WHAT DOES IT COST TO ATTEND AN ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND HOW DOES THAT COMPARE WITH OTHER AVAILABLE OPTIONS?

Community colleges deliver low cost, high quality instruction. For the current academic year (FY 2018), the average Illinois community college tuition and basic fee cost to a full-time, in-district student is $4,206 (based on 30 semester hours). This is an increase of 5.3 percent (+$211) from the previous year and 24.5 percent (+$826) from 2014.

As depicted in Table 1, current average tuition and fees at Illinois community colleges are nearly **one-third** the average tuition and fees at Illinois public universities ($13,239) and nearly **one-ninth** the average tuition and fees at private universities ($36,747).

Public university tuition and fees for first-year students increased 1.1 percent (+$139) from fiscal year 2017 and 10.0 percent (+$1,203) from fiscal year 2014. Note that entry-level tuition legislation requires that tuition charged to a first-time, undergraduate public university Illinois resident student must remain at the same level for four continuous academic years following initial enrollment or for the “normal time to complete” undergraduate programs that require over four years.

Figure 1 illustrates the difference in tuition and fees costs for community colleges versus other available in-state higher education options during 2014-2018. **Individuals interested in a Bachelors degree can significantly reduce their costs by completing the initial two years at their local community college.**

The latest available FY2018 comparative data show that tuition and fees at Illinois Community Colleges are $14 (0.3 percent) less than average community college tuition and fees in the Midwest ($4,220). Tuition and fees at Illinois public universities are $2,779 (26.6 percent) more than the Midwest average ($10,460). The average tuition and fees at Midwestern private institutions is not available.

Illinois’ community college FY2018 tuition and fees are $636 (17.8 percent) higher than the National average of $3,570. The National average is brought down by California, which enrolls about one in six of the nation’s community college students, where community college prices are unusually low ($1,430). Nationally, the average tuition and fees at public universities is $9,970 in fiscal year 2018, which is 24.7 percent lower than the Illinois average and 4.7 percent lower than the Midwest average. The entry-level tuition policy at Illinois public institutions contributes to elevated Illinois figures. At private institutions, the average tuition and fees nationally is $34,740 which is $2,007 (5.5 percent) less than the Illinois average (https://trends.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/2017-trends-in-college-pricing_1.pdf).

Collaborating with the System to Inform Statewide Community College Issues