

Public Institutions of Higher Education

**Thomas Edison State University's Responses**

9. P.L.2013, c.170 (C.18A:62-4.4) provided that a person without lawful immigration status who meets other criteria may qualify to pay the in-State tuition rate at a public institution of higher education.

- **Question:** In the current academic year, how many students at each institution are paying the in-State tuition rate pursuant to this law?

Answer:

*Thomas Edison State University does not have any students that are paying in-State tuition due to this law. The procedure to qualify for in-State tuition in compliance with this law is posted on the University website.*

10. The "Madison Holleran Suicide Prevention Act"; P.L.2016, c.18 (C.18A:3B-72 et seq.) requires that each institution of higher education have individuals with training and experience in mental health issues who focus on reducing student suicides and attempted suicides available on campus or remotely for students 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

- **Question:** Please describe the efforts made by your institution to comply with this requirement. How has your institution publicized these services to its students? How many individuals are employed by the institution for the purpose of complying with this law?

Answer:

*The Thomas Edison State University website has contact information for two different resources in which a student can talk to someone 24 hours a day/seven days a week. The resources are the NJ Hopeline and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. The University serves students predominantly at a distance, so on campus resources are not practical.*

11. According to the 2016 report of the College Affordability Study Commission, which was established pursuant to P.L.2015, c.4, the increasing cost of higher education is posing a significant barrier to students hoping to pursue postsecondary education. Nationally, after adjusting for inflation, the tuition and fees at public four-year institutions of higher education have increased over 40 percent between the 2005-2006 and 2015-2016 academic years, while increasing by 29 percent at two-year public institutions.

- **Question:** Please discuss initiatives that the institutions have taken in recent years to minimize increases in tuition and fees or to provide institutional support to their students.

Answer:

*The University's annual full-time comprehensive in-state tuition remains affordable at \$7,300 per student in FY2018. The comprehensive tuition enables a student to take up to 36 credits over a*

12-month period. This tuition is significantly lower than offered by the other New Jersey senior public colleges and universities.

To remain competitive, the University has systematically focused on cost controls. Controlling costs was particularly necessary over the years to partially defray steep reductions in State support. TESU closely monitors discretionary expenditures as new methods, including redeployment of resources, are developed to increase efficiencies and productivity. The University is committed to building on its record of effective management.

The University continues to upgrade its technological infrastructure to provide for increased flexibility and speed as it responds to student needs while remaining affordable. Listed below are some key cost-containment measures undertaken for TESU and its students:

- Twelve positions that were or became vacant during FY2017 were eliminated. Staff resources have been redeployed to maximize efficiencies and student services. The total savings in FY2018 from the elimination of these positions is \$1.1 million. In addition, there are associated fringe benefit savings. New vacancies during FY 2018 have been frozen.
- The non-salary budget was reduced by \$779,000 or 2.7 percent. The decrease included significant reductions throughout the institution.
- Created incentive for students to avoid paying with credit card which will save University approximately \$300,000 annually.
- A limited payment plan was offered to students during FY2016. The Plan was expanded during FY2017. The plan makes the tuition more affordable by dividing the cost into three equal payments.
- Installed a new human resource and payroll hosted system. The new comprehensive system replaced four separate legacy systems for an annual savings of \$37,000.
- Several partnerships were completed in which students can take low cost courses and transfer up to 90 credits to the University. This allows students to complete their degree with significant savings.
- The University has offered all students Microsoft Office for free. There is no cost to the institution. The value is \$150 per student.
- HVAC preventative maintenance plan was implemented. Preventative and predictive maintenance create cost efficiencies.
- LED lighting with motion sensors has been installed in two buildings during FY2017. LED lighting reduces energy costs, makes the need for replacement less frequent, and realizes long-term maintenance savings.
- Mail operations achieved \$341,527 in postal savings by taking advantage of less costly bulk mailing rates.
- Students save 90 percent of course tuition cost when they take TECEP examination credits, as opposed to paying for courses.
- The University engages in and encourages purchasing through State and other Cooperative contracts. The University currently participates in 11 purchasing cooperatives. This practice provides both cost avoidance and cost savings, depending on the specific goods or services being procured.
- The University continues its successful Smart Buy Program and its best practice efforts to reduce non-personnel costs and improve business operations, which generated \$609,975 in savings during FY2017. The difference between the highest quotation and the low cost quotation that was used is recorded as the Smart Buy savings

