

Policy Statement V – Market Modifiers

Adopted: November 14, 2013

Expires:

Motion from the 5th ULSU General Assembly meeting of 2013-2014:

MOTION [20315GA]

MSC: S. Glydon/S. Talbot

BIMT that the General Assembly ratify ULSU Policy Statement V - "Market Modifiers".

Carried

Market Modifiers

Background

The term market modifier refers to "a correction of a discrepancy between tuition fees set by a board of an institution in respect of a specific program of study and tuition fees for similar programs of study in other jurisdictions or in other sectors or institutions in Campus Alberta¹." These fees were first introduced into Alberta post-secondary during 2004 - 05, with six different programs, four at the University of Alberta and two at the University of Calgary being assessed differential tuition, with respect to the remaining balance of programs at each institution². Alberta is not the only province that has differential tuition, it is also a fairly recent fixture of the Ontario post-secondary system. It has been widely shown that these fees result in unfair cost discrepancies between programs, resulting in a loss of accessibility, and therefore, less options for students seeking to pursue a post-secondary education³. At a time when student debt is only increasing, these differential fees represent a very real roadblock to many prospective students who come from low-income and or debt adverse backgrounds. In fact, differential fees tends to result in a two-tiered system wherein programs to which these fees are applied are only accessible to higher income families, creating a significantly smaller talent pool within the professions, and often, a lack of skilled workers⁴.

WHEREAS the University of Lethbridge Students' Union (ULSU) opposes market modifiers and department specific differential mandatory non-instructional fees

WHEREAS the University of Lethbridge did not implement market modifiers to correct for the "market discrepancy" in 2004 -2005 along with the University of Alberta and the University of Calgary

WHEREAS Doug Horner (former Minister of Advanced Education) stated in 2010 that no further market modifiers would be applied in Alberta(cite the article)

WHEREAS market modifiers reduce the accessibility of programs by placing unnecessary financial burdens upon students;

¹ Government of Alberta, Public Post-Secondary Institutions' Tuition Fees and Regulations, Queen's Printer (Edmonton), pp. 5

² Government of Alberta News Release, Tuition Fee Balances Quality and Affordability, December 2010

³ Tomorrow's Tuition: A New Framework for Affordable Higher Education, OUSA, February 2012, pp. 16

⁴ Ontario's Next Tuition Framework: Creating Fair and Accessible Tuition Payment Processes for Students (Part II), OUSA, 2012, pp. 15 -16

WHEREAS programs which only a subset of students can utilize, and currently do through user specific fees, should not be subsidized by group contributions;

WHEREAS academic services that the University of Lethbridge provides its students are necessary to develop well-rounded, competitive graduates, but should not create additional costs for all students.

WHEREAS the academic services provided in University of Lethbridge programs serve to differentiate those programs from similar programs at other universities and should be a factor that draws students to the University of Lethbridge, not an additional financial burden on those students.

WHEREAS the University of Lethbridge has already implemented differential tuition within the faculty of fine arts, specifically the music department, by adding an additional mandatory non-instructional fee and not following the process of market modifier approval through the provincial government.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The University of Lethbridge Students' Union advocate for a policy that:

- a) Prevents the University of Lethbridge from instituting further market modifiers or differential mandatory non-instructional fees for specific faculties or departments.
- b) Recognizes the intrinsic value of the additional academic services offered alongside many of the University of Lethbridge programs, but should not result in additional costs for all students within that faculty or department.
- c) Results in all programs being equally accessible in terms of financial cost.