

## The Oregonian

### OREGON EDUCATION

News on public, private and state schools and teachers

## Higher ed institutions prepare to teach more with less

Posted by [jbrugger](#) February 25, 2009 21:36PM



Olivia Bucks/The Oregonian

*Ki Kwon, a 24-year-old senior, drips chemicals into glassware Wednesday in an organic chemistry lab at Portland State University. The university will cut some spring classes because of the state's budget problems, but the outdated lab will be renovated with stimulus money, increasing the number of ventilation hoods from four to 12.*

Oregon's public colleges and universities are bracing for more students and less money in the next two years as the recession deepens and the state's budget shrinks.

Students will start to feel the impact this spring as some campuses eliminate courses, increase class sizes, raise tuition and stop hiring. Faculty and staff face potential pay cuts and unpaid furlough days.

#### Campus cutbacks

Examples of steps universities and colleges are considering for the spring term:

- **PSU:** Increase class sizes and cancel some offerings
- **UO:** Impose tuition "surcharge" of \$150 for Oregon students
- **OSU:** Won't fill vacant jobs, reducing spending
- **Clackamas CC:** A \$5 tuition increase, to \$67 per credit

Campus officials do not know exactly how bad the cuts will get this fall, but they expect 2009-11 state funding to be at least 20 percent less than what it would take to keep operating at current levels. That would mean tuition hikes, potential layoffs and other cutbacks.

It also means campuses will have a harder time serving the record number of students expected to enroll next fall. Federal stimulus money will help a little, but no one is sure how much.

It is hard to cut costs so close to the end of the school year, so campuses are dipping into their reserves, said Jay Kenton, vice chancellor for finance and administration of the Oregon University System.

"We're cutting closer to the edge at a time when it's pretty clear that we're going to have to take further cuts," he said.

Officials are considering bigger tuition hikes this fall than previous years. Since 2000, average tuition and fees at the state's seven universities have increased by 74 percent, to \$6,130, for full-time Oregon undergraduates.

This spring, the University of Oregon may seek a tuition surcharge of \$150 for in-state students and \$350 for out-of-state students as it struggles to absorb an \$8.2 million cut this year.

James Bean, UO's senior vice president and provost, said his biggest concern is that this round of cuts will leave the university with no flexibility to deal with much deeper cuts expected in the next two years. Much of its money is tied up in dedicated funds for endowed chairs, building projects and research contracts.

"It is going to be scraping together bits here and there," he said.

Oregon State University is not planning to raise tuition this spring, said President Ed Ray. But he is telling staff: "Don't spend any money you aren't locked into spending." That means leaving jobs open and deferring other expenses.

"We clearly aren't going to be able to do as much as we could with more resources, and we aren't going to advance the institution's ability to serve students and Oregonians and the nation as fast as we would like to," he said.

Portland State University is cutting classes this spring, primarily in business and engineering, and increasing class sizes to accommodate more students, said President Wim Wiewel.

Applications to PSU are up by 10 percent for undergraduates and 15 percent for graduate programs, he said. The university is looking into renting space in movie theaters and other places to boost its capacity, he said.

"The deans are (asking): 'What programs can we close? What specializations can we afford not to offer?'" Wiewel said. "We can't stop the pain that will come, but at least we can make sure people feel it is shared fairly and strategically."

The cuts mean students may have to pay more, borrow more and take longer to complete their degrees, he said.

**Clackamas Community College has increased its spring tuition by \$5 per credit to \$67 this spring, along with cuts to classes and faculty and staff forgoing pay raises.**

Mt. Hood and Portland community colleges are not planning to increase tuition this spring, but they are trimming spending wherever they can.

"This is the time when people need retraining the most," said Courtney Wilton, vice president of college services at Clackamas. "It's unfortunate that you're not able to expand services at a time when there's really a need."

*Staff writer Bill Graves contributed to this report*  
--Suzanne Pardington; [spardington@news.oregonian.com](mailto:spardington@news.oregonian.com)