Pennsylvania universities stave off deeper budget cuts

Premium content from Pittsburgh Business Times by Malia Spencer, Reporter

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Pennsylvania’s state-supported universities escaped the annual budget battle with as much funding as they had this year, avoiding deep cuts that were originally proposed by the governor in February.

For the University of Pittsburgh it means 2012-13 funding of $136 million and for Pennsylvania State University it’s $227.7 million, according to the budget signed June 30 by Gov. Tom Corbett.

“We are very grateful to the Legislature and the administration for restoring the proposed cut to Pitt’s appropriation for Fiscal Year 2013,” said John Fedele, associate director of news for the University of Pittsburgh, in an email.

Corbett’s original budget proposal sought to cut Pitt’s state support by 30 percent, a move that university officials said would lead to steep tuition increases. That cut would have been on top of a 20 percent cut last year.

“Legislators heard from many members of the Pitt community; alumni, parents and students, and their action is recognition of the importance of strong research universities that serve Pennsylvania’s best and brightest students and are a huge engine of economic growth and stability for the region,” Fedele said.
The State System of Higher Education — which includes California University, Slippery Rock University and Indiana University — is set to receive $412.8 million in state funding.

“We are pleased the budget includes the restoration of funding to current year levels,” said Kenn Marshall, spokesman for the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education. He noted the board is expected to meet within the next two weeks, at which time tuition will be set for the 2012-13 academic year. “With the level funding it will in the long-run benefit our students and be reflected in new tuition,” he said.

The state’s community colleges also saw flat funding levels at $212.3 million.

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