

GRADUATE



PREPARE YOUR CHECKBOOKS

MICHAEL MAHARREY
Staff Writer

University of South Florida St. Petersburg graduate students will have a little less spending money in their pockets this school year.

Effective this fall, graduate school tuition has increased \$21.79 per credit hour for in-state students and a \$20.65 per credit hour for out of state students.

The increase raised tuition from \$236.98 to \$258.77 per in-state credit hour, and from \$882.05 to \$902.70 per credit hour for out of state students, said Susan Ryan, the administrative assistant for accounting and financial services at USF St. Petersburg.

Undergraduate tuition will remain unchanged at \$91.64 per credit hour.

The increase was approved by the Florida Legislature and applies to all state universities.

Rep. Bill Heller of St. Petersburg sits on

the post secondary education committee and says the increase has been in the works for a while.

"This was passed because it is something that has been needed for graduate programs for a long time," Heller said. "We want to make sure we have the resource base for our graduate programs here in Florida."

Heller said graduate programs are more expensive than undergraduate programs. Accreditation bodies require doctoral-level instructors or professionals with outstanding credentials to teach graduate courses. Class sizes are smaller and graduate programs also direct more research, which is time-intensive.

"All of these factors make graduate programs more expensive," Heller said.

The tuition increase will generate approximately \$170,000 in additional revenue for USF St. Petersburg graduate programs, based on estimated enrollment for fall 2007, said Holly Kickliter, regional associate vice chancellor, University Relations.

She said the revenue estimate could change significantly, depending on the final enrollment numbers.

Despite the tuition increase, Florida's state university graduate programs remain a bargain, Heller said.

Ryan, who spends her days dealing with students' financial issues, said she has not heard any complaints from students regarding the increase.

Amy Beeman, a graduate student in the mass communications program at USF St. Petersburg, had not heard about the tuition increase. When Beeman learned the details, she said the increase seemed reasonable.

"It really isn't that bad. It could be a lot worse," she said.

Additional increases could occur in the future. The cost of graduate programs will continue to stay ahead of revenues generated from graduate tuitions despite the latest tuition boost, Heller said.

"We are still far from getting where we need to be."