

## Day of the Locusts

Today kindergarten kop and girly men signed a [budget](#). Meanwhile the flames rose, licking away at the future. Re-regulators chased the deregulated who sheepishly tried to blend in with the mob that wanted to know how all this could happen.



So what does this august achievement in Sacramento mean for us? Nothing. Actually, it means as a charade means. Our CSU budget is at the level that the governor suggested last spring. Since that amount [falls](#) beneath what the Compact stipulated and contracts required for full funding, I suspect many of them will be re-opened. My guess is that CSU will try to push

back full payment to later years. In the short run such deferral might make the campuses look like they have more funds. But, were I to guess, I'd say that we are likely to lose a lot of that coin to a mid-year cut. M. Froggie, imprinted on my security blanket, tells me that the oddball securitization schemes to fund the budget have been discredited by the national disaster in the securitization of mortgages. This reaction has nothing to do with ethics; it has all to do with loss of confidence in the wine and wafer of capital—credit. Further, the state deficit only will worsen as tax revenue diminishes. Devaluation in the market, the loss of capital gains from sales, and decreases in collective wages because of a rising unemployment rate and other reasons all indicate that some mid-year revisions will occur. But I am an English major. I know from symbolic locusts, not from economic policy and political behavior. Still, I predict tumult in the system and state over fee increases and contracts for the next few years.

We, here, are doing well. Enrollment is, yes, too high. The plus is that this shows that reputation is outpacing our efforts at braking, that we can keep more faculty on temporary contracts employed when jobs otherwise are scarce, and that we are successfully enrolling—not imprisoning and not out-sourcing—the region's young. The new local fee, extension, non-resident enrollment, advancement and a kind and caring faculty and staff provide the resources and resilience.

Given that fees likely will rise and that, anyway, the cost of attendance can rise because of the diminishing availability of direct aid and the spike in fuel prices 30% to 40% higher than last fall, we need to do the following:

1. Each college should figure that it must reduce non-general fund costs to students by \$500 to \$700 per FTE over the next year. There is an [essay](#) on this on the Academic Affairs web. Patrolling book costs can help. Getting book orders in early (they are due at least eight weeks before term) can help, too. Using e-texts as well as the textbook rental program can assist. Bear

in mind that advising plays a role. Remind students that in CSU one pays per term, not per credit. Again, see previous [documents](#) on this.

2. Be very careful in building schedules so that we rotate required classes through time blocks during the year. The President's Cabinet approved the move to block scheduling beginning next fall. Your dean is ready and able to [explain](#) (see lower left) how and why. The overall effects will be to maximize the use of classrooms outside the 9-2, Monday through Thursday, window; to lengthen time blocks for classes; to respond to faculty and student demand for this lengthening; and to decrease for many the trips that they must make here each week. Work that faculty have done on [e-courses](#) contributes to these economies, too. Obviously, there are trade-offs in everything that we do.

Rather soon, we begin to [plan](#) for next year. We are aiming for enrollment near this year's figure. We expect, at the end of the day, no new money that is free of obligations, un-tethered to mandated costs like benefits and salaries. We are asking each college to redouble efforts to make budgeting transparent to everyone in the unit. And we will ask them to show how their work advances the causes of sustainability and wellness—you will hear about these matters from deans and colleagues—as the year moves on.

Finally, we must [understand](#) that it is in our vital interest to develop non-general streams of revenue because the state reservoir has drawn down. Advancement, grants and contracts, clinical services, and extension all play roles. This poses an organizational problem. Typically, regional universities are organized to collect and disburse funds centrally; however, non-general fund activity requires vigilance and coordination on the frontier, the borderland between the university and the public. We need consistent business practices, an astute understanding of risk, and mutual awareness so that we can cross-refer clients so that they can get appropriate help.

So, it is the day of the locusts. We know, though, that they pass through cyclically. We have prepared. We know where we are going. My advice: do not wear straw hats.

Harry Hellenbrand  
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs  
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