

Pay-in-advance tuition plan saves, helps student's parents

United Press International
ST. LOUIS — If you can get \$7,200 and have a college-bound teenager at home, Washington University has a deal for you. The Tuition Stabilization Plan is a new concept aimed at holding down rising tuition costs and preventing private universities from pricing themselves out of the middle-income market.

The plan is simple: You pay the four-year tuition in advance and Washington U. guarantees that the tuition, \$4,300, will remain the same for the full four years. The university invests the money and gains in interest what it normally would gain in tuition increases.

Any unused tuition is refunded on a pro-rated basis. The plan was devised by John Biggs, vice chancellor for financial affairs. It takes effect this fall for

students not receiving financial aid. It has tax benefits as well as budgetary advantages for families who borrow from the university.

The borrowers also get a tax break, chancellor William Danforth said in an interview. Interest deductible on federal income tax forms results in a smaller tax burden.

Information supplied by the university shows a family in a 50 percent tax bracket that borrows \$17,200 at 9 percent and repays \$250 a month for eight years saves \$731 in income taxes in the first year — more than twice the tuition increase of \$350 announced for this fall.

Of course, the family will be paying its \$3,000 annually for eight years, not just the four years a student is in school.

Danforth said the university is prepared to make about 50 loans at 9 percent. He especially likes the idea that the school will be investing in its students.

"We're willing to invest in our families and help them face inflation," Danforth said. "The interest charged isn't based on a rate any higher than what we'd expect to make off the money."

The tuition can come from other resources, of course, such as invest-

ing investments or loans on other equities.

"We think most families would be better off borrowing at their own bank or increasing their mortgage," Danforth said. "We're not anxious to become a lender, but if a family doesn't want to go elsewhere, this money will be available."

Inflation makes the stabilization plan necessary, Danforth said. Tuition has been rising 8 or 9 percent a year, he said. Salaries are the major part of the school's budget.

With no end in sight for rising costs, Danforth thinks Washington U. will be watched closely by other schools suffering the same tuition growing pains. "I think if we're successful, other universities will follow," he said.

Washington U. is helping its 4,200 undergraduates financially in other ways. About one-third receive some form of aid, often a combination of a grant, a low-rate loan and a work-study assignment, Danforth said.

With annual tuition at private colleges heading toward \$5,000 and beyond, officials realize many families wonder if a college education is worth the investment. Danforth thinks it is.

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Seniors' research theses given prizes

Prizes will be given this year to the best research thesis written by seniors in the Texas A&M University Undergraduate Fellows Program, announced officials.

More than 50 seniors are enrolled in the Undergraduate Fellows phase of the University Honors Program. Each is required to write a thesis on his senior research.

The best thesis will be selected by an awards committee and winners will be recognized during commencement ceremonies, said Dr. M. Friedman, undergraduate fel-

lows coordinator and Dr. B.L. Shapiro, University Honors Program director.

In addition to a \$100 cash prize, each winner will receive a certificate and desk pen emblazoned with the University seal.

These original research theses are preserved in University Archives. The works are similar to those submitted for graduate degrees. In some cases, publications in formal literature or presentations at meetings have been direct results of work done by the undergraduates for their reports.

Firm gives A&M \$5,945

3D International has presented Texas A&M University nearly \$6,000 in gifts from alumni and a matching grant from the Houston-based architectural, engineering, planning and project management firm.

Jack M. Rains, 3D International's executive vice president and a 1960 Texas A&M graduate, said the firm's total gift of \$5,945 represents a 75 percent increase over the amount given last year. The firm initiated its program of support for Texas A&M in 1976.

"We feel very strongly about Texas A&M and its leadership, and it is always a source of great pride for all of us at 3D International to demonstrate our support of, and commitment to, its programs in this way," Rains said.

The funds include \$2,850 specifically for the College of Architecture and Environmental Design and \$100 for the Student Conference on National Affairs hosted annually by the University. The \$2,995 balance is for unrestricted use by the University, Rains said.

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