

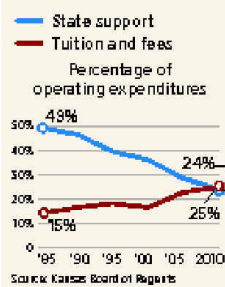
Posted on Wed, Sep. 20, 2006

## Kansas' share of college funding drops

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The Kansas City Star

### RISING, FALLING

By 2010, if state funding trends continue, students and their families will contribute more than the state will to the operation of the six regent universities in Kansas.



State support for Kansas universities is at an all-time low, and by 2010, parents and students could be shouldering a greater share of operating costs than the state.

That's the conclusion of a Kansas Board of Regents study released Tuesday that examines state funding for its six public institutions in the last 20 years.

The percentage of the six universities' operating budgets that comes from state funding dropped from 49 percent in 1985 to 29 percent in 2005. In the same period, the percentage from tuition jumped from 15 percent to 23 percent.

The regents' report predicts that if the state's share continues to slip that by 2010, tuition will account for 25 percent of operating budgets and state support will drop to 24 percent.

The largest portion of the operating budgets — 51 percent — comes from federal and sponsored research grants and fees.

"The bottom line is that the financial burden of operating the state's universities will continue to shift from the state to the shoulders of hard-working students," said Reginald L. Robinson, president and chief executive officer of the Board of Regents.

In June, regents raised tuition for the six state universities, ending a five-year tuition adjustment program during which tuition at some of the state schools more than doubled.

Still, tuition for universities in Kansas is below the average of Big 12 institutions.

"It is no doubt the decline in state support since 1985 has been a factor in KU raising tuition," said Lynn Bretz, university spokeswoman.

What is happening in Kansas is not uncommon around the country.

"It is not unusual to see a greater proportion of education funding coming from tuition rather than the state," said Charles Lenth, senior associate with State Higher Education Executive Officers, an association of state higher education

governing boards.

The state aid portion of higher education budgets nationally has dropped about 33 percent from 25 years ago, according to the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges.

However, actual spending in all 50 states combined increased slightly, from \$62.7 billion in 2004 to \$65.3 billion in 2005

"To say total state support is going down is not true; it is just that it hasn't kept up with enrollments," Lenth said.

Nationally, per-student spending declined from about \$7,100 per student in 2001 to \$5,800 per student in 2005, he said.

John Schwenn, interim president at Emporia State University, has definitely noticed that state funding hasn't kept up with the cost of higher education.

As a result, he said, some lower- or middle-income students are forced to drop out because of rising tuition; others delay their education and work to earn money for classes. More students are graduating with greater debt.

He said the school has tried to be more efficient and cut expenses, but he doesn't see any fat left in his budget.

"Do we want a highly educated work force?" he asked. "Putting money into education is the best economic development you can have."

Kansas Sen. John Vratil, a Johnson County Republican and vice-chairman of the Senate Education Committee, said he expects the trend of declining state support and rising tuition to continue.

He suggested that need-based scholarships be emphasized to enable lower-income students to attend college.

Kansas Rep. Sydney Carlin of Manhattan, the ranking Democrat on the House Higher Education Committee, said many of today's legislators were college students when the state picked up a much higher percentage of the cost.

"I think it's very hard for some of them to realize what's changed in education," said Carlin, a 2000 graduate of Kansas State University.

Universities today are under pressure to constantly upgrade technology, which is necessary to attract and retain students, she said. The state has been trimming its budget, but so have the public universities.

"That is the real trick," Carlin said.

"How do you get the pie divided so everybody gets their share? But we must find a way to educate our young people."

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