

Tuition hike met with mixed reviews

By LINDSAY ALLEN
Sun Staff Writer

Andrea Turner carried her belongings out of the Towers residence halls Thursday, but she wasn't packing for the semester break - she was leaving for good after CMU's Board of Trustees approved a \$500 per semester tuition increase this week.

"I'm taking her out of here right now," Allan Turner said as he headed into the mostly-freshman complex to help his daughter gather another load. "The price is just too high for what you get."

Unhappy with her living quarters and the price of her education and housing, Andrea Turner said she had been contemplating her future at Central Michigan University for the past month, and the 27.9 percent tuition hike - which will go into effect in the fall 2002 semester - was the last straw for her family.

"It really made my mind up," said Allan Turner, an Inkster resident.

Andrea Turner plans to attend Wayne County Community College, obtain an associate's degree and then transfer elsewhere in the state.

"She won't be back here," her father said.

However, not all parents share his feelings.

"It seems like a lot for one jump," said Shirley Murphy of Sterling Heights. "But kids have to go where they want or

they won't be successful - and if \$1,000 more per year makes my daughter more successful, it's worth it."

Murphy said her daughter Molly's education is paid for by the family, as well as by some loans and scholarships.

Bonnie Jacobs of Bay City said the increase will affect her daughter, Lindsey, who receives a scholarship and a few grants but will be expected to contribute more money toward her university bills in the fall due to the increase.

"She's going to be working a lot of hours this summer," Bonnie Jacobs said. "This isn't something we planned for, and tuition was a factor in her coming here - but I guess there's nothing we can do."

"She loves it here - it's everything she wanted and more, so what am I going to say?"

Rep. Sandy Caul, R-Mt. Pleasant, said even she was shocked by the board's decision.

"I guess I'd be lying if I said I wasn't quite surprised by the amount," Caul said. "I knew that they were discussing an increase. But I was surprised because I didn't expect the percentage to be 27.9 percent."

"Our families and students don't have the ability to increase their incomes by 28 percent. This will make it very difficult for families and students."

Reaction

(Continued from Page 1)

Prior to the increase, CMU ranked 14th out of 15 state universities in terms of tuition and fees - now, the university's tuition is the fourth highest in the state, behind the University of Michigan's Ann Arbor campus, Michigan Technological University and Michigan State University.

However, Caul said other universities are likely to raise tuition as well, which means CMU "may end up positioned more in the middle of the pack."

Although Caul said she understands the position CMU is in and feels the university does an "excellent" job educating its students, she said CMU President Mike Rao has his work cut out for him to explain what she feels may be an excessive hike.

"It's up to the president and the board to justify to not only me but also my colleagues why this was presented to students," she said.

Rao and Vice President for Finance and Administrative Services Abdul Nasser have said the funds will be used to implement a number of initiatives, including hiring 50 full-time faculty members, adding sections of core courses, expanding the teacher education program, increasing faculty and student research funds, adding scholarships and need-based financial aid, adding parking spaces, enhancing

campus security and improving technology.

Susan Shafer, spokeswoman for Gov. John Engler, said poor economic conditions warrant cutbacks around the state.

"This is not a time to be lavish and go out and propose new things," she said.

CMU Faculty Association President Wayne Kiefer said the increase was a "bold action" for the trustees to take, but it will enhance the quality of education at the university.

"Students may experience a little 'sticker shock,' but they've been getting a real bargain," he said. "Now it's catch-up time."

Kiefer said faculty members are particularly in agreement with one of Rao's priorities.

"One of the things that pleases us is the addition of new faculty positions," he said. "We need full-time, tenured faculty members to develop strong programs - that's what keeps an institution going."

"He's putting resources in the right place," Kiefer said.

He said he believes most universities in the state are considering double-digit tuition increases.

In addition to funding Rao's initiatives, the tuition funds will help offset a \$10 million revenue shortfall that had been expected.

Sen. Joanne Emmons, R-Big Rapids, said she had no knowledge of the increase and declined to comment on the situation.

(See Reaction, Page 2)