

Morehead State University is freezing tuition next school year

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Morehead State University will not raise tuition next school year, becoming the third state-funded Kentucky school to bow to increasing pressure to lower students' costs.

"If we don't raise tuition, it will cause internal pain," Morehead President Jay Morgan said Tuesday. "But as a university, we feel we shouldn't pass on increased costs to students in Eastern Kentucky who are already strapped for tuition."

Eastern Kentucky University and the University of Louisville decided last fall not to raise tuition for the 2018-2019 school year.

A 1 percent tuition increase would bring the school about \$700,000, Morgan said. So by forgoing the 3 percent tuition increase allowed by the state, the school will forfeit about \$2 million next year. Morgan said the Morehead Board of Regents would probably vote on the measure at its next meeting.

All Kentucky public universities have been hurt by more than a decade of cuts in state funding, but Morehead has been particularly hurt by enrollment drops caused by the shrinking coal economy in Eastern Kentucky, where many of its students grew up.

\$1 MILLION

Amount Morehead State University cut in top administrative posts earlier this year

Earlier this year, Morehead cut \$1 million in top administrative posts and announced a voluntary buyout and work reduction program for employees. Morgan said between 10 and 12 faculty retired and numerous other faculty and staff took reduced hours.

Morgan said the school will now look at closing some older buildings that are inefficient to run, as well as trying to recruit as many students as possible for next fall.

In the closing days of the General Assembly, Morehead and other regional universities got a slight reprieve from increased contributions to Kentucky's ailing public pension system, which will not begin until 2020. Gov. Matt Bevin, though, could still veto that language.

"That gives us more time to adjust and make a more coordinated plan," Morgan said.

Other schools have made more drastic cost-cutting measures. Earlier this month, Eastern Kentucky cut 150 positions, closed a regional campus and cut men's and women's tennis. Western Kentucky University has axed about 140 positions and closed an academic college.