

Guidelines Regarding Course Fees

July 26, 2017

The university has the goal of keeping fee annual percentage increases, including course fee increases, at or below the average annual percentage increase in tuition. For the purposes of this document, let X% represent the average annual increase in tuition over the most recent three years.

This document identifies ways to (a) ensure that faculty proposing course fee increases understand this expectation, (b) allow proposals to justify/request an exception to this cap, and (c) ensure that deans are ultimately responsible for enforcing the cap.

1. Faculty are largely unaware of the goal of keeping the rate of growth of course fees below X%/year. WSU should add a statement to the course fee request/change form(s) stating this university goal.
2. Since course fees are typically reviewed only every three years, the new fee should represent a three-year increase of less than three times X%, or **3*X%**, which ignores compounding. This is equivalent to course fee growth of "X%/year for three years."
3. New program request forms in Curriculog should add a question of whether any new course fees will be required during the first three years of program operation. The form should state that fees not identified on the form shall be prohibited for the three-year period.
4. Appropriate first-time course fees imposed for new programs and new fees on courses that have not traditionally had course fees shall not be subject to the X%/year rule for the initial course fee, but future changes in that course fee shall be subject to the rule. However, the initial course fees in these cases should be in the spirit of the "X%/year" model, with an appropriate justification that the request is for the minimum necessary course fee.
5. If a college has kept course fee increases low for an extended period of time or has recently reduced course fees, a request to increase by more than X%/year should be averaged out over more than just the most recent three years.
6. Course fee increases in excess of X%/year must justify in the request why such an increase is appropriate. Possible reasons might include:
 - a. The overall inflation rate in the nation exceeds X%.
 - b. Cost of the equipment/supplies/etc. to be replaced has risen by over X%/year. Evidence of this claim shall be included with the course fee request paperwork (e.g., past and current invoices).
 - c. Loss of current non-course-fee funding that must be replaced by a course fee
 - d. Other reasonable cases shall be considered, but the burden to prove necessity lies with the proposer
7. Deans are responsible for ensuring that, unless one of the exceptions above applies, their college's average increase is less than or equal to X% per year.
8. The review committee should carefully examine whether the exceptions are legitimate and backed up by data (e.g., cost data from invoices, an unusually long period without increases).
 - a. If the review committee believes an exception to the X%/year rule is appropriate, it should say so and forward the set of fee increases to President's Council.

- b. If the committee believes that a college's request to increase by more than X%/year is inappropriate, it should return the paperwork to the appropriate dean with the request to decrease the fee increase request.
 - c. At its discretion, the review committee may refer the increases to the group of academic deans (or the group of deans who are requesting increases), asking that group to discuss and reduce the overall university student fee increase to X%/year or below. Deans would not be able to forward the requests to President's Council until the goal has been met.
- 9. All dates in the review process should be moved earlier to allow
 - a. The chair of the committee to meet with President's Council (PC) to discuss any requested exceptions
 - b. PC to request additional information from the departments, deans, or committee
 - c. PC to be able to make informed decisions well in advance of the deadline for posting next year's fees
- 10. Course fee requests shall be due no later than November 1 (or the earliest work day thereafter) of each year. The review committee shall complete its work before the end of the fall semester, in order to give PC plenty of time to review the proposals and, if appropriate, to ask and receive responses to questions.