

More Fees On The Way For USM Students

As recently as 19-November-2014, [*The Hattiesburg American*](#) reported a 3.2% tuition increase facing in-state USM students beginning 2014-15. According to that report, "... increasing college costs are far outstripping stagnant family incomes. In-state tuition will rise 66 percent from fall 2005 to fall 2015, while household incomes have been basically flat in Mississippi. It now takes about 17 percent of the typical Mississippi family's income to pay for one year of college at a state university, not counting room, board or other costs."

And, the costs of a higher education have only gotten worse. By way of reminder, a 16-October-2013 [report for](#) *The Hattiesburg American* announced a 7% tuition increase spread over two years beginning 2013-14. The 2013 report eerily echoes and reflects just how bad things have gotten. As Jeff Amy reported in 2013, "... increasing college costs are far outstripping stagnant family incomes. In-state tuition has gone up more than 50 percent since the fall of 2004, while household incomes have been flat in Mississippi. It now takes about 12 percent of the typical Mississippi family's income to pay for one year of college at a state university, not counting room, board or other costs."

Members of the USM community were already focused on what appears to be a never-ending stream of tuition increases coming out of the Mississippi IHL. The 7% hike approved in 2013 (to be spread over two years) already had USM's annual in-state bill pegged to \$7,224 per year in 2014-15. An additional 3.2% increase in tuition further strained the pocket books and wallets of Mississippi families.

In apparent recognition that an additional tuition hike would only add to the outcry, the IHL decided to raise the costs of higher education by increasing costs using a different label.

Last week, [*The Hattiesburg American*](#) announced:

[t]wo of Mississippi's public universities are likely to increase the student fees that are charged above tuition this fall, a growing trend among the schools.

The College Board on Thursday approved the University of Southern Mississippi to add a \$20-a-semester student activity fee and \$35-a-semester capital improvement fee. The board also approved a \$50-a-semester capital improvement fee for Jackson State University.

Fees are not new as a way to extract more money from students. Students are familiar with sports fees (whether they ever attend a game), [parking fees](#), a [multitude](#) of course fees ranging from \$10 to \$100 each, student [ID card](#) fees, and the list of charges goes on.

Here's a solution neither Southern Miss nor the IHL offered instead of piling on more and more costs: stop squandering of student and taxpayer money which is now spent on an airplane (used primarily for junkets to sports events) and other administrative wastes. Then it wouldn't be necessary to increase fees or tuition.