Universities blame Legislature for cutting their budgets
By JOHN HANNA
The Associated Press

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.”

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 Sherrer, expressed frustration with the universities’ criticism of legislators.

Regent Donna Shank, 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?”

Kansas State proposed no increase for freshmen and sophomores on its Salina campus, which emphasizes technology. For other students, the increase would range from 1.9 percent to 7.4 percent.

The biggest jump would be in the tuition charged to juniors and seniors from outside Kansas attending classes on its Manhattan campus.

If the regents accept Kansas State’s proposal, it would be the only state university to charge different rates to freshmen and sophomores than to juniors and seniors. But Tom Rawson, vice president of administration and finance, noted that lower-level classes tend to be larger and emphasize lectures over lab work.

“There really are some differences in cost,” he said.

The largest increases at the University of Kansas are driven by its “compact” program, in which the university sets a single tuition rate for incoming freshmen for four years. The program started last year, and university officials pitched it as protection for families against large tuition increases.
Jeff Little has won one of 12 awards for student leadership given by the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists and a state honor from the Kansas Society of Health-System Pharmacists. Little is a senior in pharmacy at the University of Kansas. He is the son of Glenmaye Linnea of Wichita and David Little of Maple Grove, Minn.
TOPEKA — Students at Wichita State University would pay at least $121 more for a semester's tuition and fees next year under increases presented Thursday to the Kansas Board of Regents.

But that amount could rise further in June, warned university president Don Beggs, as WSU and other state universities attempt to make up for receiving less than expected from the Legislature.

WSU proposes a 4.98 percent increase in tuition for in-state students. The school still could ask to bump tuition up by as much as 5.95 percent.

Students at other schools could face bigger increases. The University of Kansas asked for an overall increase of 6.7 percent in tuition and fees. It also wants to extend a program that lets freshmen lock in their tuition rate for four years.

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Kansas State University proposed a tiered system that could have some students pay up to 7.4 percent more for credit hours next fall; some others would see no increase.

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

The regents strongly suggested in February that the universities seek increases of 6 percent or less.

Thursday, several regents worried that schools were asking students to pick up more and more of their education tab. "The issue is, who is going to shoulder that burden?" asked regent Gary Sherrer of Overland Park.

Officials from the universities voiced concern that the regents received $10 million less from the Legislature than the governor had proposed.

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?"

Beggs said before the meeting that he hoped the tuition increase at WSU would help pay for priorities including utilities, improvements to the library and to academic counseling centers. He said the university also would like to increase the stipend graduate students receive, if there is enough money.

The University of Kansas is attempting to address rising tuition by pushing to extend a program that lets incoming freshmen lock in a tuition rate for four years. Freshmen on that plan would start at a higher rate — $231.45 per credit hour — but not see any increase through 2012. Students not on the plan would pay a proposed per-credit rate of $206.50 next fall and be subject to future increases.

Under K-State’s proposal, freshmen and sophomores would pay different rates than juniors and seniors, and students at the Salina campus would pay less than at the Manhattan campus.

Some juniors and seniors could see what they pay jump by as much as 7.4 percent from the current $187.50 per credit hour to $201. That figure does not include required fees.

"Those more certain to complete their degree will pay a little more," explained K-State president Jon Wefald.

Contributing: Associated Press
Reach Jeannine Koranda at 785-296-3006.
Some universities in Kansas are going above the board's request of a 6 percent limit.

Staff and wire reports

TOPEKA | Kansas' four-year universities want to raise tuition for the fall, some by more than 6 percent, frustrating some members of the Board of Regents.

University leaders outlined their proposals for tuition and fee increases for the board on Thursday. The board will vote on the plans in June.

In February, regents asked university leaders to consider the slumping economy and to show restraint in setting tuition increases this year. They asked that tuition increases be no more than 6 percent.

"Everyone is having to cut back right now," said one regent, Donna Shank of Liberal. "Do we put all that burden on the backs of the students?"

Officials at four universities — Emporia State, Fort Hays State, Kansas State and Wichita State — proposed increases within the 6 percent range. However, they said they would revise their tuition plans to include larger increases since the Legislature appropriated $10 million less than Gov. Kathleen Sebelius proposed.

The largest increases proposed were for some freshmen at the University of Kansas and some juniors and seniors at Kansas State University. K-State has proposed for the first time charging some upper-classmen more than freshmen.

KU wants to continue its four-year tuition compact, which holds tuition costs for four years to the same rate for incoming freshmen. Under KU's tuition plan, the compact started last fall would be extended to this fall's incoming freshmen. Those students would have the option of joining the compact and being guaranteed a set tuition rate through the 2011-12 school year.

The rate charged to incoming freshmen in the fall would be 8.6 percent or 8.7 percent higher than the rate for those who enrolled last year. For other KU students, tuition will climb 6 percent in the fall.

University officials said the tuition increases will help them afford the rising cost of doing business, including higher energy costs and cost-of-living increases to teachers, researchers and staff.

But Richard Lariviere, KU executive vice chancellor, said the revenue from increases will fall short of allowing KU to raise salaries enough to compete with peer universities or make significant enhancements to education programs.

Kansas State proposed no increase for freshmen and sophomores on its Salina campus, which emphasizes technology. For other students, the increase would range from 1.9 percent to 7.4 percent.

The biggest jump would be in the tuition charged to juniors and seniors from outside Kansas attending classes on the Manhattan campus. Wichita State proposed increasing tuition 5.9 percent for students from Kansas but only 5 percent for non-Kansans to remain competitive with out-of-state schools. Fort Hays State proposed tuition increases of 5.5 percent, Pittsburg State up to 5.8 percent.

Officials at Emporia State didn't have final figures, but students there are likely to see increases of between 4.9 percent and 6 percent.

The Star's Mará Rose Williams and The Associated Press contributed to this report.
The names of more than 4,450 candidates for degrees at the University of Kansas this spring have been announced by the University Registrar.

Area graduates include Tristan Noelle, Greenleaf, Theatre and Film; Kurt Funke, Washington, Minor in History of Art & Bachelor of Science in Theatre and Film; Anthony Strickland, Washington, Human Biology with a Minor in French; and Jeff Bartley, Olathe (graduate of Linn High School), master of Civil Engineering.
Regents hear tuition increase proposals

By CHRIS GREEN
Harris News Service

TOPEKA — State universities generally asked for the lowest percentage tuition increases in several years Thursday.

But some of the hikes wouldn’t be as low as higher education leaders initially had hoped.

Officials from the state’s six public universities outlined their proposals for increasing tuition and fees beginning next fall to the state Board of Regents, which could take a final vote on the requests in June.

But some students at the University of Kansas and Kansas State University could face jumps exceeding 6 percent, the rate of increase in tuition that Regents said they preferred to keep hikes below in February.

As a result, some board members reiterated their concerns about whether the state could be making a university education too costly for many Kansans to afford.

“There are kids out there where it’s not a matter of (giving up) a latte to whether they get a college education,” said Regent Gary Sherrer of Overland Park, a former lieutenant governor to Bill Graves.

The funding would bring in millions of additional dollars to help state universities accomplish tasks such as offsetting rising energy costs and boosting salaries to recruit and keep top-notch faculty members.

Board Chairwoman Christine Downey-Schmidt of Inman said college educations are valuable to students and ensuring the state’s universities have the resources they need to excel also should be a consideration for board members.

“I want to make sure we don’t have a substandard system as a result of this,” Downey-Schmidt said of the board’s discussions on making tuition hikes leaner.

The steepest proposed increase would be for incoming resident freshmen attending the University of Kansas, who would pay 9 percent more in tuition and fees than this year’s crop of resident freshmen.

However, because they would be the second consecutive class to enter under KU’s guaranteed tuition compact, they would receive the same tuition rate for four years.

KU sophomores would see no increase this year under that compact, while juniors and seniors would see their tuition and fees go up about 6.7 percent.

In addition, Kansas State University wants to boost charges on juniors and seniors at its Manhattan campus by about 7.5 percent, giving them a higher tuition rate than underclassmen, who’d see a 5 percent jump.

Tom Rawson, K-State’s vice president for administration and finance, said the move would implement a three-tier pricing structure at the university, a first at a Kansas public university.

Under the system, college freshmen and sophomores would pay the lowest rate while graduate students would pay the highest. Juniors and seniors, whose classes can often involve more expensive laboratory work, would fall in the middle.

The university’s Salina campus, which focuses on technology and aviation, also would feature a three-tier system of its own.

Pre-college students taking courses would receive a newly created tuition rate, $100 per credit hour. Underclassmen would see no increases in tuition and fees next year while upperclassmen would pay about 1.6 percent more than at present.

Most of the proposals made to the board fell well below the percentage increases proposed in recent years.

Since 2002, in-state tuition and fees have more than doubled at the University of Kansas and Kansas State University.

Increases at the state’s other schools — Wichita State, Emporia State, Pittsburg State and Fort Hays State University — have averaged at least 8 percent a year.

Officials from four schools — K-State, Fort Hays, Wichita State and Emporia State — initially submitted proposed tuition increases that would have bolstered tuition by 5 percent or less for in-state undergraduates.

But those proposals were mapped out on the expectation lawmakers would provide higher education with the additional $35 million Gov. Kathleen Sebelius suggested in her budget.

Lawmakers did increase funding for colleges and universities but came up about $10 million short of what Sebelius had proposed.

Fort Hays President Edward Hammond said the Legislature’s decision left his institution with no choice but to raise its proposed increase for in-state undergraduates from 4.5 percent to 5.5 percent, including tuition and fees.

Pittsburg State proposed a hike in undergraduate tuition and fees of 6.5 percent, while Emporia State projected an increase in those charges that ranged from 5.3 percent and 5.7 percent. Wichita State projected it would be asking for an increase of about 5.8 percent, including both tuition and fees.

Board Vice Chairwoman Donna Shank of Liberal noted higher education officials did receive an increase in state funding from last year, although not as much as they had wanted.

While universities clearly have needs,
she said the proposed tuition increases also were coming during a time when many people in the state are facing a tough economy and the prospect of cutting back.  
“I guess the issue is who’s going to shoulder that burden,” Shank said.
Wheat State Whirlwind tour to stop in Edson

By Sharon Corcoran
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Forty University of Kansas staff members tour of Kansas will include a dinner with alumni Tuesday, at the Prairie Castle/Kuhrt Ranch in Edson.

The dinner is part of the university's 11th annual whirlwind tour of Kansas that covers more than 1,000 miles in five days, and will include professors, deans and other staff members, many of whom are new to the state, from the Lawrence campus, KU Medical Center in Kansas City, KU School of Medicine in Wichita and the Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center, a division of KU Continuing Education.

Hosted with help from the KU Alumni Association, the dinner will be a chance for alumni in the area to meet with tour participants.

Faculty associated with the KU Medical Center and KU Cancer Center will give an update on the university's work to support and improve health care in rural Kansas and efforts to achieve National Cancer Institute designation, through the Midwest Cancer Alliance, which includes Goodland Regional Medical Center.

The Northwest Chapter of the KU Alumni Association is led by Jeff Mason, a Goodland attorney with two degrees from KU, a Bachelor of Arts in political science in 1980 and a Juris Doctorate in 1983.

On past tours, similar alumni dinners have been in Liberal, Hutchinson, Concordia, Dodge City and Colby.

There is a cost for the dinner, Mason said, and reservations have to be made through Sarah Blaney at (785) 864-9767.

The Wheat State Whirlwind Tour will hit the road Monday, visiting more than 20 communities and passing through 30 counties while covering in excess of 1,000 miles of roadway. Stops include Topeka, Barnes, Marysville, Concordia, Lucas, Palco, Goodland, Oakley, Ness City, Hudson, Dodge City, Spearville, Hutchinson, Inman, Yoder and Cottonwood Falls.

Chancellor Robert Hemenway, who started the Wheat State Whirlwind Tour, said the annual trip is an invaluable experience for the participants.

"Year after year, the tour has proven to be an outstanding way for KU faculty and staff to get out and learn firsthand what makes this great state tick," he said. "They not only learn about its history, landscape and economy, they get a better understanding of where KU's students come from and meet some great people along the way."

It was organized several years ago, Mason said, to acquaint the tour participants, photos from stops and updates on the tour. The third day of the trip will begin from Goodland and head to the Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center, a division of KU Continuing Education.

Duff, the owner of Beef Belt Feeders of Scott City, raises about 200 head of buffalo, plus cattle, on the ranch near U.S. Highway 83.

Between the buffalo stops, the bus will wander off Highway 83 to give riders a look at the Monument Rocks in Gove County. Recently named one of the Eight Wonders of Kansas, the rocks were the first natural formation chosen by the Department of the Interior as a National Natural Landmark.

To view daily itineraries, maps of this year's route and photos of previous tours, visit www.wheatstate.ku.edu. During the tour, visit www.ku.edu for a blog detailing the experiences of this year's tour participants, photos from stops and updates on the tour.
Regents approve background checks

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — The Kansas Board of Regents has approved a policy allowing criminal background checks for job applicants at the state's six universities.

The new policy is being adopted after the discovery of several convicted felons working in a department at the University of Kansas.

The policy adopted Wednesday makes exceptions for student and temporary workers, but all other new employees are subject to criminal background checks. That includes a review of the sex offender registry.

The policy is modeled after one used for years at KU Medical Center. The policy discussion began after reports in news media, including a Lawrence Journal-World investigation that discovered a number of convicted felons working in one University of Kansas department.

KU Provost Richard Lariviere was a dean at University of Texas-Austin when a similar system was launched.

“It caused a considerable amount of angst from faculty and administrators when we implemented it, but ultimately it didn’t cause any more difficulty in recruiting,” he said.

At Pittsburg State and Fort Hays State universities, the issue of background checks may have to be part of negotiations with the faculty union.

“My bigger concern, though, is our international faculty and how we do background checks on people who aren’t even in this country,” said Ed Hammond, Fort Hays president.

Regent Gary Sherrer said if universities encounter obstacles they cannot solve by September, adjustments could be made.

The regents also approved a policy prohibiting weapons on campus, including paintball guns, explosives or poison gas, longbows, crossbows and knives.
Universities propose increase in tuition

By JOHN HANNA
Associated Press Writer

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"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 that 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."
Universities Seek To Raise Tuition Up To 8.7 Percent

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