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## **STATE BOARD APPROVES TUITION AND FEES FOR IDAHO PUBLIC COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

(Moscow). The Idaho State Board of Education approved resident student tuition and fees for the 2017-2018 academic year at Idaho's public, four-year higher education institutions and Eastern Idaho Technical College. The increase, by institution, is as follows:

Boise State University (BSU)	3.5%
Eastern Idaho Technical College (EITC)	2.5%
Idaho State University (ISU)	3.0%
Lewis-Clark State College (LCSC)	3.5%
University of Idaho (UI)	3.5%

The State Board weighed several factors in making its final decision, including salary equity among employees, increasing health insurance costs, increases in resident enrollment, affordability, and expectations for high quality education programs.

### *Salary Equity and Health Insurance Costs*

The 2017 Idaho Legislature approved a 3% salary increase (commonly referred to as a Change in Employee Compensation or CEC) and health insurance benefit increase for state employees, including some college and university employees. However, colleges and universities have a significant number of employees paid with funds other than state funds. In presenting their tuition and fee proposals, representatives from each of the colleges and universities cited a need to increase tuition and fees to cover those salary and benefit costs for college and university employees not funded by the Legislature.

“In the last two years, the State Board has approved tuition and fee increases to provide salary equity among employees of our public colleges and universities. We need to be fair and ensure that all employees have an opportunity for a salary increase, not just those in positions funded by the state legislature,” said Richard Westerberg, State Board member and Chairman of the Business Affairs and Human Resources Committee, which is charged with examining tuition and fee proposals.

During the January 23, 2017, meeting of the Legislature's Joint Finance-Appropriation Committee, State Board President Emma Atchley forewarned legislators and Governor Otter that a tuition and fee increase would be necessary to provide equal salary increase opportunities to non-state funded employees. At that

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meeting, Atchley testified to the legislature's budget-writing committee, "In the interest of full and fair disclosure, I'm putting the Committee and listening audience on notice that an increase in tuition will be necessary just to fully fund equal CEC and benefit cost increases for fiscal year 2018."

*Increasing Enrollment, Affordability and Expectations*

Based on Fall 2016 semester enrollment numbers, all of the state's four-year public higher education institutions and EITC saw an increase in resident freshman this academic year compared to last year. Additionally, BSU, LCSC and UI saw overall increases in enrollment by nearly 2,500 students combined. Increasing enrollment places more pressure on public higher education institutions to have additional degree programs, courses, faculty and student services available at a high quality to ensure student retention, success and eventual graduation.

Westerberg stated, "The State Board is carefully watching the cost of education overall and what share is funded by our students versus what share is funded by the state. We are very aware that affordability is a concern among current and prospective students and their families. Annually, we are faced with the challenge of balancing the cost of education between state funding we receive and tuition and fee costs paid by students."

The State Board unanimously approved the tuition and fee increases for EITC, ISU and LCSC. Atchley voted against the increases approved for BSU and UI. Both universities requested increases higher than the percent approved by the State Board.

In explaining her votes, Atchley stated, "The State Board has a role in advocating for our public higher education institutions and ensuring an adequate level of funding to maintain the high quality education programs our students expect. The increases the State Board approved are not high enough. Our students understand their education is an investment and there is a cost to ensure it is a high quality investment."

Currently, tuition and fees cover 47% of the operating costs at Idaho higher education institutions, but they remain among the most affordable among the western states. In addition to student tuition and fees, annual state general fund appropriations are another significant funding source for Idaho's public colleges and universities. The Idaho Legislature and Governor Otter recently approved a 2.7 percent increase in college and university operational funding for fiscal year 2018. An additional \$35 million in one-time funds was appropriated to BSU, ISU, LCSC and EITC as a cost share for building construction. The institutions will also allocate donated funds for those construction projects.

The State Board will continue its meeting tomorrow, Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, at 8:00 AM (PDT). The agenda, meeting materials and live streaming link are available on the State Board's web site at <https://boardofed.idaho.gov/meetings/board/archive/2017/0419-2017/index.asp>.

The State Board of Education is charged with the general supervision and governance of the public educational institutions and the public school system of the State of Idaho. To learn more about the Idaho State Board of Education, please visit [www.boardofed.idaho.gov](http://www.boardofed.idaho.gov).

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