

# Opinion

Ours Yours & Theirs

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## Editorial

# Tuition inflation

The cost of higher education continues to get, well, even higher.

A report out by the College Board says the cost of tuition and fees at a four-year public college in America rose by 6.6 percent last year, more than triple the overall rate of inflation.

### Our View:

Making college affordable is essential to educating the next generation of engineers, scientists and doctors.

Tuition and fees at private colleges rose 6.3 percent. Tuition and fees at two-year community colleges rose 4.2 percent. Moreover, across the board, student aid has not kept up.

Every week, it seems, we have a frantic story about the price of gasoline. But the real inflation leader is the price of educating the next generation.

The problem is particularly acute at colleges. Unionized teacher political muscle has meant that when there are spare dollars to spend, they have gone to K-12 education, instead of the state's colleges.

The College Board report went on to say that students are making up the difference by borrowing. The dollar amount of student loans reached \$14.5 billion last year, up a staggering 12 percent. Those looking at the next credit crunch when people can't pay back their loans would be advised to worry about this one.

College does remain a good investment. Persons earning a four-year college degree will make approximately \$1.2 million more over the course of their lifetime.

But it is abundantly clear that students and parents don't see that side of the equation. Or they see it and can't afford it.

Up at Governors State, new president Elaine Maimon is unrolling the GSU Promise. She's working to build a \$1 million endowment to start bankrolling enough financial aid so impoverished students no longer graduate in debt. At Kankakee Community College, a \$3 million "Building a Legacy" campaign has additional student-aid dollars as a key component. Olivet Nazarene University tuition and fees are \$19,590 for the 2007-2008 school year, excluding room and board costs, leaving Olivet's costs below the national average of four-year private colleges or universities.

All three local institutions, thus, are cost-conscious, but the need is still there.

Now college financial aid drives may not seem as heartwarming as buying a toy for a needy child, or contributing to a fundraiser for medical bills, but the need is just as real. Moreover, if we want to survive as a world power and a world economy, we must ensure that we educate the next generation of doctors, engineers and scientists.



New Governors State President Elaine Maimon is the originator of the "GSU Promise."