

# Community colleges won't seek tuition or tax increase

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Maricopa Community Colleges will not seek a tuition or property-tax increase for 2015-16 despite cutbacks in state aid, according to Debra Thompson, vice chancellor for business services.

A tuition discussion was on the agenda of the college board Tuesday night, more than a week after Gov. Doug Ducey cut

funding to community colleges and state universities in his proposed budget.

This year, the 10-college district received \$7.4 million in state aid — less than 1 percent of its revenue. For 2015-16, administrators are expecting to receive \$6.7 million.

In 2007, the state gave the district \$69 million. The steep drop in state aid has led the colleges to increase tuition and property taxes. There were 130,000 stu-

dents in the fall 2014 semester.

Ducey's budget also would reduce the appropriation to the three state universities by \$75 million next year, but Arizona State University President Michael Crow vowed not to increase tuition for in-state students.

Any tuition increase for community colleges from the current \$84 per credit would have set up a showdown with three new governing board members. Johanna

Haver, John Heep and Jean McGrath ran together as a conservative bloc and campaigned on a promise to cut tuition.

Earlier this month, President Barack Obama announced an initiative to provide two years of free community-college tuition. The federal government would pay 75 percent and states would opt in to pay the remaining 25 percent.

State Rep. Reginald Bolding, D-Phoenix, has proposed such a bill, HB2487.