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Student Government January 30, 2014 // by Nora Olabi // Comments

SGA pushes proposal for fixed tuition

The University's attempt to focus on student success and higher graduation rates has manifested itself in a new proposal: an option for fixed tuition.

The Tuition and Fee Advisory Committee created a proposal after the Texas Legislature passed H.B. No. 29, which requires "general academic teaching institutions" to provide a fixed-tuition plan for students. The University also believes that the Legislature is "seriously considering changing some or all of the university formula funding from access-based to output-based," according to UH's proposal summary.

Fixed-tuition rates, which would only be applicable to incoming undergraduate students and implemented starting Fall 2014, would allow students to opt into a rate that would not increase for at least the first 12 consecutive semesters, according to the house bill, and ties into Provost Paula Short's initiative, called "UH in Four," to speed up graduating students. Executive Vice President for Administration and Finance Carl Carlucci presented the proposal to the Student Government Association meeting Wednesday night. He said that fixed tuition is more than just locking in a rate; it's about student success and ties into Short's Universitywide initiative.



Executive Vice President for Administration and Finance Carl Carlucci presented to the Student Government Association a draft constructed by the Tuition and Fee Advisory Committee that would enact a house bill of the Texas Legislature that calls for a fixed-rate tuition option for undergraduates. | Justin Tijerina/The Daily Cougar

"UH in Four is great for the students; it's great for the community; it's great for Texas," Carlucci said. "Not everyone is going to be able to do this, we know that, but you have to offer an incentive to people, and (fixed tuition) is an incentive. It says that if you are able to make the sacrifice and graduate, you can essentially get a very, very cheap degree."

Carlucci has worked on the Tuition and Fee Advisory Committee to create a "predictable, transparent and open process."

Students who opt into fixed tuition may pay more in the beginning, but their rates would be locked in, regardless of inflation rates and other issues that may drive tuition costs up. The average cost of tuition would be calculated for the entering class, and the student would sign a contract agreeing to complete no



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Polls

Would you support allowing CHL (concealed handgun license) holders to conceal carry on campus?

Yes; allowing armed students on campus will deter criminals from targeting UH (48%, 209 Votes)

No; armed students will only create more problems and/or more crime (24%, 107 Votes)

Yes; but only if students register with the University that they plan to carry (15%, 68 Votes)

No; increasing the number of armed professionals will be sufficient in securing the campus (11%, 49 Votes)

Unsure (2%, 8 Votes)

Total Voters: 440

fewer than 30 credit hours a year to graduate within the four-year time frame. A tuition recommendation would be renewed every two years using the Consumer Price Index inflation rate, which for 2014-18 was calculated at 2.2 percent.

For SGA President Cedric Bandoh, fixed tuition gives students an opportunity to save money and plan their academic schedules.

“What I like about it is it’s simple. It’s fixed, no matter what your major is, whether you’re studying communications or sciences or business, you pay that same rate ... It’s fair,” Bandoh said. “I think that students coming in this upcoming fall, it’s going to be an even better experience for them. With everything else on campus, adding in a fixed tuition plan is great, and UH is comparatively already pretty much affordable, so you’re already going to an affordable school and your tuition is going to be the same every year as long as you meet certain requirements. I think that’s going to boost the overall experience here at the University.”

Supporters of the bill say “HB 29 would encourage on-time graduation by framing a university education as a four-year experience,” while opponents say that it may be unpopular with students who struggle with immediate financial needs, according to the House Research Organization bill analysis.

Four-year fixed tuition would be \$9,583 with a total four-year cost of \$38,328, but student fees will be in addition to this figure, according to the University’s draft for enacting the house bill.

A tuition cap at 12 hours would also be enacted for fixed-tuition students. Carlucci said that he would recommend an extra \$100 per credit hour for non-resident students to make up revenues because of tuition caps.

H.B. No. 29 was enacted by the Texas Legislature on Sept. 1, 2013, and the University is required to begin implementation starting Fall 2014. The Tuition and Fee Advisory Committee’s draft for implementation will go in front of the Board of Regents on Feb. 25, 2014.

More information can be found at <http://www.uh.edu/af/hb29tuition/index.htm>

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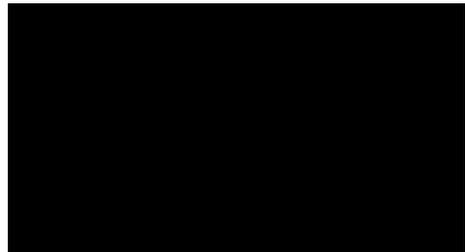
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