$1,500 fee increase to be rebated

Timothy Wallace and Matt Rocheleau, Collegian Staff

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Amanda Lund, Collegian

Courtesy Mass.gov

Gov. Deval Patrick announces his plan to give $162 million in federal stimulus aid to state higher education.

Federal stimulus money given to the state and allocated by Gov. Patrick will allow the University of Massachusetts system to rebate a $1,500 student fee increase approved by the Board of Trustees last month.

Patrick announced Tuesday that $82 million will be given to the UMass system – around half of the $162 million given to all state colleges and universities.

Instead of a $1,500 increase, the funds will allow the University to employ the standard annual increase to cover the cost of inflation, according to a statement from the governor. That cost of inflation increase projected by several news sources to be around $400.

University spokesman Ed Blaguszewski stated that he was aware of the reported $400 figure, but said the exact calculations have yet to be determined.

As part of the governor's Massachusetts Recovery Plan, the money is aimed at restoring funding to campus budgets, averting layoffs and program cuts and mitigating student fee hikes, the statement said.

However, in a campus-wide e-mail about the announcement, Chancellor Robert C. Holub was cautious in detailing exactly how the money could affect UMass.

"While this action by the Governor is not final, and the ultimate budget for the Commonwealth will not be determined until later this summer, we applaud his leadership."

"It is our sincere hope that the stimulus funding to UMass Amherst will mitigate the possibility of layoffs resulting from our projected $46 million budget deficit," he said. "We also want to do all we can to lessen the impact of the fee increase passed recently by the Board of Trustees, and hope to rebate as much of this increase as we can based on the stimulus money we receive. This announcement was an important step for our institution, and I personally thanked the Governor for his support."

"With enrollment at an all time high, it is critical that tomorrow's leaders have access to the opportunities they need today," said Patrick. "Federal recovery funds will help our public colleges and universities prepare our students for success after graduation, giving the Commonwealth a highly-skilled workforce to compete in a 21st century global economy."

If the higher education recommendations in the Governor's fiscal year 2010 budget are approved by the legislature, Governor Patrick will use $162 million in federal education recovery funds to restore budgets to FY2009 levels at UMass to $81.6 million, community colleges to $40.3 million, state colleges to $36.7 million and other forms of support including training grants to $2.8 million.

Education Secretary Paul Reville pointed to additional federal recovery money dedicated to higher education, including increases in Pell Grant and work study funding. Pell Grant funding will see an increase in the maximum grant for students from $4,731 to $5,350, and will help an additional 85,000 low-income students pay for college. Additionally, federal recovery funds include $9 million for work study programs at the 29 campuses, adding to the $45 million Massachusetts already receives annually

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"Governor Patrick is to be commended for taking this critical step toward restoring funding for public higher education in Massachusetts," said UMass President Jack Wilson. "The Governor's action represents an investment in the 63,000 students who attend the University of Massachusetts and an investment in our state's economic future."

Governor Patrick unveiled two other key parts of his Massachusetts Recovery Plan last week. First, he announced he will commit $168 million in federal recovery funds to 166 school districts to help them reach so-called foundation spending levels and avoid program cuts and teacher layoffs next school year. Second, he pledged $280 million for every school district in the state to support special education services, plus an additional $10 million for special education services for pre-school students.

To date, Governor Patrick has committed a total of $620 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds for K-12 education, special education and higher education programs and services.

Over the next two years, Massachusetts will receive an estimated $1.88 billion to support early education, K-12 education and higher education.

Timothy Wallace can be reached at timothyw@student.umass.edu.

Matt Rocheleau can be reached at mrochele@dailycollegian.com.

Comments

5 comments

Jack — Thu Mar 26 2009 11:51
So there's still going to be a $400 fee increase. That this is allegedly the same as inflation doesn't matter if, like many people, your income is the same or less than it was last year.

Your name — Wed Mar 25 2009 15:16
Right, everyone wins. Especially them lower income taxpayers who are worse off while paying their taxes than the people who are receiving the education and their tax money.

Your name — Wed Mar 25 2009 09:26
Actually I think it means everyone has the chance to "win". This isn't a competition for resources between students and staff; it's about providing the best possible resources to prepare our students for the future. We all have to chip in (especially parents who in many cases are responsible for the tuition and the taxes that make up the stimulus monies as well as fees).

barry morse — Wed Mar 25 2009 06:23
www.TheEasyEssay.com is a free program that is being used from Special Services Education to college education, FCAT, SAT, ACT test preparation, home schooling, and educational rehabilitation, as well as in business for concise, organized and targeted memos, speeches, reports, and recommendations.
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Ryan — Tue Mar 24 2009 23:20
Does that mean the students won? Students 1: Administration 0

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