Editorial: Increased tuition is necessary, not evil

We all know that going through the motions of higher education can get pretty costly. Rider, being a private educational institution, offers an especially expensive education. While many of us rely on student loans, generous scholarships and even more generous parents, paying for the typical four-year college opportunity is still an incredible financial burden upon whoever’s signing the tuition checks. So when tuition was increased to $22,910 for next year, we students wanted to know why it’s necessary to be opening our wallets at the University’s whim.

Yes, kids, your tuition increases every year, without fail, but this isn’t an issue that’s exclusive to Rider. Other New Jersey colleges are increasing their 2005-2006 tuition rates. Monmouth and Seton Hall, for example, are both increasing their tuition to numbers 5 percent higher than this academic year’s costs. This is the same percentage as Rider’s increase, which is lower than it has been in previous years. Last year’s tuition was raised by 6 percent, the year before that saw a 7 percent hike in tuition rates.

Every year the Board of Trustees establishes what tuition ought to be, methodically weighing financial feasibility against both how much is needed to maintain the high quality of education that Rider offers and to fund the operating expenses of various campus facilities, such as Dalby’s and the library. And, as is often the case with rising costs, inflation can shoulder its share of the blame.

One could argue that rising tuition is not only unnecessary, but also could dissuade potential students from attending Rider; however, one would be wrong in both cases. As previously stated, tuition is raised to accommodate the needs of the University so that it can continue to offer both current and future students an exemplary educational experience. As driving away prospective students, an individual who has never attended Rider before would not perceive new tuition fees as an increase, but rather as the cost of obtaining an education at a competitive university.

Rider’s president Mordechai Rozanski has not only made it his goal to keep the tuition increases to a manageable minimum, but also said that tuition would not be affected by this year’s construction; on both counts, Rozanski has come through thus far.

In order to ease the pain of higher academic costs, financial aid was increased by 8 percent. Next year, there will be $2.6 million more aid available to the students of Rider, raising the total financial aid budget to $26.7 million.

It is too early to tell what kind of tuition increases Rider students will encounter in the future, but a 5 percent rise in rates per year is the average, according to the Office of Admissions.

Sometimes it’s easy to focus on the negative aspects of a situation and this is no exception. It hurts to shell out money for something that you don’t end up with, but this is a prime example of delayed gratification. Ideally, a graduate from a four-year college opportunity is still an incredible financial burden upon whoever’s signing the tuition checks. So when tuition was increased to $22,910 for next year, we students wanted to know why it’s necessary to be opening our wallets at the University’s whim.

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