

from policy makers and may advance through the legislature. Gov. Chris Christie, a Republican, has not taken a public position on the package of bills.

Other proposals from Ms. Riley fall well outside the mainstream and seem unlikely to advance, including a bill to bar colleges from requiring meal plans, another that would close public colleges with a six-year graduation rate below 50 percent, and one requiring the state auditor to determine whether student fees benefit students.

The proposal that college leaders are most concerned about would freeze tuition and fees for nine semesters for all incoming students at public and private colleges in the state.

John B. Wilson, president of the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in New Jersey, which represents private colleges, said it is not clear that the state has the authority to freeze tuition at private institutions.

Assemblywoman Riley, who is also an elementary school teacher, said that the bills were meant to start a conversation about college costs, but that campus leaders were only beginning to understand the impact that tuition increases have on students and families.

"They're going to have to wake up and get it done," she said. "They do a great job of educating, but there are things they can do, surely, to cut costs."

The Other Side

When Ms. Riley and her colleagues in the legislature talk about cost cutting and efficiency, however, higher-education leaders hear mostly and redundantly about regulation.

"Many of these proposals, if not most, are already done or on the way to being done," said Darryl G. Greer, a senior fellow at the William J. Hughes

