



Colorado's higher education funding crisis and Trinidad State Junior College

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Trinidad State Junior College, with campuses in Trinidad and Alamosa, serves as a significant economic force in the regional economy. It is the only two-year public college in Alamosa and Huerfano counties. The 80-year-old college awards more than 500 degrees and certificates per year, enrolls more than 2,100 students and attracts more than 250 non-resident students. The combination of student and college spending stimulates the local economy.

But with the state's budget crisis, a result of the recession, lawmakers focused heavily on higher education for cuts. In FY 2005, the state's community college system received 14.6 percent less than it did four years ago and 19.3 percent less when adjusted for inflation.

Fiscal year	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
General fund appropriations in millions (nominal)	\$124.5	\$125.7	\$117.3	\$106.3	\$106.3
Annual percent change		1%	- 6.7%	- 9.4%	0%
General fund appropriations (inflation-adjusted)	\$131.8	\$129.2	\$118.5	\$107.5	\$106.3
Annual percent change		- 1.9%	- 8.3%	- 9.2%	- 1.2%

Source: Joint Budget Committee and Colorado Legislative Council

Enrollment at Trinidad State Junior College decreased slightly over this period.

Fiscal year	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Fall enrollment total headcount	1,979	2,196	2,022	2,106
Annual percent change		11%	- 7.9%	4.2%
Fall enrollment resident headcount		2,003	1,860	1,852
Annual percent change			- 7.1%	- 0.4%

Source: Colorado Commission on Higher Education

Although community colleges serve a large number of low-income students who are sensitive to tuition rate increases, tuition at community colleges has increased in order to keep up with rising costs and falling state support. Trinidad State Junior College has raised tuition and fees by more than 40 percent in the past four years.

	2001	2005	Percent change
Average annual resident undergraduate tuition and fees	\$1,533	\$2,154	40.5%

Source: Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

While the cost of attending Trinidad State Junior College has increased, state funding for student financial aid was slashed during the FY 2002-2005 period. In FY 2005, the college received 2.6 percent less than it did three years ago. State-funded financial aid per student fell significantly in the past year.

Fiscal year	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
State financial aid allocation	\$1,607,894	\$1,510,492	\$1,412,549
Annual percent change	10.8%	- 6.1%	- 6.5%
State financial aid dollars per resident student	\$803	\$812	\$763
Annual percent change		1.1%	- 6.3%

Source: Colorado Commission on Higher Education