



Memorandum

To: Joint Budget Committee
From: Alfredo Kemm, JBC Staff (303-866-4549)
Date: April 21, 2026
Subject: University of Northern Colorado Tuition Flexibility Request

On April 7, 2026, the University of Northern Colorado submitted a request for tuition flexibility (attached) that seeks to provide an increase for undergraduate resident tuition up to a maximum of 4.0 percent from the current approved 3.5 percent.

The request states that even with an increase of 4.0 percent, the University will remain the State's most affordable public research institution.

The request identifies that the additional 0.5 percent would generate an additional \$300,000 for the University. Staff estimates an additional \$229,654 in tuition cash funds revenue.

Staff recommends that the Committee approve the tuition flexibility request for the University of Northern Colorado. If approved, staff will prepare a conference committee amendment that establishes this tuition cap variance in the tuition footnote and adjusts the tuition revenue by the staff-calculated difference of \$229,654.



UNIVERSITY OF
NORTHERN COLORADO
Office of the President

To: Joint Budget Committee Members
From: Andy Feinstein, UNC President
RE: UNC FY 2026-27 Tuition Rates
Date: April 7, 2026
CC: Dale Pratt, UNC; Alfredo Kemm, JBC Staff; Kayla Tibbals, Nexus Policy Group

As part of UNC's FY 2026–27 financial planning, I respectfully request flexibility to increase undergraduate resident tuition above the proposed 3.5% cap, up to a maximum of 4.0%.

This request is both measured and necessary. Even with the proposed state appropriation and a 3.5% tuition increase, UNC faces a structural gap driven by unavoidable cost increases, including inflationary pressures, compensation needs, and essential operating expenses required to sustain student success. The additional 0.5% flexibility would generate approximately \$300,000—modest in scale, but critical to closing this gap without further reducing core services.

We have already taken significant steps to absorb cost pressures internally. In FY26, UNC implemented approximately \$14 million in operating reductions, including layoffs and the elimination of vacant positions. These actions reflect a disciplined and responsible approach to financial stewardship. Additional reductions could directly impact academic quality, student support services, and the progress we have made in improving student retention and completion.

Importantly, alternative revenue options are limited. Approximately 85% of UNC students are Colorado residents, and while non-resident tuition increases are proposed at 5%, market data indicates we are already at or near competitive limits for that population. As a result, non-resident tuition cannot meaningfully offset rising costs.

The requested increase represents a minimal impact on students. For a full-time undergraduate resident student, the difference between a 3.5% and 4.0% increase is approximately \$60 per semester before financial aid. Through our strategic financial aid strategies—including tuition promise programs and targeted institutional aid—many of our highest-need students will see this impact significantly reduced or fully mitigated.

Even with a 4.0% increase, UNC will remain Colorado's most affordable public research university. Our tuition and fee rates are already among the lowest in the state—and below all other public research institutions—before accounting for financial aid. This request preserves that position while ensuring we do not compromise educational quality.

We are grateful for the Joint Budget Committee's increased investments in Colorado higher education and recognize the challenging budget environment the state is facing. We appreciate the diligent work the committee members have given to resolving these complex concerns.

For these reasons, and as UNC completes its remaining FY27 budget work, I respectfully request the Joint Budget Committee's approval for undergraduate resident tuition flexibility above 3.5% and up to a maximum of 4%.