



Price of Service Cuts

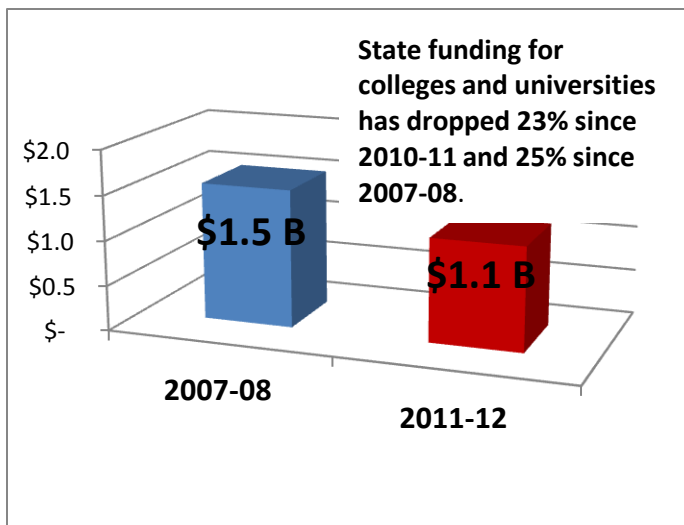


Drowning in Debt: Budget Cuts Raise Cost of College

One in a series about the impact of five years of state service cuts on the citizens of Pennsylvania. Keep up with all the stories in the days and weeks ahead by liking our [Facebook Page](#) or bookmarking our Price of Service Cuts [web page](#).



Brittany graduated from Shippensburg University last year with \$60,000 in student loans. She is thankful, however, because her communications degree did land her a job in New York where she commutes every day from Bucks County. Others are not so fortunate. Zachary invested in a five-year architecture/landscape program at Pennsylvania State University, and it has yet to pay off. After graduating, Zachary settled for a manual-labor landscaping job that has since ended. He is eager to work and has a career of academic achievement but simply cannot find a job.¹



These stories are not unique. Today, many young graduates are left holding a diploma but not a job after pouring time and money into a college education. As a result, more graduates are defaulting on their student loan payments each year.

At a time when parents and students are burdened with the cost of an increasingly expensive college education, the state budget cut funding to public institutions – making the situation even worse – as institutions are increasing their tuition. If Zachary were returning for another year, he would be paying the in-state tuition fee (not including housing, food, or books) of \$15,124, which is \$724 higher than last year.

State support of higher education has been cut dramatically in the past few years. Since the start of the recession in 2007-08, state funding for community colleges has been cut by 10%, the State System of Higher Education schools by 25%, and the state-related universities (Penn State, Pitt, Temple and Lincoln) have seen their funding cut 29%.

State schools are raising the price of tuition as a result of the lost revenue, and Pennsylvania families are paying the price. Behind the mortgage, the cost of college is often a family's largest investment, and it is becoming increasingly unaffordable.

The Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center a non-partisan policy research project that provides independent, credible analysis on state tax, budget and related policy matters, with attention to the impact of current or proposed policies on working families. Learn more at <http://pennbpc.org/priceofcuts> or at <http://facebook.com/PennBPC>.



¹ Jeff Gammage, "Debt soaring with tuition," Philadelphia Inquirer, September 18, 2011, http://articles.philly.com/2011-09-18/news/30172177_1_tuition-and-fees-college-enrollment-state-owned-colleges.