

USG Tuition FAQ – April 2009

Q: Is there an Institutional Fee for students this fall?

A: Yes. All students will pay a special Institutional Fee in the upcoming academic year: \$100 a semester at the research universities, as well as at Georgia Southern University, Valdosta State University, Georgia College and State University, Kennesaw State University, Southern Polytechnic State University, and University of West Georgia; \$75 a semester at the regional and state universities, and \$50 a semester at the state and two-year colleges.

Q: I thought this was a temporary fee. Why is the fee being extended?

A: The fee was originally set in December 2008 for the Spring 2009 semester. At that time it was labeled as a temporary fee because, while the Regents understood the economy was worsening and had been told to plan for budget cuts, the Governor had not yet made his budget recommendations and the General Assembly had not yet acted on those recommendations to set an amended budget for the current fiscal year or a new budget for the upcoming fiscal year. The temporary fee was part of the Regents' budget reduction plan. Now that the System's Fiscal Year 2010 budget has been set and we have a much clearer picture of the state's declining revenues, the board has decided that a special Institutional Fee must be part of the overall strategy to ensure access and academic excellence for students. This is not a fee that the Regents want to put in place, but the times leave the board little choice. Otherwise, in order to ensure the academic quality, it would have been necessary to place the entire financial burden on new students and those students enrolled prior to fall 2006, who are not part of the Guaranteed Tuition Plan. This would have been an unfair and very expensive burden, and the special fee spreads the cost equitably among all USG students.

Q: So is this new fee permanent?

A: We do not know what the economy and consequently, the state's budget picture will look like for fiscal year 2011 and beyond. The special fee applies for the Fiscal Year 2010. Next year the board will make decisions on tuition and fees based upon the budget adopted by the General Assembly. No one can say – or should predict – what options the Regents will have and decisions they will take with respect to tuition and fees.

Q: So the Institutional Fee applies to students on the Guaranteed Tuition Plan?

A: Yes, the fee applies to all students, including those in the Guaranteed Tuition Plan.

Q: Is the fee covered by HOPE?

A: No, HOPE does not cover fees approved by the Regents after January 2004. This fee is not HOPE eligible.

Q: Last December, when the Institutional Fee was passed, there was concern expressed by students about a lack of consultation. What, if any, input did students have on the new fee?

A: Students did voice their concerns last December and we listened. In February, at the Student Advisory Council Meeting, both Vice Chancellor for Fiscal Affairs Usha Ramachandran and Chancellor Errol B. Davis, Jr., spoke at length with student leaders about the fee, the budget, and possible options for Fiscal Year 2010. Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Susan Herbst, spoke to Student Government Associations at both UGA and Georgia Tech. Prior to the April Board Meeting, USG Presidents briefed student leaders on the campuses regarding the options. And of course, the Chancellor and Ms. Ramachandran again briefed the Student Advisory Council before the Regents' April board meeting. Those meetings, particularly in February, allowed for significant student input. For example, student dissatisfaction with the Guaranteed Tuition Plan was an important – though not the only – factor in the recommendation to end the program. We have listened closely. The decision to implement the new fee will not be endorsed by all, but the decision reflects what, in the board's consideration, is the most equitable solution to maintain academic quality in the face of extraordinary budget pressures.