

## REGULAR ITEM (Resolution 25-12-55)

December 11, 2025

Tab 3

### Consideration of 2026-27 Tuition and Fees Schedule

#### Brief Description

The State Board is responsible for setting tuition and fees (operating fees, building fees, and the maximum allowable student activity fees) for Washington's community and technical colleges. The Board also sets tuition for upper-division courses in the system's applied baccalaureate programs. Current state tuition policy, established in the 2015 College Affordability Program, allows resident tuition to increase each year based on an inflation factor tied to Washington's median wage.

#### How does this item link to the State Board's Strategic Plan?

Keeping tuition and fees affordable is essential for equitable student access. At the same time, tuition revenue remains an important part of funding high-quality instruction as the state budget continues to rely on tuition revenue to support operations.

#### Background information and analysis

Since 2017-18, tuition increases have been tied to inflation through changes in Washington's median hourly wage, providing an average annual increases of 3.1% over the past three years and offering predictable, modest increases for students. Under RCW 28B.15.067(2), tuition operating fees for resident undergraduates may not increase by more than the average annual growth rate in Washington's median hourly wage over the previous 14 years, as calculated by the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

SB 5079 (2023) requires the Office of Financial Management (OFM) to publish the maximum allowable increase each year. Using May 2024 BLS data, OFM set the 14-year growth rate at 3.3%, allowing community and technical colleges and public four-year institutions to increase tuition operating fees by up to that amount for the 2026-27 academic year. For a full-time resident lower-division student taking 15 credits per quarter, a 3.3% increase equals about \$52 more per quarter, or \$157 more per year.

Presidents and State Board staff recommend continuing the policy of increasing resident and non-resident tuition operating fees by the percentage the Legislature allows.

#### Recommendation/preferred result

Adopt Resolution 25-12-55, establishing the 2026-27 tuition and fees schedules for resident and non-resident, upper and lower division students.

Policy Manual Change Yes  No

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**STATE OF WASHINGTON**  
**STATE BOARD FOR COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES**  
**RESOLUTION 25-12-55**

A resolution relating to 2026-27 Tuition and Fees.

**WHEREAS**, RCW 28B.15.067 authorizes the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges to set resident and non-resident tuition fees; and

**WHEREAS**, the Legislature has authorized a maximum 3.3 percent increase in resident undergraduate tuition operating fee for the 2026-27 academic year under the College Affordability Program passed in 2015; and

**WHEREAS**, the State Board may adopt resident tuition increases up to the legislative maximum and applied a 3.3 percent increase for both lower- and upper-division courses in the 2025-26 academic year; and

**WHEREAS**, 2026-27 building fee rates for lower- and upper-division tuition must be adjusted by the Seattle CPI inflation factor;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges:

- Adopts the community college lower division course tuition and fee schedule and rates for 2026-27 as set forth in Attachment A – FY 2026-27 Lower Division Tuition Schedule; and
- Adopts the community college upper division course tuition and fee schedule and rates for 2026-27 as set forth in Attachment A – FY 2026-27 Upper Division Tuition Schedule; and
- Requires the deposit of 2% of operating fee revenues into the Community and Technical College Innovation Fund.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges authorizes the Executive Director to make adjustments to this action, including any necessary changes to the State Board’s Policy Manual, as necessary, for actions taken by the Governor, Legislature, data corrections, externally imposed restrictions or guidelines, uniform accounting and reporting requirements, and unanticipated changes in state or federal law.

**APPROVED AND ADOPTED** on December 11, 2025

Attest



Nate Humphrey, secretary



Martin Valadez, chair