

UI proposes 8.46-percent fee increase

By Halley Griffin, Daily News staff writer

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Lizzie Reese knows the University of Idaho is struggling with state budget cuts, but she still thinks it's a lot to ask students to pay 8.46 percent more in student fees next year.

"We're already paying enough for college and books and everything, and raising fees is just ridiculous," said Reese, a UI sophomore.

Four student leaders received a memo from President Steven Daley-Laursen on Tuesday outlining the proposed fee increases.

Under the proposal, full-time fees would increase by \$196 per semester, bumping costs to \$2,512 per semester.

Sophomore Brian Frederiksen said he wants to know exactly what his extra \$196 would be paying for.

"I think in general, every sort of increase people are going to be agitated," he said.

According to the notice of intent to increase fees, \$154.22 of the increase for full-time undergraduates would go to the general education operating budget. The rest is divided between facility fees, computing and network access and dedicated activity fees.

UI students saw their fees increase by 5 percent for the current year. The university had requested a 7.9-percent increase from the State Board of Education.

Dean of Students Bruce Pitman said the board takes an active role in setting student fees, and has set them lower than requested for the past several years.

Pitman said the university does not request higher-than-necessary fees to offset a potential lowering by the board.

"We actually could use a higher percentage increase than we're asking for, but we know that there are limits, and increases in cost limit access," Pitman said. "We also know that without additional revenue we limit access by limiting the number or quality of programs that we have to offer as well."

He said the request is within the normal range, although it is on the high end of requests the UI has made in the past five to six years.

Reese said she worries that the university's generally low cost could be used as justification for higher increases.

"I think (8.46 percent) seems like a lot because of how much they're cutting down," Reese said.

Pitman said the university has an extensive student fee review process. It begins every year with an invitation to student organizations and campus agencies to make proposals about how they would use new dollars.

The proposals are submitted in mid-January, and are reviewed by a committee of representatives from the Student Bar Association, the Associated Students of the University of Idaho, and the Graduate and Professional Student Association.

The fee committee reviews the various proposals, and forwards their own proposal to the president, who then announces the recommendations.

After a period of public comment, the UI will host an open forum for students March 5.

The board of education will review different institutions' proposals in April.

"At this point we do not know what the other institutions are proposing for their fee increases, but we do know that we will be hearing that very soon," Pitman said.