

# Iowa college students to protest tuition increase



MacKenzie Elmer, melmer@dmreg.com 4:42 p.m. CDT October 20, 2014



(Photo: Used with permission.)

More than 100 Iowa college students are planning to protest proposed tuition hikes during the Iowa Board of Regents meeting in Iowa City on Wednesday.

A Rally Against Student Debt will be held at both the University of Iowa and Iowa State University. Students are planning to meet on the Pentacrest in Iowa City and at the Parks Library in Ames at noon. Students are expected to share personal experiences with student debt, and Democratic state representatives are also expected to speak.

"We wanted to all work together to bring awareness to fact that it doesn't have to be an issue if the state would start funding higher education again. Then we wouldn't be acquiring so much debt as individuals," said Melissa Zimdars, a UI doctoral student.

The regents are reviewing 2015-16 tuition and mandatory fee increases for undergraduate and graduate students, after consecutive years of tuition freezes for undergraduate residents. The board is scheduled to vote on the tuition proposal in December.

**DATABASE:** [Student loan debt by Iowa college \(http://db.desmoinesregister.com/average-student-loan-debt-iowa-students/\)](http://db.desmoinesregister.com/average-student-loan-debt-iowa-students/)

UI undergraduates, both in-state and out-of-state, could see a 1.75 percent increase in tuition and mandatory fees. Resident graduate students could see a 1.95 percent increase and for non-residents, a 1.83 percent increase.

A flyer from the Iowa State group stated the average student there graduates with \$30,000 in student loans.

Iowa State resident and non-resident students could see a 1.56 percent and 1.16 percent increase, consecutively. Resident graduate students could see a 1.6 percent increase and for non-residents, a 1.17 percent increase.

"I personally have student debt, so it's a really big issue for me," said Jane Kersch, a junior at Iowa State. "Iowa already has the sixth-highest (student) debt in the country. Just thinking about graduation and having to start paying that off is really depressing."

Tuition increases would be highest at University of Northern Iowa, with a proposed 2.37 percent increase for residents and a 2.03 percent increase for non-residents. Graduate student tuition for residents could increase 2.29 percent and 2.01 percent for non-residents.

So far, it's unclear whether UNI students will participate in the rally.

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