Cost of college likely to rise again

By Barbara Hollingsworth

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Kansas students likely will have to dig even deeper this coming fall for tuition payments.

The six regents universities are again proposing tuition increases, but not the same brutal double-digit hikes of recent years.

At the high end, incoming freshmen at The University of Kansas would pay 8.7 percent more for 15 credit hours, but they would be locked into that tuition rate for four years.

"At a time when everything from the price of gas to the price of bread is increasing, we are able to offer parents and students a guarantee that the price of a KU education won't increase for four years," said KU chancellor Robert Hemenway. "This is part of our commitment to the people of Kansas to ensure that a first-rate college education remains affordable."

Kansas Board of Regents members, who discussed the tuition plans Thursday in Topeka, won't vote on the increases until their June meeting. Tonight, Washburn University's Board of Regents will consider a 6.5 percent tuition increase that would raise tuition to $196 per credit hour.

Christine Downey-Schmidt, chairwoman of the Kansas regents, said the tuition increases are prompting a lot of talks from regents. Some, she said, worry about shoving too much of the tuition burden on families. But she said she and others believe that quality must be maintained even as the per-pupil support from state funding has declined.

"It's a complex dilemma in that universities are desiring to provide the best educational opportunity," she said. "On the other hand, the declining amount of dollars over the last years from the Legislature have put the squeeze on."

Kansas universities must remain competitive, Downey-Schmidt said.

"The bottom line remains education is still a very
Tuition: Some blame Legislature

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good deal in Kansas by almost any comparison basis,” she said.

Many of the increases proposed Thursday were based on higher than currently approved amounts of state funding. Kansas State University and Emporia State University plan to review their tuition plans.

Officials from some regents universities blamed the Legislature’s decision to appropriate $10 million less for their operating budgets than Gov. Kathleen Sebelius had proposed.

Several regents, including former Lt. Gov. Gary Sherrer, expressed frustration with the universities’ criticism of legislators.

Regent Donna Shank, of Liberal, suggested that universities consider trimming their spending.

“We are in a tough economy right now,” she said. “Everyone is having to cut back right now. Do we put all that burden on the backs of the students?”

Adam McGonigle, student body president at KU, said it is important to keep tuition under control. But he acknowledged students expect to see modest increases.

“The cost of living goes up every year,” he said. “The cost of an education goes up as well.”

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

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TUITION INCREASES

Here are the proposed increases for Kansas residents attending regents universities with semester costs based on a 15-hour schedule and don’t include additional required fees:

The University of Kansas: An increase for incoming freshmen of 8.7 percent to $3,471 per semester. For students who began school before the compact tuition rate program began in fall 2007, the increase is about 6 percent to $3,097 per semester.

Kansas State University: For freshmen and sophomores, a resident tuition increase of 3.5 percent to $2,910 per semester. For resident juniors and seniors, a tuition increase of 5.1 percent to $2,955 per semester.

Kansas State University-Salina: For freshmen and sophomores, no increase, which puts tuition at $2,812. For juniors and seniors, a tuition increase of 1.6 percent to $2,857 per semester.

Emporia State University: Undergraduate increase of 4.4 percent to $1,639 per semester.

Pittsburg State University: Undergraduate increase of 5.75 percent to $1,710 per semester.

Wichita State University: Undergraduate increase of nearly 5 percent to $2,053 per semester.

Fort Hays State University: Undergraduate increase of 4.5 percent to $1,357 per semester.
Awards pile up for KU Hillel

Campus group earns honors from university, student body

By Beth Lipoff
Staff Writer

For the second year in a row, the University of Kansas Hillel has won the student organization of the year award for social justice from KU’s Student Involvement and Leadership Center. The student body also singled out the group from 550 organizations and groups in the Jayhawk Choice Awards as student organization of the year.

Some of the qualities that helped KU Hillel gain the distinction from the Student Involvement and Leadership Center were the number of students that Hillel comes in contact with during the year, the quality of its programs and its overall impact on the campus, said KU Hillel Executive Director Jay Lewis.

“It’s been pretty amazing to have these student leaders. Part of why we won Student Organization of the Year is that we have nearly 100 students involved in some sort of leadership position,” Lewis said.

Director of the Student Involvement and Leadership Center Ruben Perez said that the group’s alternative winter break program to New Orleans this year was a major factor in the decision.

Its “Rock Chalk Shabbat” program, a campus-wide celebration of Shabbat in the fall that attracted about 500 participants, also won for program of the year.

Another KU Hillel program Lewis noted was a student-led alternative spring break group trip to Washington, D.C., where students participated in a homelessness-education project in conjunction with the National Council for the Homeless, which won for social justice program of the year.

Other programs Hillel facilitates include Birthright trips to Israel, a semester-long study class on the Jewish state and “Focus the Nation,” where KU Hillel partnered with Center for Sustainability for a campus-wide initiative to combat global warming and promote sustainability.

“They’re probably the premiere student group focusing on religion. Their faith is a part of it, but they’re pushing beyond specifically religious celebration. They celebrate their faith while celebrating student life and being great leaders,” Perez said. “They are certainly raising the bar for being an active student organization.”

INDIVIDUAL HONORS

In addition to gaining recognition for its programs, Hillel also saw individual students shine.

KU’s Emily Taylor Women’s Resource Center named Megan Williams, a graduate student in American studies and KU Hillel’s graduate student intern, Outstanding Woman in Partnership for her work on campus, including trying to involve graduate students in Hillel activities.

“She spearheaded our graduate-student programming and efforts to engage graduate students in Jewish campus life, which we’d never done before. We went from a small handful (involved) in the previous year to more than 20 this year,” Lewis said.

KU Hillel student board member and senior Nick Lush, a French and Italian major, won the Campanile Award.
KU Hillel board members Nick Lush, Matt Erickson, Jon Hurst-Sneh, Allie Stillman and Elliot Kort accepted the KU Jayhawk Choice Student Organization of the Year Award from Ruben Perez, director of the Student Involvement and Leadership Center.

which will be presented at commencement ceremonies Sunday, May 18. This award goes to one student each year who has shown leadership and a commitment to the university. Lush has chaired events such as Heat in’ Up With Hillel, an introductory program at the beginning of the school year.

“One of the things we strongly encourage our students to do is not just be involved in Jewish student leadership but to be involved in the many aspects of the university, and we hope that’s a lesson they take with them into adulthood,” Lewis said.

For the first time ever, a KU Hillel board member, Max Stettner, won the Student Organization Member of the Year award. Stettner helped organize the alternative spring break trip and also participated in KU Hillel’s student senate. Stettner is an American studies major from Overland Park.

“He was the single-handed instigator for Dates for Darfur, a concert, date auction and party to raise awareness and money for Darfur relief,” Lewis said. The event raised about $1,800.

Stettner, who transferred to KU two years ago from the University of Arizona, has been involved with Hillel since he arrived. He said he enjoyed working for many different causes, especially those that have to do with social justice.

“You’re introduced to people who have your same interests that maybe you didn’t know before. It’s really great to make new friends through projects that you really care about,” Stettner said.

He also credits Lewis for encouraging KU Hillel’s achievements by supporting the students.

“I think that it’s important that he enables the students to do these types of projects, and he’s very supportive and open to new ideas. He allows the students to have the resources for something like the Darfur benefit,” Stettner said. “It’s really a credit to Jay. He lets the students take control of these projects when they come about. He’s really good at empowering members of Hillel.”
KU Names Top Scholars
From Class of 2008

More than 165 members of the Class of 2008 will be recognized as top scholars during commencement at the University of Kansas Sunday, May 18.

Each year, KU has awarded its most prized four-year scholarships to students whose academic records and other qualifications make them eligible for selection. These students will be Chancellors Club Scholars, Elizabeth M. Watkins-Emily Berger Scholars, Solon E. Summerfield Scholars, Endowment Meritorious Scholars, National Merit Scholars, National Hispanic Scholars and National Achievement Scholars. KU Endowment has managed the funds for these scholarships.

Kathryn Hill, of Andover, and Katherine Schreiber and Lauren Rowland, both of Wichita, were among the students selected for the Elizabeth M. Watkins-Emily Berger Scholarship. Elizabeth M. Watkins-Emily Berger and Solon E. Summerfield scholarships will provide $3,000 a year for four years to 100 Kansas high school graduates in recognition of their outstanding high school academic achievements and records of community service and leadership. Summerfield scholarships for men have been funded through an endowment established by Solon E. Summerfield, who was a Lawrence native and KU graduate. Watkins-Berger scholarships for women have been financed by the estate of Elizabeth M. Watkins of Lawrence and an endowment in memory of Emily Berger, a KU graduate, by her brother, the late Arthur Berger of Dallas.

Hill, the daughter of Lary and Diane Hill, majored in History at KU and graduated from Andover Central High School. The daughter of Douglas and Julie Schreiber, Schreiber majored in Human Biology at KU and graduated from Andover High School. Rowland, the daughter of Ann Heatherly, majored in Biochemistry at KU and graduated from Wichita Collegiate.

The Class of 2008 will include graduates from the spring 2008 and summer and fall 2007 terms. The commencement procession will begin at 2:30 p.m. at Memorial Stadium.
Universities seek tuition hike

TOPEKA — Tuition would increase this fall by as much as 8.7 percent at the state’s six universities under proposals their top officials outlined Thursday.

The changes would raise at least $22 million during the next academic year, and officials told the Kansas Board of Regents that their universities need the new dollars to provide adequate pay raises and sustain existing programs. The board, which oversees the state’s higher education system, plans to vote on the proposals next month.

The largest percentage increases would be in the tuition charged to some incoming freshmen at the University of Kansas and to some juniors and seniors at Kansas State University. But some students at both institutions would see no increase in what they pay.

University of Kansas officials asked the regents to continue a program under which incoming freshmen are guaranteed the same tuition for four years. Kansas State proposed, for the first time, charging juniors and seniors more than it charges freshmen and sophomores.

The board wasn’t entirely pleased with the proposals. The regents strongly suggested in February that the universities seek increases of 6 percent or less, and a few of the changes suggested went beyond that mark.

“For six years now, we have had huge tuition increases,” former Lt. Gov. Gary Sherrer, a regent from Overland Park, said during a break. “In this economy, my personal belief is that you do not want to start shutting the doors of your universities based on ability to pay.”
Universities seek to raise tuition up to 8.7 percent

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Tuition

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Some of the proposals remained fluid. Officials at four universities — Emporia State, Fort Hays State, Kansas State and Wichita State — said they would have to revise their plans to include larger increases.

They blamed the Legislature's decision to appropriate $10 million less for their operating budgets than Gov. Kathleen Sebelius had proposed.

Several regents, including Sherrill, expressed frustration with the universities' criticism of legislators. Regent Donna Shank, of Liberal, suggested that universities consider trimming their spending.

"We are in a tough economy right now," she said.

"Everyone is having to cut back right now. Do we put all that burden on the backs of the students?" Adam McGonigle, student body president at the University of Kansas, said it's important to keep tuition under control. But he acknowledged students expect to see modest increases.

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State universities seek tuition increases

TOPEKA (AP) — Officials at the state's six universities are proposing to raise tuition this fall by as much as 6 percent.

The charges would generate $22 million in revenue over the next academic year. The universities would use the money for faculty increases and to sustain ongoing programs.

The plans were presented Thursday to the Kansas Board of Regents, who will vote on the proposals next month.

Tuition increases would vary by institution. The University of Kansas is proposing a 6 percent increase for full-time, undergraduate and graduate students. But the university is also seeking to extend a program that locks in tuition rates for incoming freshmen for four years.

Kansas State University is proposing no increase for students on its Salina campus.
Legislative session ends

By Senator Derek Schmidt

The 2008 session of the Kansas legislature concluded this past week. The wrap-up session lasted eight days, and the session overall lasted 90 days.

A few highlights from the final week, all of which I supported, include:

- **Healthcare**: We gave final approval to legislation that will expand eligibility for the state’s Healthwave insurance coverage to several thousand more Kansas kids, mostly in working families. Some critics have suggested this approach is defective because it relies heavily on federal funding, but that actually seems to me to be one of its strengths: it builds on a tried and true federal program to provide coverage to more kids without putting the full burden on Kansas taxpayers.

- **Education**: We provided for an increase in state education funding by about $37 million, which will match the rate of inflation, for the 2009-10 school year. The money to pay for this fifth straight year of increase is now set aside in a “lockbox” so it will be there next year.

- **Budget**: The final state budget grows overall state general spending by just over 5 percent, which is an improvement over recent years. Ever since the school finance litigation and the resulting infusion of new state funds in 2005, the state budget has been growing at an unsustainable rate. This year’s effort to reduce the rate of growth we almost cut it in half from last year’s rate is a first step toward putting the budget on a sustainable footing. Nonetheless, the next few years look very difficult in terms of balancing the state budget.

- **Children’s programs**: The final budget provides more than $10 million in “windfall” money from the multi-state tobacco litigation settlement to give a one-time boost to pre-kindergarten programs in our state. Years ago, the state made the commitment to use tobacco settlement money to promote the well-being of children, and this decision carries on that tradition. Because this is windfall money from litigation, and not taxpayer money, its use for this purpose does not worsen the state’s overall budget situation.

- **Senior tax relief**: The legislature gave final approval to tax-relief legislation that will provide a new state income tax credit to certain low-income senior citizens. The provision will provide more than $2 million per year in tax relief to low-income senior citizens for the first three years and about $3.4 million per year in relief after that.

The tax bill also provides disaster-recovery help and shifts part of the corporate tax load off of Kansas corporations and onto multi-state corporations doing business in Kansas.

- **Pharmacists**: The final budget provides funding to expand the School of Pharmacy at the University of Kansas. One of the arguments made in favor of this funding was that many small, rural counties have no pharmacist and that one of the problems (though not the only problem) is that not enough pharmacy school graduates are being produced by our universities.

With the 2008 session now concluded; except for the final ceremonial adjournment on May 29, it now is time to catch up on paperwork. I’ve appreciated all the mail and emails you have sent during this legislative session, and I hope to catch up on replying to those in the next few weeks.

The best way to reach me will remain through my Topeka office at the State Capitol, Room 390-E, Topeka, Kansas 66612 or by phone at (785) 296-2497. You also can e-mail me through my Website at www.DerekSchmidt.com.
The names of more than 4,450 candidates for degrees at the University of Kansas this spring, represent 95 Kansas counties, 48 other states and the District of Columbia and 44 other countries. Among the degree candidates are Jeanna Bleecker, daughter of John and Jeanne Bleecker, Mankato, theatre and Film BGS; Reba Liggett, daughter of Mike and Phyllis Liggett, Mankato, English BGS; Shawna Doane, daughter of Lee and Denelle Mick, Cawker City, Pharmacy PD; Amanda Walker, daughter of Allen and Barb Hurley, Republic, Pharmacy PD.
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KU announces more than 4,450 candidates for degrees

The names of more than 4,450 candidates for degrees at the University of Kansas this spring — representing 95 Kansas counties, 48 other states and the District of Columbia and 44 other countries — have been announced by the University Registrar.

KU’s Class of 2008 numbers more than 7,000, including 2,555 who completed degree work in summer and fall 2007. Because KU conducts only one formal commencement ceremony each year, many of these candidates for degrees will return Sunday, May 18, for the university’s 136th commencement procession into Memorial Stadium. More than 4,000 members of the Class of 2008 are expected to participate.

Barber County students receiving degrees are:

David James Bell, Business Administration MBA, Graduate Master of Business Administration, Medicine Lodge High School, Medicine Lodge, son of David and Joyce Bell, Isabel.

Carrie Kaye Abbott, daughter of Donna Abbott, Psychology BA DECL Senior Bachelor of Arts/Psychology, South Barber High School, Kiowa.

William Daniel Taber, son of Marion Taber, Kiowa, Business Administration MBA Graduate Master of Business Administration.