In the new governance proposal adopted by the State Board of Higher Education in July was a provision that each university would develop its proposals for tuition through broad on-campus consultation, with particular emphasis on the participation of students. The president would use the information developed through that process in preparing a tuition recommendation for consideration by the State Board.

The Governance and Policy Committee considered the matter of tuition setting at two of its meetings earlier in 2010, leading up to the recommendation adopted by the Board in its governance proposal. The Board’s action in July 2010 included the following description of tuition:

“2. The Board would establish a tuition process:
   a. Board guidelines take into account affordability (related to Oregonians’ income) and level of state support.
   b. Board sets affordability targets (need-based aid, fee remission requirements, etc.).
   c. An open tuition-setting process on each campus involving students, faculty, and others would be used to develop annual or longer tuition proposals.
   d. President proposes a plan for tuition.
   e. Presentation of a university’s tuition proposal to the Board with comments to the Board by the university’s student government representative.
   f. Board adopts tuition for each campus.”

The provision was written within a framework that included 15 overarching principles that established the public guidelines for a public university system. Principle 12 reads: “Every Oregon public university will ensure that all qualified Oregonians can afford to attend and succeed.” Further, the Board, in its proposal, included seven core outcomes that would form the basis for a new compact with state government. Two of these, enrollment of Oregonians and affordability for Oregon students, appear most pertinent to a discussion of tuition-setting.

Sufficient enrollment of Oregon students is key to the achievement of the state’s 40-40-20 objectives and the Board’s goal of raising the education level of Oregon’s adult population. Therefore, discussion of tuition must take into account both the costs of education and the ability to pay of Oregon families and students. Much has been made of the fact that Oregon’s per capita personal income stands at 91 percent of the national average and ranks somewhat below the median of all states. However, that fact masks a greater shift in the incomes of the families of likely public university students in Oregon. Because all of the growth in high school graduates over the next 15 years will come from groups within Oregon’s population that have
long had lower incomes than even the state average (e.g., those from Latino families), using per capita personal income or even median family income data may overstate the ability to pay of those whose enrollment and success are critical to meeting the goals of the state and of the Board. This places a great deal of emphasis on need based financial aid and keeping costs (including tuition but not exclusively tuition) at levels as low as is possible while maintaining appropriate levels of quality.

The Governance and Policy Committee discussed this matter at some length, most recently on March 18, and reached the following conclusion (excerpted from “Tuition Guidelines,” dated March 19, 2010): “Board guidelines [for tuition] would reflect the actual or anticipated level of state investment, affordability for Oregon students, state needs for specific programs, cost control, state and Board priorities, the availability of need-based grant aid from sources other than fee remissions, the level of fee remissions for need-based grant aid, and such other factors as may be necessary to ensure the achievement of the goals of the Board’s strategic vision.”

The March 19 document (which is attached) also declared that universities would be able to establish tuition at market levels for nonresident undergraduate and international students as long as the tuition paid by those students was sufficient to recover the full costs of education.

Therefore, the Board’s interest in tuition-setting was restricted to other categories of students: Oregon undergraduates, graduate students, and nonresident undergraduate students in cases where the tuition charged was not sufficient to recover the full costs of education.

Finally, the March 19 document provided guidance about how university tuition plans could be developed, with the understanding that the Board would establish guidelines for setting tuition in any given period. That guidance reads: “Universities would be permitted to develop tuition plans that took into consideration market conditions, state support, other university income available to support educational programs and student financial aid, future employment prospects and earning potential of graduates, differential costs of education by program or instructional modality, student level, investments to improve programs and academic quality, investments in facilities and systems/equipment, specified university initiatives, and other factors the universities believed pertinent to tuition. It is expected that tuition rates for different universities, different levels of students, and different programs will vary.”

The Board, in its July action, provided significant guidance regarding the process to be used to establish tuition. It remains for the Committee to develop the process for further consideration by the Board. Obviously, the process will evolve over time but its principal elements would have to include Board guidelines, a participative open process, a presidential proposal, a presentation of both the presidential proposal and comments by a student government representative, and Board adoption of the tuition rate(s).
One possible process (and accompanying calendar) could be:

1. **Board promulgates guidance—October**
   Obviously, such guidance would be based upon Board policies, efforts to achieve Board goals, fulfillment of the compact with the state, the mission and financial condition of each university, expected state appropriation support, legislative guidance (if any), anticipated total enrollment and enrollment mix for each university, affordability objectives, inflation/deflation, Oregon family income, quality enhancement initiatives (including faculty salary increases), program cost, facilities costs, legal compliance requirements, cost control, and a host of other factors. Factors may change each year and the Board may weigh them differently in terms of relative importance each year.

2. **President establishes tuition review committee—October**
   The president of each university will charge a committee with providing advice and comment about tuition for the upcoming period. This committee, which may be an existing committee within the governance structure of the university or may be established separately by the president, must include representation from student government, the faculty, university staff, and the university’s administration. It may include members from interested external communities, at the president’s discretion. The president of the student government shall appoint undergraduate student members. The president of the university shall appoint all other members, consistent with the shared governance requirements of that university, and shall designate one member to chair the committee. In addition, the president may appoint graduate students, appropriate. The president shall provide to the committee the guidance from the Board as well as such additional financial and policy information as the president believes pertinent or as the committee may reasonably request.

3. **Committee process—November-February**
   The committee will meet at least twice during this period. Its meetings shall be open to the public and broad notification of the meetings shall be made to the university community. The committee will consider the guidelines provided by the Board, the information provided by the president, any proposal advanced by the president, and such other matters as shall seem appropriate.

4. **Presidential recommendation—March**
   The president shall develop a tuition recommendation for review by the committee no later than March 1 and the committee shall advise the president regarding that recommendation no later than March 31. The president shall develop a recommendation for consideration by the Board that takes into account the advice received from the committee. However, the president need not accept that advice.

5. **Presidential proposal—April**
   The president shall request tuition rates for the categories of students covered by Board guidelines and submit that recommendation to the Chancellor, with a copy to each
member of the committee. If the president revises the proposal subsequent to its initial submission to the Chancellor, a copy of such revision shall be provided to all members of the committee prior to consideration of the revised proposal by the Board.

6. **Board consideration—June**
   Upon recommendation by the Chancellor, the Board will consider the proposal of the president (along with such modifications as the chancellor may propose). In considering such proposal, the Board shall provide an opportunity for the president and for an appropriate representative of the student government of that university to address the Board orally or in writing. If the representative of the student government was not involved in the university’s committee, that representative may invite another student who had been involved in that committee’s work to accompany him or her.

7. **Board adoption—June**
   The Board shall adopt the tuition rates for the university after taking into account all the information provided to it, its own policy goals and the guidelines it provided to the university, and the advice of the president and of the student government, and, if appropriate, the committee.

Whenever the State Board of Higher Education has decided on a tuition process to be used by each university, it shall promulgate the process after consideration of public comments.

   *Note:* This calendar and process do not apply to summer session tuition or to tuition charged in continuing education and for other non-standard terms. The committee should consider whether a process should be established for summer session tuition. Because of scheduling and notice requirements, such a process would not follow that used for the academic year unless the Board chose to make the summer session a part of the academic year for fee setting purposes. A separate campus process for summer session could cause confusion. Summer session tuition would continue to be approved by the Board, as happens currently.

   Tuition/enrollment fees for continuing education have been approved by campus presidents for many years. No new process is recommended for these courses and programs.