considerations remain central to the council's discussions.
- Additional meetings and financial modeling reviews will inform the council's final tuition recommendation.