

Tuition and Fee Advisory Board

The Tuition and Fee Advisory Board (TFAB) is the university's official advisory group charged with reviewing and recommending tuition and fee proposals each year, prior to their submission to the President and Board of Trustees (HB 4141, § 2(1)).¹ TFAB is advisory to the President and its members are drawn broadly from the university community, including students, faculty, and staff. Effective fall 2018, TFAB fills the formal advisory body role required by House Bill 4141, and is further charged to carry out all relevant parts of that bill.

TFAB charge

Specifically, the President charges TFAB with advising on all matters that pertain to the cost of attendance at the University, including undergraduate and graduate tuition, mandatory fees, non-mandatory fees (such as housing costs and non-instruction related course fees), and the structure of tuition (including, for example, differential tuition levels or comprehensive graduate program rates). In addition, TFAB helps to promote communication and engagement about tuition with the students of the University.

TFAB membership

TFAB typically consists of about eighteen official members. Membership may vary slightly depending on the particular tuition and fee questions that are likely to be in play in a given year (HB 4141, § 2(2)(a)). The typical membership is as follows:

- Vice President for Finance and Administration & CFO – co-chair
- Vice President for Student Life – co-chair
- A group of at least five students that must have the following characteristics:
 - At least two students representing the recognized student government (ASUO)²
 - At least two students from historically underserved student populations³
 - At least one graduate student
- Two faculty members (ideally with one drawn from the Senate Budget Committee)
- Deans of two schools or colleges
- Director of Financial Aid
- Director of Budget and Resource Planning
- Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Studies (or designee, if necessary)
- Director of Institutional Research
- Vice President for Student Life (or designee)

¹ In previous years, TFAB provided recommendations to the Provost. Per HB 4141, starting in FY19, TFAB is advisory to the President.

² Ideally, ASUO provides nominations to TFAB co-chairs by June 15 or at the latest by September 21.

³ According to the University of Oregon, “historically underserved students” are defined as students who come from one or more of these groups:

- Underrepresented minority students
- Low income students (Pell Grant recipient)
- Veteran students
- Rural students

This aligns with the HECC definition in the Student Success and Completion Model (SSCM).

Other members of the University community who will often either serve on TFAB or consult with TFAB include:

- Senior Vice President and Provost
- Vice President for Student Services and Enrollment Management
- University Registrar

TFAB is also supported by the university communications office and provided with appropriate platforms for widespread dissemination of tuition- and fee-related information.

TFAB timeline

TFAB meetings normally begin in October and run until a month before the UO Board of Trustees meets to consider tuition. Typically, there is a break in December due to exams and winter break. The first few meetings are usually dedicated to providing TFAB members with critical information and training necessary for them to make informed recommendations. This information typically includes current and historical UO budget information, projected cost increases, sensitivity analysis on tuition increases, historical and comparative tuition and fee rates, enrollment trends and enrollment planning parameters.

Starting fall 2018, training offered includes mechanisms by which moneys are appropriated by the Legislative Assembly to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) for allocation to public universities; and training on historical data regarding the relationship between the amount of resident tuition and mandatory enrollment fees charged by the UO and the amount of state appropriations that the HECC allocates to the UO (HB 4141, § 2(3)).

Beginning in January of each year, TFAB meets regularly in order to review and discuss specific tuition and fee proposals. The meeting schedule, as well as anticipated agenda topics, are posted on the University's tuition website. This website also provides information regarding the UO budget, tuition, and the documents reviewed in TFAB meetings (HB 4141, § 2(7)). TFAB meetings are open meetings⁴ and non-advisory group members are welcome to engage in the discussion, as appropriate. High-level notes (e.g., record of topics discussed, direction given to groups) are posted on the website following each meeting.

In January, TFAB (often in collaboration with the student government) organizes a public student forum to share information related to the University's budget situation and to solicit feedback and ideas from students. This forum is important as it provides input into the tuition-setting process, per UO policy, before TFAB develops its final recommendations. The President generally hosts a second forum for students after TFAB has developed its recommendations in order to receive additional feedback.

TFAB recommendations

TFAB is not a decision-making body, but rather an advisory group to the President. For this reason, the group does not operate through formal voting. Instead, the group uses a variety of processes, including open dialogue and straw polls, to discuss and analyze issues. TFAB strives to come to consensus on recommendations where possible. In situations where TFAB cannot come to

⁴ During COVID-19, given the remote structure of TFAB meetings, non-advisory group members are welcome to attend Zoom sessions, but are asked to register in advance.

consensus on a particular recommendation, care is taken to provide all opinions and feedback to the President. This is done via a written memo that is drafted by the co-chairs and circulated to the entire advisory group for review and editing before it is submitted to the President (HB 4141, § 2(6)(b)). The goals of that memo are (i) to provide the President with recommendations related to proposed tuition and fee increases, and (ii) if there is not consensus on particular issues, to make sure that the President is provided the full range of opinions and concerns raised by members of the advisory group. Members of TFAB may also attach a minority opinion memo to the final TFAB recommendation memo. TFAB generally needs to provide recommendations to the President 3-4 weeks in advance of the date upon which the Board plans to consider tuition.

As noted above, once TFAB submits its recommendations to the President, the President typically holds a second forum to discuss the proposal with students. Prior to submitting information to the UO Board of Trustees, the President also posts information online regarding TFAB's recommendations, and per UO policy, establishes a process to collect feedback from students, faculty, and staff on the proposed increases.