A Historical Look at State Support and Tuition Collections at Northern Arizona University

This chart illustrates the decline in state General Fund support accompanied by the increased tuition and fees paid by full-time (FTE) NAU students. The correlation is clear, but not direct, and at no time has NAU attempted to fill the entirety of the state funding decrease with student tuition dollars.

The university currently receives $5,000 less from the state on a per student basis than it did in 2008. The $2,200 per student increase in tuition and fees covers less than half the difference.

If current state policy on university funding continues, and NAU maintains its recent trajectory on small adjustments to the guaranteed tuition PLEDGE rates, the university will collect less tuition per FTE in addition to having less state funding available for each student.
This chart combines the state GF appropriations and net tuition and fees per FTE. These monies represent the actual dollars available to educate NAU’s students.

When these resources are combined, NAU currently spends almost $2500 less per FTE than it did in FY 08.

If current trends in enrollment growth, tuition, and state funding continue, that per FTE funding decline will approach $3,000 by next year and further decline into the future.

State funding reductions to date have been managed by instituting a number of operating efficiencies (i.e. reductions in personnel, partnerships with external organizations, elimination of some centers and campus sites), delayed capital investments, and increased student enrollment and tuition revenues.
The chart below provides a 20-year history of state support to NAU and corresponding resident tuition rates.

Today’s total state investment in NAU is equal to the amount NAU received in the early 1990s. In that time, NAU has grown by approximately 10,000 students.

In 1997 the state contributed well over 70% to an Arizona student’s college degree. That investment has decreased to 25% today.

In 2008, NAU instituted the PLEDGE tuition rate, which guarantees a student’s rate is for 4 years. Any increases in tuition shown on this graph after that year DO NOT impact continuing students, and represents the rate entering freshman will pay for the duration of their college career at NAU’s Flagstaff campus. It is important to remember that NAU has implemented a number of lower cost tuition options through our online programs, Yuma and Yavapai campuses, and our 2NAU pathways with community colleges, and the new competency based degree program we call Personalized Learning.