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Cost to study, live at Berklee College of Music to rise 3.5 percent to \$56k for 2014-15

Posted by Matt Rocheleau February 25, 2014 10:00 AM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Boston.com Staff

The annual cost to study and live at Berklee College of Music will rise by about 3.5 percent to \$56,370 next fall, campus officials said.

That figure includes \$37,800 for full-time undergraduate tuition, which is about 3.5 percent higher than the current \$36,514. The figure also includes the college's mandatory fee of \$1,110 per year, which is 3.5 percent higher than the current fee, and \$17,460 a year for housing and a meal plan, which is about 1.5 percent higher than the current room and board rate.

The figure does not include estimated additional costs, which the college estimates will run students another \$9,000 a year to pay for health insurance, a laptop, books, transportation, loan fees and other personal expenses.

Mark Campbell, vice president for enrollment at Berklee, said that while the school's sticker price is rising, the actual cost will not increase for many students who are eligible for financial aid.

"The increase in aid has risen faster than the increase in tuition costs for about 5 years in a row now," he said. "We've made a really conscious decision over several years to increase aid."

"Like everybody else, we're really cognizant of college costs and our process has been trying to find what is the least cost we can pass on while still balancing out budget," said Campbell. "Our focus is on the families and students and keeping their education as affordable as possible."


He said the college has also increased some funding toward need-based scholarship and grant programs, particularly for juniors and seniors who find themselves in a financial bind just shy of graduation.

Few other area colleges and universities have released their pricing for the 2014-15 academic year. Most will announce their rates over the next few months.

Amherst College, which costs \$61,443 a year currently, is the state's most expensive school, according to a Globe review of tuition, room, board and mandatory fee rates charged by higher education institutions in Massachusetts.

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Full-time students living on campus at several other private Massachusetts schools – including Brandeis and Harvard universities, MIT, and Babson, Wellesley and Williams colleges – pay in the mid- to high-\$50,000s, and estimated personal and travel expenses can push their total bill above the \$60,000 mark.

Many other local private schools cost more than \$50,000.

Officials at such pricy schools often point out that their institutions offer generous financial aid package that can drastically lower the actual price charged to students and their families.

The Associated Press reported recently that figures from the College Board show tuition and fees at four-year public colleges rose 27 percent in the past five years and tuition and fees at four-year private schools went up 14 percent.

An increasing number of schools are offering some students a guarantee that they will pay a single rate for the length of their college careers, according to the [Associated Press](#).

And, the [Globe reported recently](#) that a number of private institutions across the country, including locally, are freezing tuition, guaranteeing graduation in four years, increasing aid or matching aid offers at competing institutions.

Though many schools tout their financial aid offerings, some experts say that potential students, particularly those from low-income backgrounds, see the so-called “sticker price” and are quickly scared off before applying because they don’t realize, or are perhaps confused by, what aid options are available.

Lesley University in Cambridge [recently announced](#) it will restructure its pricing to essentially build financial aid into base tuition and fee costs, lowering the school’s “sticker price” and potentially lowering the odds that prospective students will be scared off or confused by the actual cost.

Expensive, elite schools have been particularly criticized for not doing more to recruit and admit low-income students.

Harvard [recently announced](#) it will launch an outreach and awareness campaign to try to encourage more low-income students to apply.

Matt Rocheleau can be reached at matthew.rocheleau@globe.com. Looking for more coverage of area colleges and universities? Go to our [Your Campus pages](#).

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