

Colby-Sawyer College Tuition Reset Overview

President's Institute
Council of Independent Colleges
January 6, 2023

Colby-Sawyer College



Colby-Sawyer College

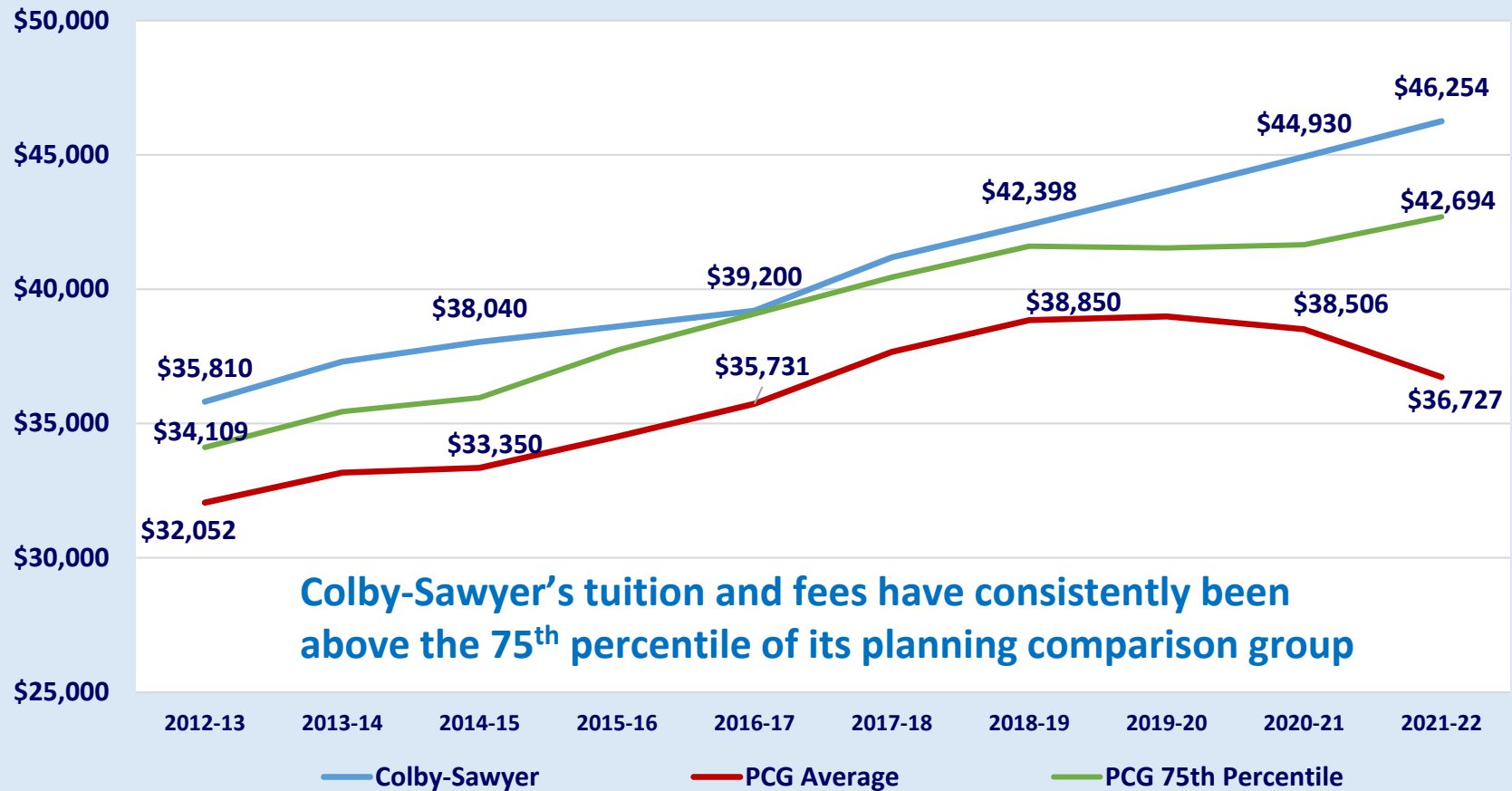
- Founded in 1837
- Located in Dartmouth-Lake Sunapee region of NH
- All women's college until 1989
- Forty percent of students are first in their families to attend college
- Forty percent of students enroll from NH, another 40 percent from New England
- Largest majors include nursing, business, biology, psychology, and exercise science

Why Pursue a Tuition Reset?

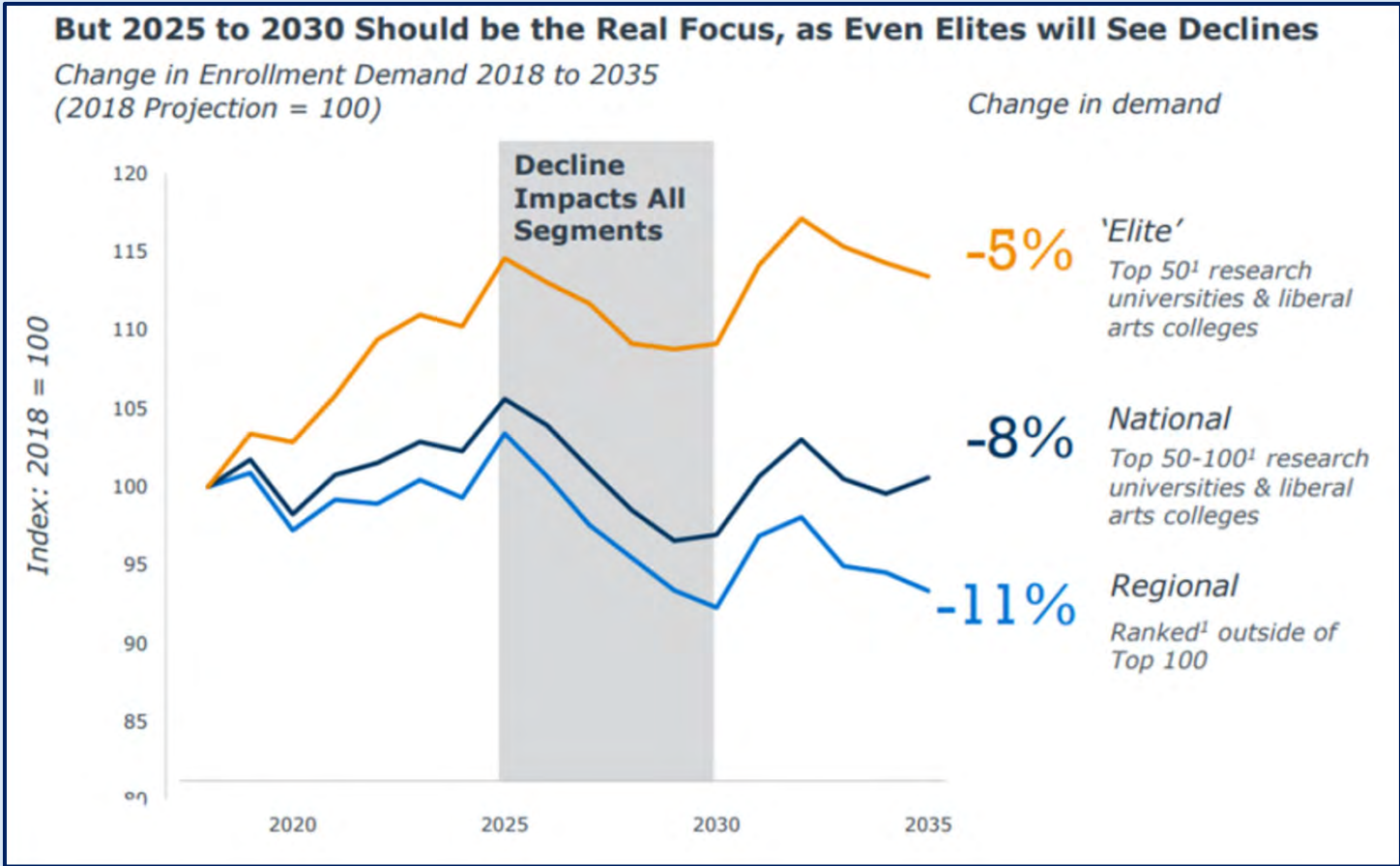
Public Perception of Sticker Price

- Salle Mae 2022 Update to College Costs Report
 - ❖ 81% of students said that they eliminate schools on the basis of published tuition price
 - ❖ 61% of families eliminate a school without any research beyond its published price
 - ❖ 45% of families that think scholarships are only for exceptional students
 - ❖ 36% of families that think scholarships are not worth applying for if a family makes too much money
 - ❖ 30% of families did not file a FAFSA form
- How many families were we not able to reach because of our high sticker price?

Tuition and Fees (Sticker Price): CSC vs. Planning Comparison Group



Demographic Cliff



Source: Nathan Grawe

Reasons for A Reset

(We met all of the criteria)

Inquiry and applicant pools have been declining	
Enrollment has been declining	
The college is under capacity	
The tuition discount rate is above 50%	
Almost all students receive institutional aid	
Many competitors have lower published prices	

Source: Lucie Lapovsky article "Do Price Resets Work?"

Process and Timeline for Reset

Timeline

- January 2022: Introduced concept to Board of Trustees at winter meeting
- Hired tuition reset consultant immediately thereafter
- February 2022: Formed Tuition Reset Group
- May 2022: Consultant presented to full board at spring meeting
- June 2022: Senior officers met with peers from institution that had gone through a reset
- July 2022: Board approved tuition reset at summer retreat
- Late August 2022: Held all faculty and staff meeting to inform internal community
- September 2022: Launched reset publicly to prospective and current students
- November 2022: Launched institutional marketing campaign

Reset Working Group

- Trustees
 - ❖ Chair of the Board
 - ❖ Vice Chair
 - ❖ Chair, Finance and Investment Committee
 - ❖ 3 additional trustees
- Staff
 - ❖ President
 - ❖ Vice President for Admission and Financial Aid
 - ❖ Vice President for Finance and Administration
 - ❖ Vice President for Marketing and Communications
 - ❖ Dean, School of Arts and Sciences
 - ❖ Assistant Athletic Director and Head Baseball Coach

Tuition Reset Process

- Lowering overall price, but net cost to students remains the same for vast majority of students
- Some students will see a savings because the net price they are paying is above the new tuition price; these students receive little Colby-Sawyer aid

Goals of Our Tuition Reset

- Grow applications and ideally change the composition of application pool
- Increase enrollment by modest amount (especially Year Two and beyond)
- Increase net revenue (total and per student)

Potential Tuition Reset Outcomes



91%

Percent of tuition reset
schools that saw
increase in applications

Source: IPEDS data

Tuition Reset “Sticker” Price

Approach	Tuition	Room & Board	Other Expenses	Total
Keep price the same	\$46,364	\$16,368	\$2,000	\$64,732
Tuition Reset Approach	\$17,500 -62.3%	\$16,859 3%	\$2,000 0%	\$36,359 -43.8%

- Reviewed the approach of schools that have pursued a reset
- More reflective of what our students actually pay
- Private college education at a public institution cost
 - ❖ UNH’s in-state tuition is \$15,520 (in-state)
 - ❖ Plymouth State in-state tuition is \$14,492 (in-state)
 - ❖ Keene State in-state tuition is \$14,638 (in-state)

Why Now?

- **The College has the opportunity to approach the tuition reset from a position of financial strength**
 - ❖ Record highs for fundraising the past two years
 - ❖ Endowment growth
 - ❖ Consistent Department of Education score of 3.0
- **One of the few areas of growth despite the demographic cliff will be first-generation students who are particularly susceptible to sticker price**
- **Exciting time on campus**
 - ❖ New programs at the graduate level
 - ❖ Two new construction projects
 - ❖ Chance to tout strong outcomes and distinctiveness of all majors

Communications and Marketing

Communicating to Current Students

- Each student received a letter that compared their current financial aid package to the new package under the \$17,500 tuition price
- Specific financial aid questions were directed to the financial aid office
- General questions were answered, to the best of their ability, by faculty and staff
 - ❖ We created extensive FAQ page for all constituencies

Communication to External Constituents

- Communicated initial announcement through social media, admissions CRM, alumni CRM, and on dedicated college website
- Every communication to prospective students included at least a “p.s.” regarding new sticker price
- Emails and postcards to college counselors
- Emails and postcards to prospective parents
- Approximately one-third of attendees at Fall Open House cited new price as reason for attending

Media Coverage

- Local outlets covered our announcement immediately
- Hechinger Report published article that was picked up by the *Washington Post* and by *Slate* in November 2022 and December 2022 respectively
- *New York Times* reporter came to campus in September 2022, actual article was printed in December 2022

Institutional Marketing

- Numerous themes around 100% concept
 - ❖ Affordability
 - ❖ Career preparedness
 - 100% of students complete internship, 100% complete senior capstone project, 99% placement rate within 6 months
 - ❖ Right fit
 - ❖ Committed to student success
 - ❖ Reach your full potential
- Billboards, airport banners, NPR ads, video on streaming platforms, digital ads
- Dedicated website where we can track visitor volume

Sample Marketing Image

Previous attachment

100%

possible for you.

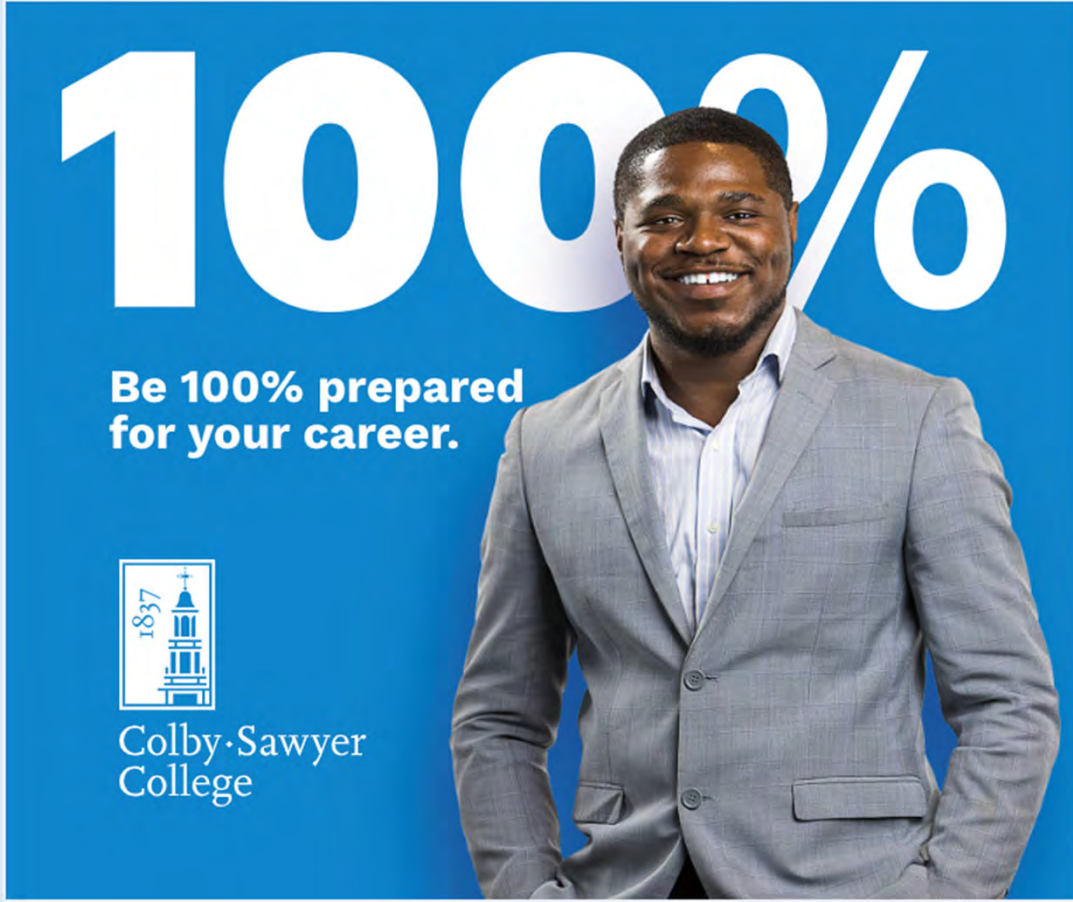
Colby-Sawyer.edu/100



Colby·Sawyer
College




Sample Marketing Image



100%

**Be 100% prepared
for your career.**



Colby Sawyer
College

Lessons Learned

Lessons Learned – Positive Outcomes

- We were the first to announce in our region a reset (another institution followed 3 weeks later)
- Faculty, staff, alumni, prospective parents all very positive about change
- Very few parents of current students who were upset about change
- Strong media coverage
- Engaging with high schools that have not sent students to CSC before

Lessons Learned - Challenges

- We moved very quickly to implement this change
 - ❖ Trustees did not want to wait until Fall 2024
 - ❖ Taxed a small number of staff to a high degree
- Talking to an institution that had gone through reset was key for senior officer buy-in
 - ❖ Wish we had done this earlier
- Communication with current students about reset likely too densely worded
 - ❖ Held open forum for current students
- Two month delay between reset announcement and institutional marketing campaign

Unknowns

- Unclear what enrollment gains we will make in Year One
 - ❖ Consultant cautioned that Year Two and Year Three would be most likely gains
- Not sure how prevalent high price/high quality model is in New England
 - ❖ Crucial that admissions, financial aid, and coaches all focus on net cost to families
- Would applications continued to decline if we had not pursued reset?