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Board of Governors approves \$240 tuition increase for 2015-16

\$30 million in budget cuts still needed without increased state support

Contact: Kenn Marshall, (717) 720-4054 or (717) 329-0809

Harrisburg – The Board of Governors of Pennsylvania’s State System of Higher Education today approved a \$240 tuition increase for the 2015-16 academic year while pledging to continue to seek additional state funding to support the universities’ operations.

The 14 State System universities have made more than \$270 million in combined budget cuts over the last decade, and would need to make about \$30 million in additional cuts next year if state funding is not increased. The System has not received a funding increase from the state in seven years and currently is receiving the same level of funding it did in 1997-98 – 17 years ago.

“Even with the modest tuition increase we approved today, the universities still would need to make significant budget cuts without any increased funding from the state again next year,” said Board of Governors Chairman Guido M. Pichini. “We will continue to talk with the Governor and the Legislature to seek their support on behalf of our students and their families.”

The last time state funding to the System was increased was in 2007-08. Since then, the System’s appropriation has been cut three times, including by 18 percent in 2011-12. The System has received the same amount of funding from the state for the last four years.

The Board of Governors voted to set tuition for next year without a state budget in place, at least in part because of the large deficits the universities face. Without a tuition increase, and without an increase in state support, the universities would need to cut their budgets by a combined \$66.8 million this year.

The action taken by the Board today sets next year’s base full-time tuition rate for Pennsylvania residents – who comprise about 90 percent of all State System students – at \$7,060. Even with the increase, the State System universities will remain the lowest-cost option among all four-year colleges and universities in the state.

The tuition increase will provide about half of the additional funds the universities need to balance their budgets. Significant cost increases are expected this year in several areas, including healthcare and pension contributions, over which the universities essentially have no control. Most of the universities also are expecting their enrollments to decline slightly, as the number of high school graduates in the state continues to drop, which will result in reduced revenue.

“Our university leadership, especially our presidents, should be commended for everything they have done to control costs and to continue to ensure their institutions are providing a high-quality, high-value education to students,” Mr. Pichini said. “It is essential the state continues its investment in the State System, and increase that investment for the benefit not just of our students, but the entire Commonwealth.”

Full-time, nonresident tuition will range from about \$7,413 to \$17,650.

“The education our universities provide continues to represent a tremendous value,” said State System Chancellor Frank T. Brogan. “The quality of programming remains high, and the array of academic programs that is offered is continually being enhanced and redesigned to meet the needs of employers across Pennsylvania and the nation.”

Pennsylvania’s State System of Higher Education is the largest provider of higher education in the Commonwealth, with about 110,000 degree-seeking students and thousands more who are enrolled in certificate and other career-development programs. Collectively, the 14 universities that comprise the State System offer more than 2,300 degree and certificate programs in more than 530 academic areas. Nearly 520,000 State System university alumni live in Pennsylvania.

The State System universities are Bloomsburg, California, Cheyney, Clarion, East Stroudsburg, Edinboro, Indiana, Kutztown, Lock Haven, Mansfield, Millersville, Shippensburg, Slippery Rock and West Chester Universities of Pennsylvania. The universities also operate branch campuses in Oil City (Clarion), Freeport and Punxsutawney (IUP), and Clearfield (Lock Haven), and offer classes and programs at several regional centers, including the Dixon University Center in Harrisburg and in Center City in Philadelphia.