

SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS

AGENDA ITEM: 3 – G (2)
DATE: March 30-31, 2021

SUBJECT

Tuition and Fees Setting

CONTROLLING STATUTE, RULE, OR POLICY

None

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

The Board of Regents recognizes affordability as one of the major tenets of a public education and dutifully guards it as an essential condition of the system it governs. Additionally, affordability is critical for any higher education institution as it encourages or discourages student attendance.

During its March meeting, the Board is expected to set tuition and fees for its institutions, one of its most important responsibilities. Setting tuition and fees must be done with a mind to balancing student affordability with the real costs of providing education. One real cost is Legislature-approved salary policy. When the Legislature approves a base fund increase for employee salaries, tuition at the regental system must also increase to compensate for the portion of Board of Regents employees not funded with state dollars.

Senate Bill 27 was introduced by the Board of Regents during the 2021 Legislative Session in an effort to create better cost structures that affect affordability for students. With the successful passage of Senate Bill 27, statutory references to self-support tuition rates that are associated with off-campus (online) delivery of public university coursework are being removed. This gives the Board flexibility to set off-campus tuition rates, meaning that online courses will no longer be obligated to the higher self-support tuition rate. This is good for students as it allows the Board to better align the regental cost structure with the ways courses are delivered at public universities today in comparison to past models. The change initiated by Senate Bill 27 observes the changing nature of course delivery, the technologies involved, and the type of students served. Senate Bill 27 does not apply to the cost of courses offered at the Community College for Sioux Falls or Black Hills State University – Rapid City, which remain at the self-support rate.

IMPACT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board will address tuition and fees setting during the Budget and Finance Committee section of its March Board meeting agenda.

ATTACHMENTS

None

INFORMATIONAL ITEM