



Dr. John W. Oswald

Message to Penn State Students from President John W. Oswald

At the beginning of this spring term I am continuing what I started last fall, an open letter addressed to the student body. In this spring of 1976, just as families are preparing income tax returns and governments are developing future budgets at all levels, students here and all over the country are concerned with the costs of education including tuition. I now want to discuss this topic frankly and realistically with you.

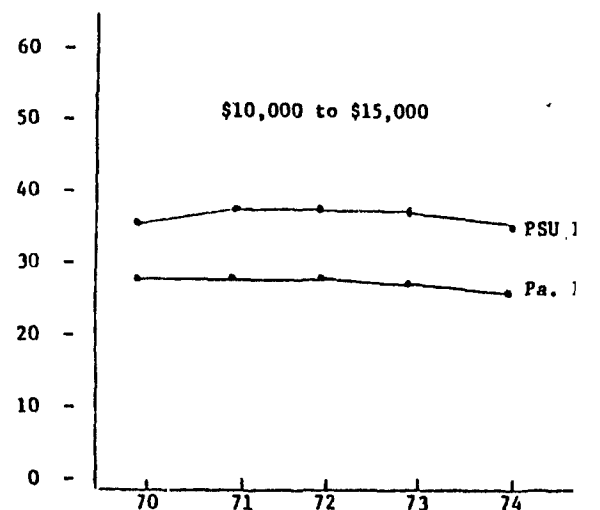
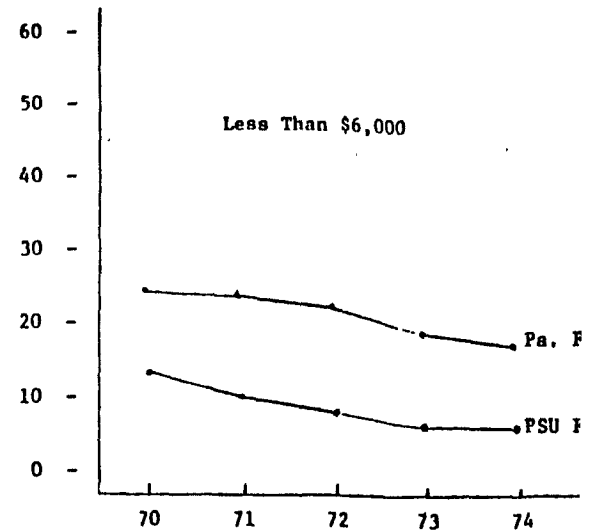
First of all, I want you to know what both my official and personal position is concerning the level of tuition at a public institution. My entire professional career in education has been with land-grant institutions and I am totally committed to the unique mission these universities hold. One of these missions is the special emphasis on student accessibility regardless of financial status.

As we all know, both the individual and society itself benefit from the education of its members. Perhaps ideally in a democracy higher education should be available to qualified applicants at no cost. However, from a practical standpoint in this country the individual student has come to share a part of the financial cost, recognizing the advantage he derives from higher education. My continuing concern in Pennsylvania is the level that our students in a public institution are asked to share through tuition payments. I have repeatedly spoken before the legislature of the unique public responsibility of Penn State through its charter as the Commonwealth land-grant university in which we are to be responsive to the educational needs of people of all financial backgrounds.

As for the benefits to society, a qualitatively sound, advanced industrial society cannot exist without large numbers of highly educated and technically competent people. Certainly the professional, cultural and economic contributions of our 95,000 alumni now living in Pennsylvania are significant to the Commonwealth; and many, many of them fill key positions in all walks of life in the state. An overall total of 150,000 Penn State graduates throughout the nation and the world also contribute their share to society in general.

We are now faced, however, with the realities of 1976 in Pennsylvania. State funds are in short supply for all agencies and institutions, including Penn State in which budgetary needs are greater than current resources will support. In understanding the Penn State 1976-77 budget situation, we must realize the following: (1) there is almost no indication of significant new tax resources for state funds; (2) our entire budget request is based on recognition of inflationary costs — operating costs which include the salary needs of our personnel, both faculty and staff, who face the same inflated costs personally, just as do student families; (3) we are making every effort inside the University with our present funds to accommodate to this financial actuality — indeed over the past five years we have reallocated some 10 million dollars; (4) our reception at the appropriation committee hearings has been positive and attentive, but the statement of the Chairman of the Senate Appropriation Committee, Mr. Henry Cianfrani, illustrates the problem: "We're fond of Penn State and we're aware of the University's tremendous progress, but we don't have the dollars. This is a trouble period and you can't get

Comparison of Famil



Family Income Levels:	
Less than \$6,000	Penn State F Pennsylvania
6,000 to 9,999	Penn State F Pennsylvania
10,000 to 14,999	Penn State F Pennsylvania
15,000 and Over	Penn State F Pennsylvania

blood out of a stone."

My principal concern involving tuition in my presentation to the Senate and the House has focused on the effect of tuition increase on the student body at Penn State. We still have a full enrollment and more persons than we can accommodate next year in the total years there has been a significant decline in the number of student families.

Let me illustrate by reference to the accompanying charts, carefully. One chart shows that in 1970, 31 percent of all Penn State students entering Penn State came from families in that income category. In that same Fall, 34 percent of Pennsylvania families were in the \$6,000 to \$10,000 income category. For that Fall term, however, only 13 percent of the Freshmen entering Penn State came from that income category, a severe decline in four years. This decline shows that income families have been losing access to Penn State in re

At the legislative budget hearings I also pointed out that while tuition has gone up, the state's proportionate support of those costs has not. We now have one of the highest tuition rates of any land-grant university in the country. Each year the dollar amount of our legislative appropriation has