

**March 21, 2005**

## **STATE BOARD, INSTITUTION PRESIDENTS PRAISE TUITION BILL PASSAGE FROM SENATE**

BOISE - State Board of Education President Roderic Lewis and Presidents from Idaho's college and universities praised the Idaho Legislature for passing a bill allowing Boise State University, Idaho State University, and Lewis-Clark State College the ability to charge tuition fees.

The Idaho Senate passed the bill allowing student fees to be used for the cost of instruction on a 25 to 8 vote. The House of Representatives passed the bill on March 4th by a vote of 49 to 18. The legislation now goes to the Governor.

Current Idaho code prohibits BSU, ISU, and LCSC from charging tuition for full-time resident students. The Idaho Constitution prohibits the University of Idaho from charging tuition. UI officials support the change for the other institutions but are not seeking a similar change for the University because of the cost associated with a Constitutional amendment.

"The important issue here is not whether we call them student fees, matriculation fees or tuition fees, but rather the issue is the amount students must pay to attend higher education," said State Board of Education President Roderic Lewis.

Historically, even though fees have been called "matriculation" fees, student costs have gone up approximately 126% over that last 10 years. Merely restricting student assessments to matriculation fees has not stemmed the tide of increasing student costs. The state's prohibition against the use of tuition fees is merely a restriction on how universities can allocate student funds. Currently, matriculation fees cannot be used to cover the cost of instruction. This limitation has resulted in a complicated budgeting process for our institutions as they attempt to properly allocate increasingly limited funds. The complexity of the process creates confusion for Idaho students and the public as they try to understand how student fees are used. Utilizing tuition fees instead of matriculation fees will allow institutions greater flexibility in their use of funds, especially at this time of restricted state funding. By allowing tuition, institutions can use student fees to offer classes and hire professors to meet increased student demand.

State Board of Education President Roderic Lewis points out that, "Allowing tuition will give greater clarity and transparency in the institutions' use of student dollars. Approval of tuition simply allows our institutions to allocate those fees where they are needed most."

Bob Kustra, President of BSU, added, "I thank the State Board of Education for its leadership on the legislation and applaud the passage of the tuition fee bill. This action strengthens the link between

what students are paying and the education they receive. I appreciate the Legislature giving Boise State the authority to use student fees for educational and instructional costs. This will allow us to be more responsive to the academic needs and demands of our students to deliver the courses and programs that they want to take.”

Noting that the legislation would increase transparency and flexibility in the use of money provided by students, Lewis-Clark State College President Dene Thomas said, “I want to thank the Legislature for giving higher education institutions the ability to use our students' dollars in the way that will benefit them the most. This will help us to be honest, to be clear, and to make the best use of every dollar.”

ISU President Dick Bowen agreed, “The University appreciates the State Board of Education for supporting this legislation and the state Legislature for passing it. This change is critical to the future of Idaho State University.”

With the approval of this legislation, the amount charged to students will continue to be reviewed and approved by the State Board of Education. The State Board of Education will be setting fees for the 2005-2006 school year at its meeting April 21st in Idaho Falls.