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Meet Me in the Middle:
 The Student, the State, and the School

Dramatic campus demonstrations, fasts, and even takeovers continue, especially in California (Altavena), as college costs keep rising (Walker). Images of student protesters convey a sober picture of the current state of college tuition costs in the country. For students, among the factors to consider when choosing a college--academics, athletics, student life, location, and so on--cost is increasingly the most important and, for many, a barrier. With tuition prices at an all-time high and state funding reduced by economic recession, universities themselves are now in a unique position to bridge the funding gap and to meet students and states in the middle of the crisis. By taking steps such as practicing cost containment, using new technological advancements, and exploring new revenue streams, many schools have been able to keep tuition costs down.

Prices for undergraduate tuition at both public and private institutions have progressively increased over the past decades and now "exceed inflation every year" (Hayden). The National Center for Education Statistics reports that "[b]etween 2000-01 and 2010-11, prices for undergraduate tuition, room, and board at public institutions rose 42 percent" and "at private, not-for-profit institutions rose 31 percent" (United States). In fact, as CreditUnions.com has reported, the increase in higher education prices has steadily outpaced that of both medical costs and house prices (see fig. 1). This graph compares how much the cost of a college education has risen in recent years with how much health care costs and

Writer's last name and page number 1/2" from top of page

Writer's name
 Instructor's name
 Course
 Date
 Title, centered

Opening with current events to spark interest

For more on beginning a research paper, see pp. 676-77.

Double-spacing throughout

Comments on current situation

Thesis previews development and central argument

For more on a thesis for a research paper, see pp. 674-75.

Paragraph establishes background for the paper's general topic

No page number available in online source

Figure cited in text

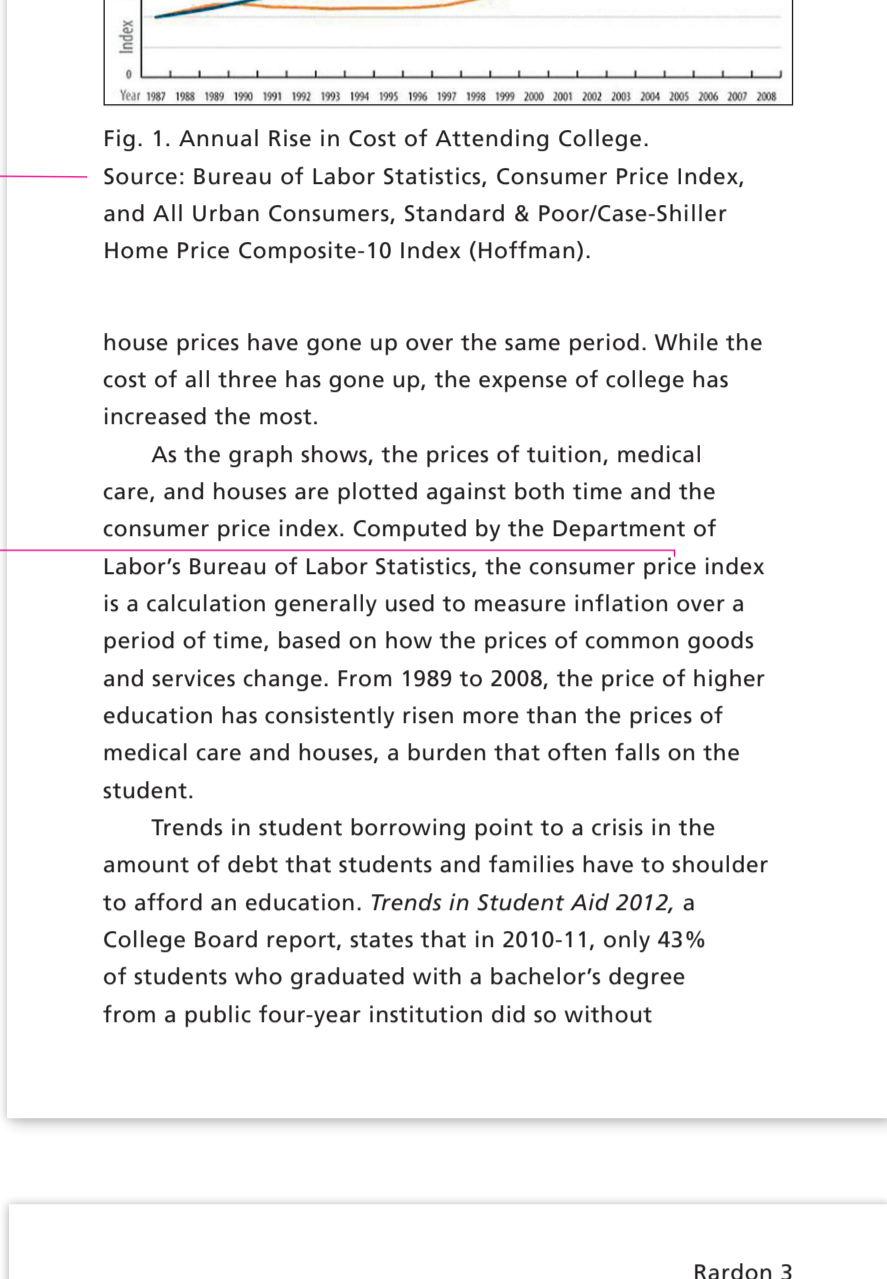


Figure labeled in caption; source information provided

Source presents and credits findings of another study

Key term is defined

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education debt (Baum and Payea). The rest graduated with debt averaging \$23,800. Despite a recent 4% drop in borrowing, the first in two decades, these numbers demonstrate the rising financial burden placed on college students. Many continue "making decisions and trade-offs among schools, living arrangements, work, and finances" (Bozick 278). Economist Richard Vedder has summed up the situation: "What we have now is an unsustainable trend" (qtd. in Sandler 199).

Due to the economic recession, states have been forced to cut their budgets and reduce their funding to higher education. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities reports that in 2009 and 2010, thirty-nine states decreased their budgets for higher education, leading to "reductions in faculty and staff in addition to tuition increases" (Johnson et al. 6). Like California, the state of Florida was forced to raise tuition by 15% in 2009-10. The tuition increases that result from a lack of state funds have become a nationwide threat.

With students accepting record debt and states forced to cut their budgets, public colleges and universities have a unique opportunity--even responsibility--to change. Instead of raising tuition to make up for lost state funds, many schools have begun to cut costs. Through cost containment, schools can decrease their operating budgets and their reliance on state funds. In an article for *Time*, Sophia Yan outlines reductions on more than twenty campuses. For instance, Harvard University saved \$900,000 by cutting hot breakfasts during the week in the dining halls. Western Washington University saved \$485,000 by cutting its football team, and Whittier College saved \$50,000 by cutting first-year orientation by a day. On the theory that "every little bit helps," schools are finding ways to save money.

Only one citation needed for material in sequence in a paragraph and clearly from the same source

Facts and statistics support main point

For an explanation of statistics as evidence, see p. 160.

Page numbers provided for quotations

Original quote from another source

Paper continues to lay out background of argument

Transition from background to central argument

First way to avoid raising tuition is explained

Specific examples provide evidence for point

For more on integrating sources, see Ch. 34.

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Going beyond cutbacks in services, schools have also considered operational changes that will result in even more savings. The Delta Project on Postsecondary Education Costs, Productivity, and Accountability, a nonprofit group that analyzes college costs and spending trends, recommends ways to increase productivity: Make investments in course redesign and other curricula changes that will make for a more cost-effective curriculum. . . . This includes redesigning large undergraduate courses, creating cost-effective developmental education modules that can be delivered statewide; and redesigning the general education curriculum to enhance community college transfer. (4)

Other suggestions include making buildings more energy efficient and creating work opportunities for jobless students as interns or research assistants (4). Such changes can lead to substantial savings and help schools across the country.

Another alternative to raising tuition is for schools to embrace technological advances. As Kamenetz observes, "Whether hybrid classes, social networks, tutoring programs, games, or open content, technology provides speed skates for students and teachers, not crutches." Specific models have come from the National Center for Academic Transformation, a nonprofit organization that uses information technology to raise student performance and lower costs. Its six course redesign models vary in the amount of in-class instruction replaced by technology (Natl. Center, "Six Models" 1). When the University of Alabama adopted the emporium model for Intermediate Algebra and replaced lectures with an online learning resource center (3), the redesign increased student success, met individual needs, and saved 30% of costs (Natl. Center, "Program"). Of course, such course redesign cannot always be applied across the curriculum, but schools giving

Point from last paragraph used for transition to new point

Launch statement refers to organization as author

Direct quotation longer than four lines set off from text without quotation marks, followed by page number in parentheses

Transition leads to second way to avoid raising tuition

Quotation source clearly identified but pages are not numbered in source

Short title added to distinguish two sources by the same author

Basic models are explained before giving a specific example

Statistics support claims

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serious thought to current technology can transform the classroom, saving money and helping students.

Finally, schools can supplement income from student tuition by considering additional sources of revenue. *BusinessWeek* writer Francesca Di Meglio reports that many schools already look to grants, patents, real estate, and popular graduate courses to "protect [their] bottom line from fiscal and demographic trends that are making the college business more challenging." As early as the 1950s, three Indiana University researchers patented Crest toothpaste, and its returns went on to fund an on-campus dental research institute. Similarly, in 2004 Emmanuel College in Boston allowed Merck, a large pharmaceuticals company, to build a research facility on an acre of land with a 75-year lease for \$50 million. Di Meglio's examples show how schools can tap into these alternative income streams and reduce some of the pressure on tuition.

Rising tuition costs, growing student borrowing, and shrinking government funding have endangered widespread access to a college education. As President Obama himself said in the 2010 State of the Union address, "In the United States of America, no one should go broke because they chose to go to college. . . . It's time for colleges and universities to get serious about cutting their own costs--because they, too, have a responsibility to help solve this problem." In an era of economic strain, schools can embrace this chance to think creatively about the way they operate. By cutting costs where they spent money in the past, thinking differently about how they operate in the present, and looking to new ways of bringing in revenue in the future, schools can ensure their own vitality and their students' success. When public colleges and universities take such steps to ensure that a college education is available to everyone, meeting students and states in the middle with innovative ideas, students can stop protesting and start welcoming in an era of increased college access.

Third way to avoid raising tuition is introduced

Launch statement names publication and author

Brackets to identify words added to original text

Paraphrase of original source

Final sentence in paragraph connects examples from source with overall argument

For more on concluding a research paper, see pp. 676-77.

Ellipses show where words are omitted

Conclusion emphasizes critical points in argument

Conclusion returns to events in opening

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List of works cited on a separate page

List alphabetized by names of authors or by titles (when no author is named); names match source citations in text

First line of entry at left margin, additional lines indented 1/2"

All lines double-spaced, within and between entries

Three hyphens replace repeating exact name from previous entry

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