

BROWN ULMAN • 2014

Keeping College Affordable: The Brown-Ulman Commitment

Each day, Marylanders in every corner of our state are making their children a promise: that if they work hard and do well in school, there's nothing they can't achieve.

In today's increasingly competitive global economy, those achievements are made possible, in large part, through higher education. And in order to access a college degree, it must be affordable for all of our families – a ladder of opportunity that all Marylanders can climb.

From 2003 to 2007, prior to the O'Malley-Brown Administration, the price of a college education had grown 21.4%.ⁱ At the time, Maryland was the 10th most expensive state for public college tuition and the dream of higher education was slipping out of reach of working families.ⁱⁱ

Over the past seven years, we've prioritized our budget to put families and education first, making college affordable for more Marylanders. In the middle of the worst economic recession since the Great Depression, we froze tuition for four years in a row while other states were slashing investments in higher education. At a time when employers had fewer positions to fill, we knew Marylanders would be best served by accessing our world-class colleges and universities - including our community colleges - to acquire the skills, training, and education they needed to be successful.

Since 2007, we have done more to hold down the growth of public school costs than any other state. Tuition at Maryland's public colleges and universities has grown at an average of only 3.3% per year, while our neighbors in Virginia and Pennsylvania have grown at a rate of 31.9% and 16.6%, respectively.ⁱⁱⁱ As a result, we've gone from the 10th most expensive to 24th most affordable.^{iv}

But for all of our progress, some families still struggle to pay for college. We can do more for these families and for *all* Maryland students.

So we're making a commitment to Marylanders: tuition at our public colleges and universities will grow by no more than 3% annually through 2018.

Reducing college costs should never come at the expense of educational quality, and it hasn't. In fact, five of Maryland's public schools were recently ranked among Kiplinger's 100 "Best Values."^v

Today, more and more of Maryland's students are graduating from high school, starting college, and completing degrees than ever before, in part because we've given them the tools to succeed early on. We've fostered new partnerships between colleges and high schools to create programming that promotes Career and Technology Education (CTE), Science Technology and Math (STEM), and enhanced access to certifications and college credit. Because of these efforts, a record number of students are graduating from our colleges and universities with degrees in highly sought after STEM fields – an increase of 24.8% since 2006.^{vi}

Together, we've helped more families afford college, and it's been a smart investment. In FY2015, keeping tuition low at our colleges and universities came at a cost of a little less than \$10 million – approximately \$5 million for each percentage point reduction. So while the annual cost to hold tuition at or below 3% annually will range based on the economy and institutional costs, we believe it's the right choice for Maryland's students, our economy, and our future.

With this investment, we will ensure the dream of a college education is never out of reach of our families and children.

Sincerely,



Lt. Governor Anthony G. Brown

ⁱ [Final Report](#), Commission to Develop the Maryland Model for Funding Higher Education, page 67, December 2008

ⁱⁱ [Trends in College Affordability](#), The College Board, page 22, 2006

ⁱⁱⁱ [FY2015 Budget Highlights](#), Maryland Department of Budget and Management, 2014

^{iv} [Trends in College Pricing](#), The College Board, page 17, 2013

^v [Best College Values](#), Kiplinger's Website, March 2014

^{vi} [Education Goals](#), Maryland StateStat Website, 2014