

Lawmaker blasts tuition increases

Asks for aid cuts to penalize schools

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3A

■ Soundoff, Page 11A.

A prominent Detroit legislator said Wednesday the state's public universities should be penalized with state aid cuts for double-digit tuition increases ranging as high as 21.4 percent.

An angry outburst by Rep. Morris Hood, a Democrat who is chairman of the House higher education subcommittee, halted a House-Senate conference committee's progress on the state's higher education budget. Other state officials, however, said there were no immediate plans to force the schools to roll back tuition.

"I think these fees have become outrageous," said Hood. "Higher learning will be for the privileged. The poor and the middle-class students need not apply. And that bothers the hell out of me."

Hood launched his harshest attack

at the University of Michigan, whose regents Friday approved a 12 percent tuition increase: "I have a problem with the University of Michigan. I have problems with their racist policy."

Later, he said: "They're arrogant. They're belligerent. They're elitist."

Robben Fleming, U-M's interim president, issued a statement: "I find it difficult to understand how Rep. Hood could make the statements which he is said to have made about the U-M. On the contrary, members of the staff at the Legislature working on minority affairs have said that we are a model among universities for the things which we are doing."

U-M has hired 15 new minority faculty, increased black freshman enrollment by 20 percent and added \$4 million this year to the \$30 million it

PROPOSED TUITION INCREASES

University	1987-88	1988-89	Increase
Michigan Tech.	\$1,950.00	\$2,367.00	21.4%
Oakland	\$1,766.50	\$2,107.50	19.3
E. Michigan	\$1,613.25	\$1,878.00	16.4
Lake Superior St.	\$1,600.00	\$1,850.00	15.6
U-M Flint	\$1,700.00	\$1,954.00	14.9
Saginaw Valley St.	\$1,689.50	\$1,937.50	14.7
Ferris St.	\$1,749.00	\$1,995.00	14.1
Grand Valley St.	\$1,632.00	\$1,860.00	14.0*
N. Michigan	\$1,578.00	\$1,789.00	13.4
U-M Ann Arbor	\$2,684.00	\$3,006.00	12.0
U-M Dearborn	\$1,890.00	\$2,116.00	12.0
Central Mich.	\$1,662.00	\$1,849.50	11.3
Michigan St.	\$2,546.25	\$2,800.00	10.0*
W. Michigan	\$1,852.00	\$2,038.00	10.0*
Wayne St.	\$1,895.00	\$2,045.00	7.9

* Proposed increases awaiting governing board approval

spends on minority programs, he said.

Joseph Owsley, a U-M spokesman, said, "I think we've gotten the message out that the university is not a racist university by any means."

Of the state's 15 universities, U-M is among 12 to have announced tuition increases for fall. The other three are

considering increases. Of those, only Wayne State, which boosted tuition 7.9 percent, kept its increase under 10 percent. Michigan Technological University voted the largest increase — 21.4 percent beginning this fall.

See TUITION, Page 10A

College tuition plan expected to be popular

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3A

Michigan officials said Wednesday they expect a deluge of applications next week when the enrollment period for the state's new pre-paid tuition program opens.

More than 55,000 applications have been mailed to those interested in enrolling children in the guaranteed tuition plan, officials said.

The five-day enrollment period begins Monday. Applications must be returned to the state by Aug. 5 to enroll a child in the program this year. The state will schedule enrollment periods each year.

About 2,000 calls come in daily from people requesting information about the Michigan Education Trust (MET), said Bob Kolt, spokesman for the Michigan Department of the Treasury.

"It's been said this program has captured the imagination of the American public," said Richard Cole, MET president.

The applications must be re-

turned with a \$25 fee next week — not before and not after. Applicants must be Michigan residents and already have a child.

The MET program covers only undergraduate tuition and fees.

Under the program, parents, grandparents or other sponsors pay a required amount of money to the state and the state guarantees to pay the child's tuition at any of Michigan's 15 public universities or 29 community colleges.

The enrollment amounts vary from \$6,756 for a newborn to \$12,580 for a 17-year-old.

Applications can be requested by phone from the state, or picked up at all public libraries, savings and loans, all Meijer Thrifty Acres department stores, state Treasury or Secretary of State offices. The applications explain how they should be returned to the state.

Requests for applications can be made by mail or phone from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. weekdays at 1-800-MET-4-KID.

Lawmaker blasts hikes in tuition, asks aid cut

TUITION, from Page 3A

Hood said the increases indicate the colleges have lost touch with their main objective — to educate the public. "They're snubbing their noses at the people and they're snubbing their noses at this Legislature, and I damn well take exception to that."

State Budget Director Shelby Solomon said there are no immediate plans to threaten universities with state budget cutbacks to force lower tuitions. Gov. James Blanchard has used implied threats of state cutbacks in the past to hold down tuition rates.

"There's a span of options we have," Solomon said. "We may be talking about looking at the longer term how these institutions are funded. We may have to look at institutions individually and see how that money is being spent.

"We have to express concern with those tuition increases."

Blanchard proposed a one percent increase for higher education in the 1988-89 state budget, but lawmakers have tentatively bumped it to a 3.3 percent increase, or about \$1.1 billion.

Solomon said the higher education budget thus would enjoy one of the bigger increases in what is called a lean state budget. State spending for colleges and universities has increased 57 percent in the last five years, compared to a 15 percent inflation increase during that time, Solomon said.

But Glenn Stevens, executive director of the Presidents Council State Universities of Michigan, blamed the tuition increases on "the convergence of many factors more or less simultaneously."

He cited fallout from state budget cutbacks in the early 1980s and several years when tuition was frozen. He also said that universities' costs for equipment, computers, books, subscriptions have risen much faster than the general inflation rate.

The state's universities also enrolled 7.6 percent more students last fall than five years ago, and state support has not kept pace, Stevens said.

AP contributed to this report.