Affordability of Higher Education: California and Other States

California Postsecondary Education Commission
www.cpec.ca.gov

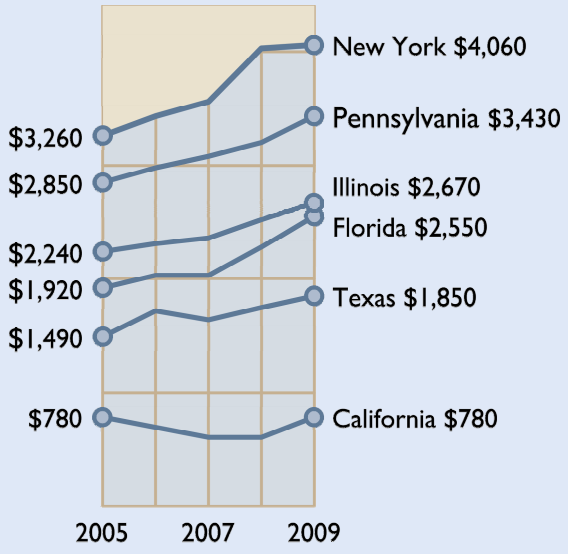
Presentation to the Assembly Higher Education Committee
Report 11-01 • February 15, 2011 • by Jessika Jones

Fee Levels

In 2009, when CPEC completed its most recent fee comparison, both the University of California and California State University had lower fees than nearly all of their national comparator universities.

- California's community college fees are the lowest in the nation, significantly lower than fees in other large states.
- Nationally, community college fees for full-time students averaged $3,000 in 2009–10.
- Annual fees for full-time students in 2010–11 are $11,300 at UC, $5,300 at CSU, and $780 at the community colleges.

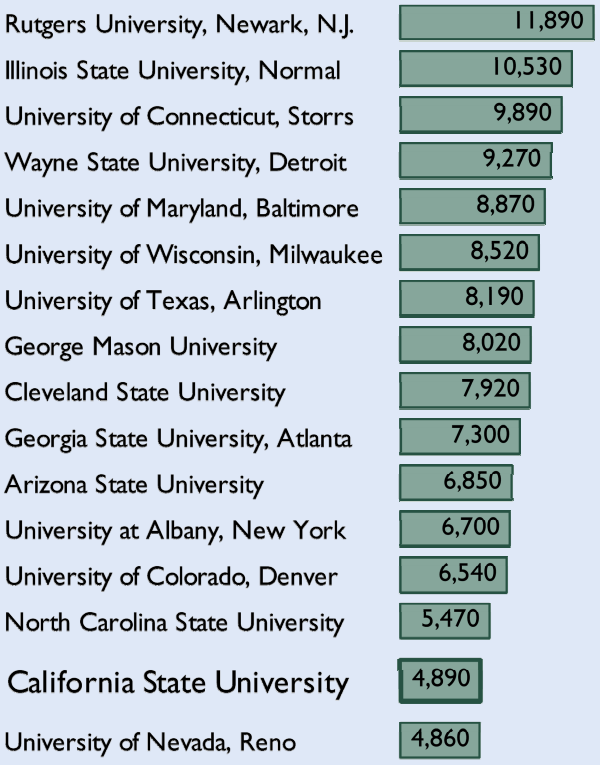
Community College Fees Six Largest States



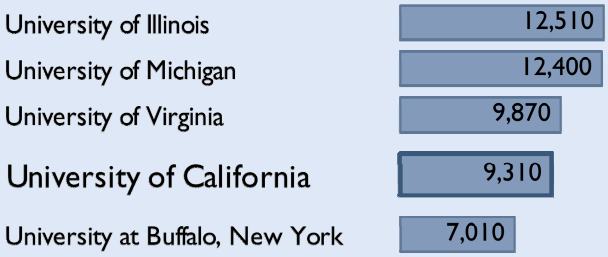
Undergraduate Fees 2009–10

Fees for full-time students who are state residents

CSU and comparator universities



UC and comparator universities



Fee data compiled by CSU Office of the Chancellor and UC Office of the President.

Total Cost of Attendance

Fees are only about a third of the cost of attendance at UC and CSU. Students must also pay for books, room and board, and other living costs.

- California's higher living costs make the overall cost of attendance at UC higher than at most major public research universities.
- For example, fees at the University of Illinois are 30% more than UC's fees, but with lower living costs in Illinois, the total cost of attendance is about the same as at UC.
- Costs at the University of Michigan and the University of Virginia are lower than at UC, despite higher fees.
- At CSU, lower fees offset California's higher living costs. Costs are lower for CSU students living with their families than for commuter students at other state universities.

Incomes

Affordability depends on incomes as well as university costs. Incomes are higher in California than in most other states.

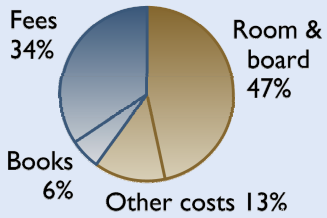
- A year at UC for students living on campus is about 40% of California median family income. This is about the same percentage of family income as at the University of Illinois and the University of Michigan, where both costs and incomes are lower.
- For commuter students at CSU, total costs are 16–17% of California median family income.
- In other states, costs for commuter students at state universities are generally 20–24% of median family income.
- Wage stagnation among lower- and middle-income earners in the past decade is a contributing factor in the college-cost pinch families are experiencing.

Median Family Income, 2009

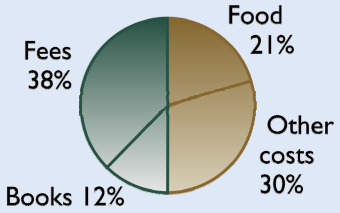
Virginia	$72,900	Ohio	$59,200
California	67,600	Michigan	59,000
Illinois	67,100	Georgia	58,400
New York	65,300	Arizona	58,100

Costs at UC and CSU 2009–10

UC student living on campus
Total costs — $27,120



CSU student living with family
Total costs — $12,980



Other costs consist of transportation, clothing, laundry, and entertainment

Cost of Attendance Other States

Student living on campus

U. of Illinois, Urbana	$25,500
U. of Michigan, Ann Arbor	23,700
University of Virginia	21,100
University at Buffalo	19,500

Student living with family

Cleveland State	$13,100
Wayne State	13,000
Georgia State	13,000
Arizona State	12,200
George Mason University	12,000

Grants and Net Costs

For many students from middle- and lower-income families, grants lower the net cost of attendance. But costs are still a significant part of family income.

- For the lowest-income families, grants and fee waivers can cover up to 70% of total costs at UC and half of total costs at CSU.
- The net cost for students living on campus at UC is about one-third of annual income for low-income families. For middle-income families, costs are about one-quarter of annual income.
- Low-income and lower-middle-income families can expect to receive annual grants of $12,000 to $17,000 for a student attending UC, and $5,000 to $9,000 for CSU.
- At lower- and middle-income levels, net costs for a CSU commuter student are 14–15% of family income.

Net costs for students, 2009

	Average grant	Net cost	Percent of income
UC student living on campus			
Low income	$16,600	$10,500	34%
Lower middle	12,200	14,900	27%
Middle income	5,900	21,200	25%
Upper middle	2,900	24,200	19%
CSU student living with family			
Low income	$8,800	$4,200	14%
Lower middle	4,800	8,200	15%
Middle income	1,500	11,500	14%
Upper middle	700	12,300	10%

Grants and costs shown for typical living arrangements for incoming students. Freshmen at UC usually live on campus. Most CSU freshmen attending their regional campus live in the family home.

Income levels

- Low income — annual income about $31,000
  20% of families have incomes below this level
- Lower-middle — annual income about $55,000
  40% of families have incomes below this level
- Middle income — annual income about $84,000
  60% of families have incomes below this level
- Upper-middle — annual income about $130,000
  80% of families have incomes below this level

CPEC reports on fees and affordability

Costs at Public Universities: How does California Compare with other States? June 2010. 4 pages. Report 10-12

Fees at California's Public Colleges and Universities. March 2010. 4 pages. Report 10-01

Community Colleges: Still an Affordable Route to a Degree? September 2008. 6 pages. Report 08-14

College Costs and Family Income: The Affordability Issue at CSU and UC
Draft in preparation. 7 pages.