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UVI to Increase Tuition by 14 Percent; Meal Plans by 26 Percent Among Other Fee Hikes as Institution Faces Chronically Low Enrollment, Inflationary Pressures

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The University of the Virgin Islands Board of Trustees has approved increases to tuition and fees for students, which are expected to start taking effect this fall. The decision was taken during the board's quarterly meeting on Saturday, March 4, as the university faces [chronically low enrollment](#) and inflationary pressures.

Tuition will rise by 7 percent this year — a necessary increase, said UVI Dr. President David Hall and Finance and Budget Committee Chair Oran Roebuck, as the university grapples with rising operating costs and increased financial needs. “For our local students, who qualify for free tuition, this increase will have no effect at all,” said Mr. Hall. “We are trying to increase the amount of scholarships that we are providing to students...and we hope that even more of our students will

take advantage of free tuition.”

Tuition was last increased at UVI in 2016. The 7 percent hike in Fall 2023 will be followed by another 7 percent tuition increase in the fall semester of 2024 as well.

Students will also pay more for their meal plans, which were last updated in 2011. “The food services operations normally operate at least at a balanced budget,” said Mr. Hall. “But recently, because of inflation and the cost of food going up, they have been operating at a deficit.”

Meal plans will go up by 13 percent this fall and will rise again by the same amount in Fall 2024 as well.

Other fees will also rise this fall; UVI’s student activity fee will go from \$44 to \$70 per semester. The extra \$26 will go towards funding the operations of UVI’s Wellness Center. The cost of graduation will also increase from \$75 to \$125 after twenty years, which will cover increasing costs associated with hosting the ceremonies, including diplomas, caps and gowns for graduating students. Students graduating this May will not be affected by the increase.

“We would like to live in a world where we never have to increase prices, but the reality is to address the increasing costs that we are experiencing in certain areas, to address the budget deficit that the university faces, we think that this is a reasonable measure,” said Mr. Hall.

The board also agreed to request \$43 million from the V.I. Legislature as its annual appropriation for 2023-2024. The request includes funds, according to Mr. Hall, that would address “unfunded mandates” such as increases in payments to the Government Employees Retirement System, health insurance, and property insurance.

UVI’s Board of Trustees approved retroactive pay for 425 former employees who worked from 1992 to 1998. The university will obtain funding to deliver a 3% retroactive payment to those workers, who were reportedly deprived of merit pay.

Permission to pursue a land swap with the Virgin Islands Port Authority (VIPA) was also approved on Saturday by the UVI board. The deal will ultimately need approval from the legislature once it is agreed by both parties.