Tuition Strike - Motivation

Why protest tuition hikes?

Rising tuition costs are frequently attributed to the following factors by administrators and their ideological supporters - rising inflation + costs, increased wages for instructors, and declining state funding.

The following factors are considered a more accurate representation - rising administrative pay, increased marketing and PR efforts, increasing the appearance of economic efficiency by treating the university like a corporation, exploitative relationships with businesses, and declining state funding.

The economics of university education follows the austerity model of neo-liberal economies. Privatizing public goods and utilities because they “increase economic efficiency” leads to wealthy CEO’s. The corporate model of education follows the general corporate model: cutting wages, cutting full time jobs, increasing marketing and promoting university admissions as “sales”, and administrative bloat without financial transparency.

Why Call a Strike?

The reason for calling a strike is a rational one. We began with a rally of students at a budget forum. These forums had been historically under attended and resulted in continual tuition hikes. Our first rally mobilized over a hundred students and successfully pressured the board of trustees to consider compromising on the extent of tuition hikes. Without public political pressure, the administrators are free to push a singular perspective about the economics of our university.

Through collective action we have demonstrated we can force the university to back down or compromise on positions which are detrimental to the students and staff. We have lobbied our governments. We have requested politely through the proper channels. We have exhausted the bureaucratic avenues afforded our voices. The next step is to strike. Through the strike we demonstrate that the university does not exist without its students. If we do not participate in a process which exploits us, we demonstrate we are no longer passive. We have asked nicely, and they have demonstrated they do not consider our financial well-being.

To those who are reticent to take action, we would like to share why this tactic is positive. We have exhausted all previous methods. We have participated in tuition committees. We have voted and recommended in student government. We have spoken before the Board of Trustees. We have brought student’s voices to the administrators by turning them out to the Budget Forums. Merely the implication of public action has succeeded in providing concessions from the Board of Trustees. The next logical step is to strike. This does not end with one action. We continue to build our voices. We continue to build our collective power. A campaign to end tuition hikes and unaffordable education begins with these steps. It does not end here. We don’t want small numbers of students to build this – to be this action – we want to build a movement made by students for students to have agency over their own education.