

# College tuition is up sharply

■ Tuition at East Carolina University increased by about 2 percent from \$2,445 in 2008 to \$2,491 in 2009.

BY JUSTIN POPE  
The Associated Press

With the economy struggling, parents and students dared to hope this year might offer a break from rising college costs. Instead, they got another sharp increase.

Average tuition at four-year public colleges in the U.S. climbed 6.5 percent, or \$429, to \$7,020 this fall as schools apologetically passed on much of their financial problems, according to an annual report from the College Board, released Tuesday. At private colleges, tuition rose 4.4 percent, or \$1,096, to \$26,273.

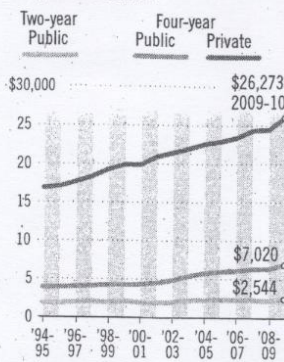
"Every sector of the American economy is under stress and higher education is no exception," Terry Hartle, senior vice president of the American Council on Education, said. "It's regrettable, and it's yet another piece of disappointing economic news that affects families."

The price increases came despite painful cost-cutting by colleges on everything from faculty to cafeterias and sports travel. As usual, the rise in tuition outstripped the overall

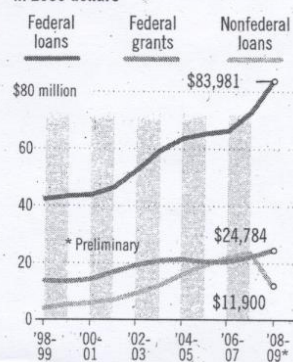
## Four-year college costs keep rising

Average tuition at in-state four-year public colleges rose 6.5 percent this fall. At private colleges, the average list price rose 4.4 percent.

Average published tuition and fees, in 2009 dollars



Student aid and loans, in 2008 dollars



SOURCE: The College Board

inflation rate.

In fact, during the period covered by the report, consumer prices declined 2.1 percent. So the latest tuition increase at public colleges was closer to 9 percent in real terms.

"It's only natural for parents to question why colleges are raising their prices yet again, while the rest of our economy is inflation-free," James Boyle, president of the group College Parents of America, said.

The news isn't all bad.

The estimated net price — what the average student actually pays after financial aid is taken into account — is still much lower than the list price, about \$1,620 at public four-year colleges and less

than \$12,000 at private ones. Both figures are up slightly from last year but still lower than five years ago.

Community colleges, home to about 40 percent of college students, raised prices, too, but tuition still is essentially free to many after financial aid is factored in.

A companion report also out Tuesday shows financial aid from Uncle Sam is surging and reliance on often-expensive private loans has plummeted. And while students in states such as California, Florida and New York have seen double-digit tuition increases, some other states have held the line.

Maryland and Missouri froze tuition.