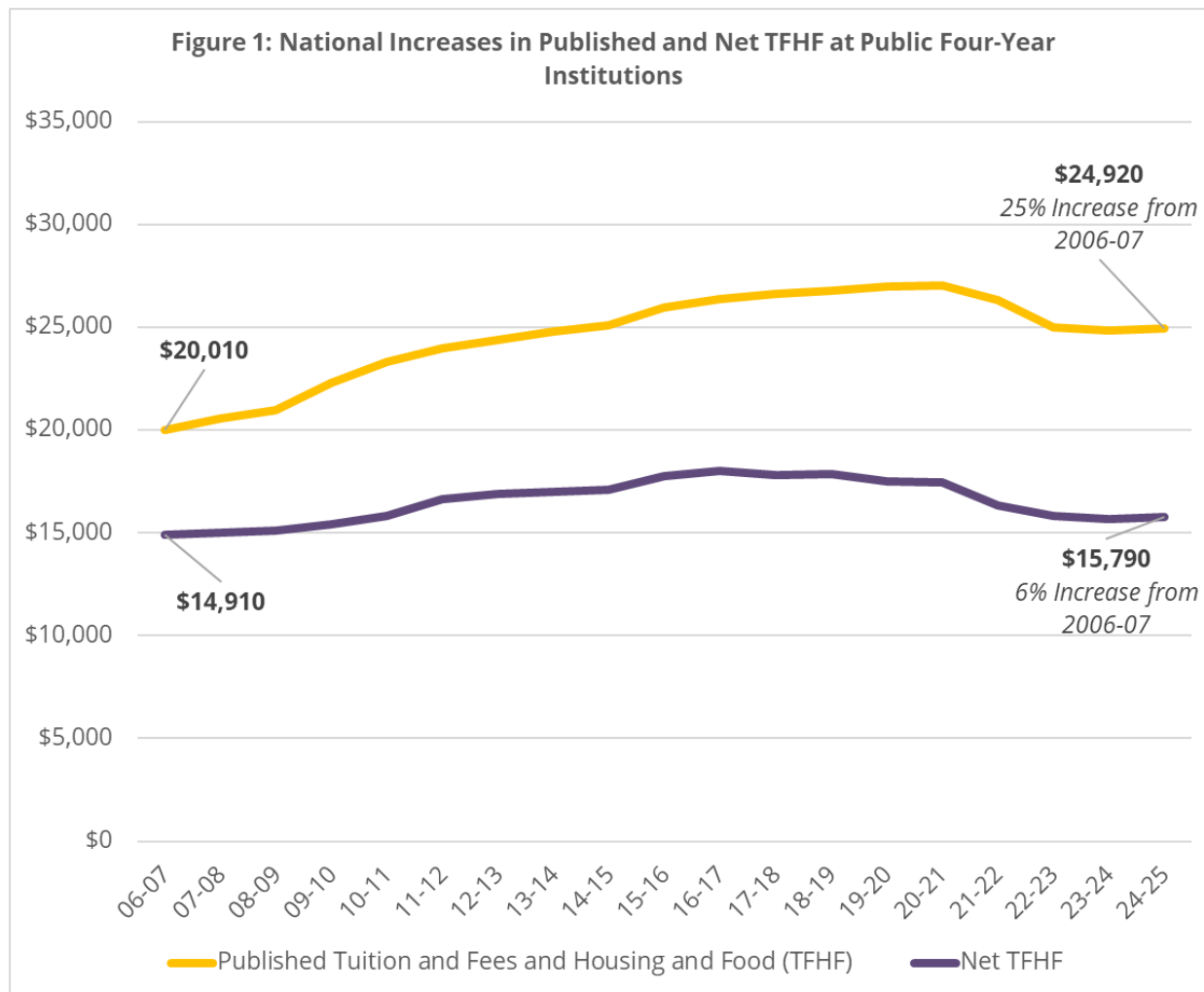


## Subject: Published Price vs. Net Price in Higher Education – 2025 Update

Published college prices—which include tuition, fees, housing, and food (TFHF)—have increased dramatically over the past two decades. However, **net prices**<sup>1</sup>—TFHF minus grant and scholarship aid from federal, state, or institutional sources—**have increased at a much slower rate** over that same period and have largely declined (after adjusting for inflation) since 2016-17.

As seen in Figure 1 (below), between 2006-07 and 2024-25, *published* prices for resident students rose an average of 25 percent at public four-year institutions (going from \$20,010 to \$24,920), whereas *net* prices for residents at public four-year institutions rose an average of 6 percent (going from \$14,910 to \$15,790). This difference can be attributed to federal, state, and institutional aid.



(Source: Figure 9 data. The College Board, [Trends in College Pricing and Student Aid 2024](#), page 18. Average Published and Net Prices are in 2024 dollars.)

When considering increases in net price, it is worth keeping two things in mind:

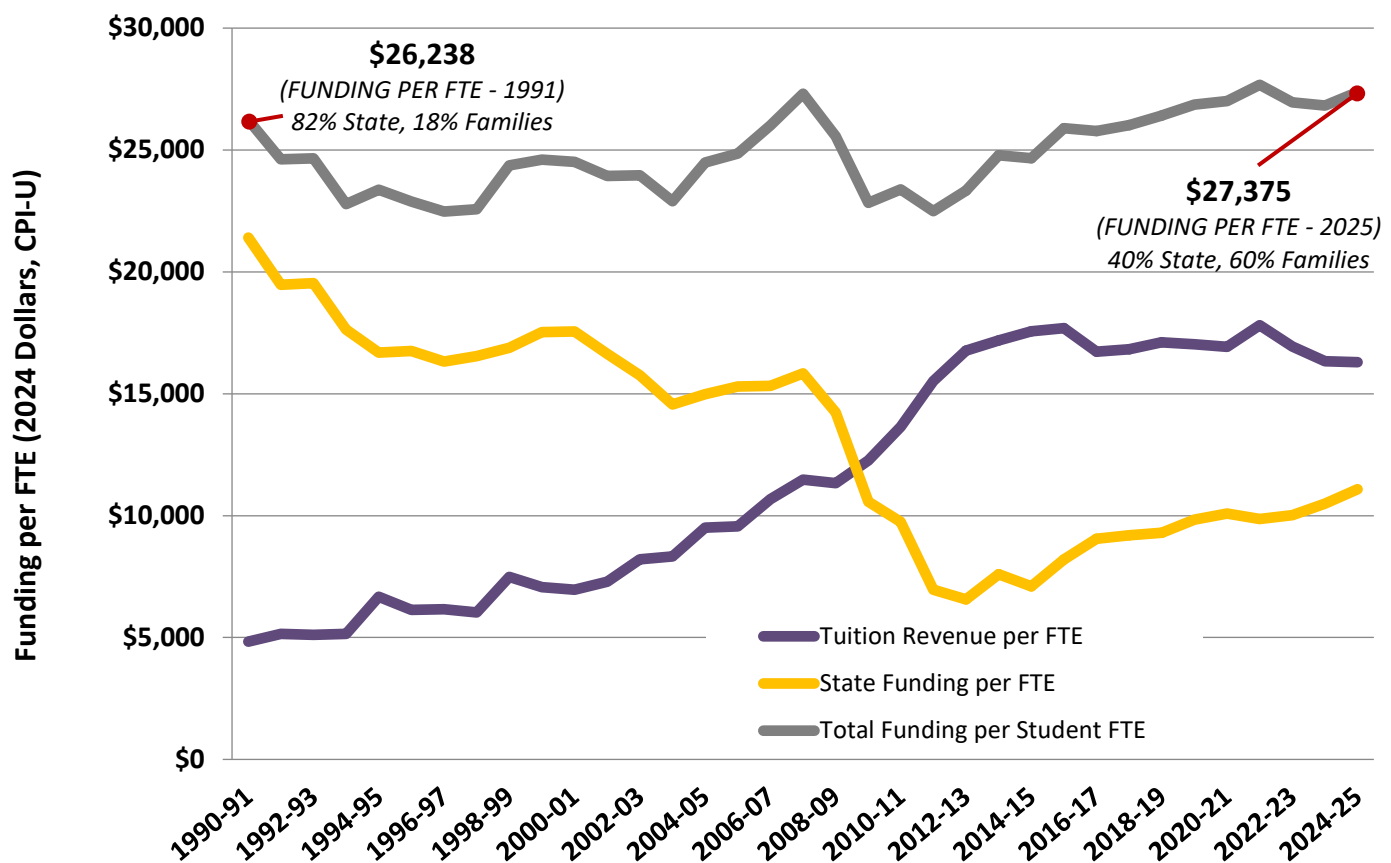
1. **The price behavior of higher education bears more similarity to service industries than to goods-producing industries.** Unlike goods producers, service industries have few opportunities to increase productivity without decreasing quality. This is primarily due to a reliance on expensive, high-skill workers (who comprise over 80

<sup>1</sup> Net price is the “total cost of attendance” (calculated using the weighted average of sticker prices for students in different living situations) minus average aid. Specifically, the “cost of attendance” is the weighted average of published price, weighted by how many students are living on campus, versus off-campus, versus at home. Average financial aid is subtracted from the total cost of attendance to get to net price.

percent of higher education employees) and cutting-edge technology. As a result, higher education prices behave similarly to other personal services offered by highly educated providers. Notably, the cost curves for dentists, lawyers, and physicians essentially [mirror those for higher education](#).

2. **Tuition increases at public institutions are due, in large part, to a decades-long trend of state budget cuts.** Like many other state institutions, the UW has endured numerous state funding cuts in past biennia. Consequently, the majority of funding formerly provided by the state is now borne by students and their families. As seen in Figure 2 below, in 1990-91, Washington state contributed 82 percent of the total funding per UW student FTE, and families were responsible for 18 percent. In 2023-24, state funds covered only 40 percent of the total funding per FTE, leaving 60 percent to students and families.

Figure 2: University of Washington State and Tuition Funding per Student FTE



Rising tuition rates could have meant a decline in access and in the economic diversity of students, but this has not been the case at the UW. **The UW increased its contribution to institutional financial aid in order to minimize net-price increases, particularly for students with the most financial need.** As of the 2023-24 academic year:

- **22 percent** of UW undergraduates were eligible for Pell Grant funding.
- **20 percent (6,625)** of UW resident undergraduate students were eligible for the Husky Promise.
- **41 percent (13,700)** of UW students received funds from the Washington College Grant.
- **27 percent** of entering freshmen are first-generation, four-year degree-seeking students.
- In 2023-24, **55 percent** of UW undergraduates received some form of financial aid, with approximately **\$457 million** in aid given. The UW also awarded more than **\$100 million** in institutional grants and scholarships specifically to Washington residents.

More information can be found in our [2024-25 Fast Facts](#).

Table 1 compares the UW in Seattle to its peers (the U.S. News & World Report Top Public Research Institutions) on two common metrics of affordability and access: net price and percent of students receiving Pell grants. In 2022-23, the **published price** for resident undergraduates at Seattle was **\$32,090** whereas the **net price** for first-time, full-time, resident undergraduates at Seattle was **\$11,023**. As the table shows, **the UW in Seattle has the lowest net price points of its peers, and about 71 percent of all UW undergraduates graduate with no known debt.** <sup>2</sup>

**Table 1: 2023 U.S. News & World Report Peer Comparisons: Resident Undergraduate Net Price and Percent Pell Recipients among All Undergraduates; Source: IPEDS 2023**

Institution Name	2022-23	
	Net Price	% Receiving Pell
<b>University of Washington-Seattle Campus</b>	<b>\$11,023</b>	<b>15.46%</b>
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	\$11,140	20.26%
University of Florida	\$11,521	21.98%
Purdue University-Main Campus	\$12,421	12.98%
University of California-San Diego	\$13,293	32.89%
University of Wisconsin-Madison	\$14,216	15.32%
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign	\$14,297	23.81%
University of California-Irvine	\$14,647	37.29%
Florida State University	\$14,903	23.75%
University of California-Los Angeles	\$15,166	27.10%
University of California-Santa Barbara	\$15,283	27.99%
University of Maryland-College Park	\$15,833	18.59%
Georgia Institute of Technology-Main Campus	\$15,901	13.67%
University of Georgia	\$16,303	17.22%
University of Minnesota-Twin Cities	\$16,730	16.87%
University of California-Berkeley	\$16,997	27.33%
University of California-Davis	\$17,315	30.78%
University of Virginia-Main Campus	\$17,831	13.71%
The University of Texas at Austin	\$18,036	25.11%
University of Michigan-Ann Arbor	\$19,005	17.57%
Rutgers University-New Brunswick	\$19,052	27.20%
Ohio State University-Main Campus	\$19,575	19.45%
Texas A & M University-College Station	\$21,610	19.23%
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University	\$22,205	15.01%
University of Connecticut	\$22,324	24.16%
University of Massachusetts-Amherst	\$22,954	20.29%
University of Pittsburgh-Pittsburgh Campus	\$24,338	13.78%
<b>U.S. News Peer Average</b>	<b>\$17,034</b>	<b>21.67%</b>

Variations in net price from year to year are due to many factors, including changes in tuition, fees, financial aid, and other aspects of student budgets. Overall, other components of student budgets (books, transportation, personal expenses) have not changed significantly, and the UW has kept its commitment to institutional aid and to keeping mandatory fees and other expenses low. These factors have allowed the UW in Seattle's net price to remain relatively stable and below peer institutions.

<sup>2</sup> The University has no records of students' consumer loans and therefore cannot say definitively that these students have no debt.