

Providing Access: Who Pays What for Higher Education in N.C.

A fiscal crisis is forcing North Carolina to raise college tuition and scale back university budgets. The education community worries that N.C. students are losing “access” to higher education. A look at the most recent data suggest that N.C.’s high standing among the 50 states in those measures means it can weather the current fiscal problems and still provide better “access” than most other states.

By Jon Sanders

Summary: For the academic year 1999-2000, taxpayers in North Carolina paid the fourth-highest per-pupil amount in the nation to subsidize public-college students in their state. Also, N.C. students attending the state’s community colleges or public universities paid the second-lowest amounts in tuition and fees in the nation in either category of institution.

The continuing budget crisis in North Carolina has led to, among other things, cuts (real and threatened) in the budget of the state’s community colleges and public universities. It has also led to tuition increases especially in the University of North Carolina system.

These have, in keeping with the script, resulted in a great outcry from the education community. And in fairness the governor and the legislature have done plenty regarding the budget to call into question their decision-making abilities and priorities. But how damaging have their decisions been?

Lags in data collection prevent an up-to-date assessment of the total “damage.” The most recent, complete data are two years old — they concern the 1999-2000 academic year. Nevertheless, the 1999-2000 figures give a picture of where the state “begins” relative to other states in “providing access” to higher education — measured here in terms of tuition and fees and appropriations per full-time-equivalent student enrolled. In other words, this study compares: (1) how much N.C.

students are expected to pay — relative to in-state students in the other states — to receive a public two-year or four-year postsecondary education, and (2) how much N.C. taxpayers are made to pay in taxes — relative to taxpayers in the other states — per full-time student enrolled in public postsecondary education in their state.

The tables provided at the end of this study feature the comparisons of N.C. with the rest of the nation in terms of providing access to public higher education in 1999-2000. Table 1 shows that the average cost in tuition and fees for an in-state student attending a public, two-year institution in North Carolina in 1999-2000 was \$778. That amount was less than half the national average of \$1,647 and the second-lowest in the nation.

Also, Table 2 shows that the average cost in tuition and fees for an in-state student attending a public, four-year institution in North Carolina in 1999-2000 was \$2,054. That amount was just 60 percent of the national average of \$3,376 and also the second-lowest in the nation.

Tables 3 and 4 show how the costs of tuition and fees had changed in a year. North Carolina's standings in both tables had slipped by one (N.C. was third in both polls for 2000-01). For two-year colleges, N.C.'s average of \$891 was slightly more than half the national average of \$2,299. For four-year colleges, the N.C. average of \$1,714 was less than two-thirds the national average of \$3,551.

As for appropriations, Table 5 shows that the average amount appropriated per full-time-equivalent student enrolled in public institutions of higher education in North Carolina was \$7,066, which was 40 percent higher than the national average of \$5,061 and the fourth-highest amount in the nation.

Given that the data are from 1999-2000, and that tuition has increased in subsequent years as the state has buckled down under a budget crisis, it is reasonable to expect that North Carolina has fallen somewhat in those comparisons over the last two years. Nevertheless, the state's standings in those categories as late as the 1999-2000 academic year suggests the long-term impact of the state's fiscal crisis on the state's public universities and community colleges will not be as devastating as predicted. Most of the other states in the nation as late as 1999-2000 expected their students to bring more to the table in terms of paying for their own education than N.C. expected of its students, and most other states burdened their taxpayers with less of the cost of educating those students than N.C. did its taxpayers.

**Table 1. Average tuition and fees,¹ 1999-2000,
public two-year institutions**

<u>Rank</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Tuition & fees avg.</u>
1	California	\$ 317
2	North Carolina	778
3	New Mexico	823
4	Louisiana	876
5	Texas	895
6	Arizona	901
7	Mississippi	968
8	Hawaii	1,052
9	Arkansas	1,059
10	Virginia	1,140
11	Nevada	1,208
12	Oklahoma	1,239
13	Idaho	1,253
14	Kansas	1,310
15	Tennessee	1,314
16	Kentucky	1,318
17	Wyoming	1,320
18	Florida	1,330
19	South Carolina	1,338
20	Nebraska	1,372
21	Georgia	1,384
22	Missouri	1,443
23	Alabama	1,486
24	Utah	1,500
25	Illinois	1,502
26	Colorado	1,548
27	West Virginia	1,579
28	Oregon	1,584
29	Delaware	1,616
30	Washington	1,649
31	Rhode Island	1,746
32	Michigan	1,747
33	Connecticut	1,892
34	North Dakota	1,893
35	Massachusetts	1,926
36	Montana	1,961
37	Alaska	2,028
38	Iowa	2,060
39	Pennsylvania	2,115
40	Wisconsin	2,118
41	Indiana	2,127
42	New Jersey	2,149
43	Maryland	2,262
44	Minnesota	2,359
45	Ohio	2,377
46	New York	2,554
47	Maine	2,586
48	South Dakota	2,747
49	Vermont	2,846
50	New Hampshire	3,744
	<i>U.S Average</i>	<i>\$1,647</i>

**Table 2. Average tuition and fees,¹ 1999-2000,
public four-year institutions**

<u>Rank</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Tuition & fees avg.</u>
1	Nevada	\$2,034
2	North Carolina	2,054
3	Utah	2,147
4	Oklahoma	2,183
5	Florida	2,244
6	Arizona	2,252
7	New Mexico	2,340
8	Wyoming	2,416
9	Louisiana	2,430
10	Kansas	2,439
11	Idaho	2,458
12	Georgia	2,524
13	West Virginia	2,549
14	California	2,559
15	Texas	2,644
16	Tennessee	2,698
17	Kentucky	2,723
18	Colorado	2,775
19	Arkansas	2,785
20	Alabama	2,833
21	Alaska	2,855
22	Mississippi	2,872
23	Nebraska	2,930
24	Hawaii	2,965
25	North Dakota	2,990
26	Iowa	2,998
27	Montana	3,011
28	South Dakota	3,210
29	Wisconsin	3,313
30	Washington	3,357
31	Oregon	3,582
32	South Carolina	3,638
33	Indiana	3,646
34	Missouri	3,701
35	Virginia	3,733
36	Minnesota	3,800
37	New York	3,983
38	Illinois	4,038
39	Massachusetts	4,105
40	Maine	4,122
41	Rhode Island	4,318
42	Connecticut	4,435
43	Ohio	4,495
44	Michigan	4,538
45	Maryland	4,552
46	Delaware	4,642
47	New Jersey	5,255
48	Pennsylvania	5,610
49	New Hampshire	6,083
50	Vermont	6,913
	<i>U.S Average</i>	<i>\$3,376</i>

**Table 1. Average tuition and fees,² 2000-1,
public two-year institutions**

<u>Rank</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Tuition & fees avg.</u>
1	California	\$ 316
2	New Mexico	866
3	North Carolina	891
4	Arizona	924
5	Louisiana	929
6	Texas	931
7	Hawaii	1,067
8	Virginia	1,132
9	Mississippi	1,134
10	Arkansas	1,159
11	Oklahoma	1,250
12	Idaho	1,316
13	Nevada	1,371
14	Georgia	1,374
15	Kentucky	1,376
16	Kansas	1,379
17	Nebraska	1,425
18	Florida	1,438
19	Tennessee	1,441
20	Wyoming	1,442
21	South Carolina	1,466
22	Missouri	1,482
23	Illinois	1,534
24	Utah	1,563
25	Oregon	1,637
26	Colorado	1,655
27	West Virginia	1,667
28	Alabama	1,671
29	Delaware	1,680
30	Michigan	1,739
31	Washington	1,745
32	Rhode Island	1,806
33	Connecticut	1,867
34	Massachusetts	1,891
35	North Dakota	1,903
36	Montana	2,007
37	Alaska	2,088
38	Indiana	2,125
39	Iowa	2,149
40	Wisconsin	2,262
41	Maryland	2,271
42	Pennsylvania	2,285
43	Ohio	2,294
44	New Jersey	2,295
45	Minnesota	2,512
46	New York	2,557
47	Maine	2,599
48	South Dakota	2,861
49	Vermont	3,004
50	New Hampshire	3,935
	<i>U.S. Average</i>	<i>\$1,714</i>

**Table 2. Average tuition and fees,² 2000-1,
public four-year institutions**

<u>Rank</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Tuition & fees avg.</u>
1	Utah	\$2,244
2	Oklahoma	2,257
3	North Carolina	2,299
4	Arizona	2,346
5	Nevada	2,349
6	Florida	2,365
7	West Virginia	2,548
8	California	2,561
9	Wyoming	2,575
10	New Mexico	2,626
11	Idaho	2,627
12	Kansas	2,637
13	Georgia	2,698
14	Louisiana	2,773
15	Texas	2,803
16	Kentucky	2,898
17	Alaska	2,936
18	North Dakota	2,938
19	Tennessee	2,950
20	Mississippi	2,967
21	Hawaii	2,974
22	Colorado	2,980
23	Alabama	2,987
24	Arkansas	3,006
25	Montana	3,076
26	Nebraska	3,097
27	Iowa	3,158
28	Wisconsin	3,414
29	South Dakota	3,486
30	Washington	3,604
31	Oregon	3,650
32	Virginia	3,723
33	Indiana	3,785
34	Missouri	3,878
35	Massachusetts	4,003
36	Minnesota	4,024
37	New York	4,062
38	Illinois	4,177
39	Maine	4,259
40	Rhode Island	4,512
41	Connecticut	4,543
42	Michigan	4,626
43	South Carolina	4,684
44	Ohio	4,740
45	Maryland	4,778
46	Delaware	4,797
47	New Jersey	5,607
48	Pennsylvania	5,918
49	New Hampshire	6,455
50	Vermont	7,134
	<i>U.S. Average</i>	<i>\$3,551</i>

Table 5. Higher-Education Appropriations³ per FTE Student Enrolled,⁴ 1999-00

<u>Rank</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Amount appropriated</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Amount appropriated</u>
1	Hawaii	\$7,358	27	Florida	\$4,880
2	Mississippi	7,233	28	Illinois	4,824
3	Connecticut	7,189	29	Oklahoma	4,767
4	North Carolina	7,066	30	Delaware	4,760
5	Alaska	6,871	31	Virginia	4,756
6	Georgia	6,544	32	Maryland	4,729
7	Kentucky	6,315	33	West Virginia	4,725
8	Minnesota	6,200	34	Texas	4,723
9	Iowa	6,161	35	Washington	4,697
10	Arkansas	5,857	36	Louisiana	4,681
11	New Jersey	5,845	37	California	4,552
12	Massachusetts	5,730	38	Michigan	4,514
13	New York	5,668	39	Oregon	4,444
14	Alabama	5,581	40	Wisconsin	4,305
15	Pennsylvania	5,570	41	Utah	4,239
16	Nebraska	5,376	42	Kansas	4,138
17	Indiana	5,315	43	Rhode Island	3,936
18	Idaho	5,308	44	South Dakota	3,812
19	South Carolina	5,295	45	Montana	3,612
20	Maine	5,280	46	Nevada	3,588
21	New Mexico	5,276	47	Colorado	3,278
22	North Dakota	5,106	48	Arizona	3,134
23	Tennessee	5,086	49	Vermont	3,080
24	Ohio	5,013	50	New Hampshire	2,743
25	Wyoming	5,000			
26	Missouri	4,905		<i>U.S Average</i>	<i>\$5,061</i>

NOTES

¹ Source for tuition and fees: *The Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac*, 2001-02.

² Source for tuition and fees: *The Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac*, 2002-03.

³ Sources: For appropriations, the Center for Higher Education & Educational Finance, Illinois State University Dept. of Educational Administrations and Foundations; for enrollment, *The Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac*, 2002-03. The data for appropriations do not distinguish uniformly the amounts appropriated to two-year institutions and to four-year institutions.

⁴ FTE stands for “Full Time Equivalent”; FTE student enrollment accounts for the differing course loads of students, including part-time students, by dividing the total student hours taken by the number of hours considered to constitute “full-time.” “Appropriations Per FTE Student Enrolled” is a measure of the amount a state government appropriates to its public institutions of higher education divided by the FTE student enrollment.