

University of North Dakota Proposes Law School Tuition Hike



Summary: The University of North Dakota has proposed raising its tuition prices for next academic year.

While the [salaries](#) of lawyers have gone down and interest in law schools has also declined, one law school has made the interesting choice of *raising* its tuition.

The University of North Dakota has proposed a nine percent tuition hike for its law school, according to *The Bismarck Tribune*. This proposal is a response to campus leaders wanting to address a maintenance backlog, and the overall price increases will affect not only the law school, but the undergraduate and graduate schools.

UND has proposed to the State Board of Higher Education that undergraduates will pay 4% more next academic year, the cap on increases from the state. Graduate students may also see raises, but they are not protected by legislative controls, *The Bismarck Tribune* stated.

UND has proposed that graduate programs' tuition raise by seven percent and that the law school's cost jumps by nine percent. Even with that increase, UND President Mark Kennedy said that the law school is one of the least expensive in the country. He had advocated the price increase for the school because he said that UND was underpriced compared to other schools in the region such as the University of Minnesota. For instance, in-state students at University of Minnesota pay approximately \$13,400-\$14,000 per year while UND in-state students pay around \$8,140.

U.S. News and World Report analyzed the cost of law school alumni indebtedness in 2015, and it found that UND Law graduates had, on average, debts of \$69,058. While this is on the lower end of the debt [list](#), which ranges from almost \$50,000 to \$200,000, the school is ranked #142 on the *U.S. News* Best Law Schools list. Comparing those stats to University of Minnesota, Minnesota is ranked #23 on the *U.S. News* list and costs, on average, \$92,179. While Kennedy is right that UND is much cheaper than its competitors, it also does not yet have its esteem.

As part of the proposal, UND wanted to allocate one percent of its raised tuition revenue to a university capital fund which Kennedy said would provide almost \$1 million a year in deferred maintenance needs. He stated that revitalizing the campus was essential in attracting more students.

"The state of North Dakota has not faced deferred maintenance in the mirror and said, 'We have a real plan to address it,'" Kennedy said to *The Bismarck Tribune*. "We're trying to look in the mirror, and though we haven't found the answer yet, we're trying to look at everything we can."

The legislature will vote on the price increases on May 15.

According to *JD Journal*, the one building of UND Law School was last renovated in 2013 after the state legislature had awarded the school \$11.4 million for the project.

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Source: *The Bismarck Tribune*

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Do you think UND Law should raise its tuition prices? Let us know in the comments below.