

A Faculty Member's Perspective on Aligning the CSU Mission and Funding

Our mission is to enable students to realize their educational goals, and to promote the welfare and intellectual progress of students and society. As the preponderance of revenue shifts from the State to the student, the CSU System is forced to reexamine the status quo. All CSU constituents need to come together to make purposeful change.

Our Top Priority: Heal the tattered relations between faculty, staff, students, and management. We are all demoralized. There needs to be a renewed sense of commitment to what is best for all, and not just in the uncertain future, but also in the present. CSU politics is a non-zero-sum game. The sum of gains and losses by the various groups can be either more or less than what we began with. Unsolved labor problems and weak shared governance structures are detrimental to the health of the university system. We can develop cooperative behavior patterns and choose funding strategies that are supported by broader consensus. We can work towards win-win solutions.

Purposeful Change: We believe that there are many alternatives to cutting enrollment. We do not see the necessity of faculty lay-offs. The CSU can use student and tax-payer money to greater advantage for the state. We strongly oppose academic and financial decisions that accentuate the budget crisis, regardless of the merit of the political ends. The public trusts that the CSU will act in the interest of all Californians.

We can allow ourselves to succeed financially without as much state support. We can reward efficiency and good management. We can encourage talent and resourcefulness. We can take shared governance seriously. We can bargain with more good faith on both sides. We can trust campus presidents, if and only if, their decisions are balanced with true shared governance. As the CSU transitions to a semi-private entity, we can emphasize efficiency, incentives, and shared decision-making.

Rebalance: Accessibility, affordability, and quality are competing educational goods in the CSU. One cannot be altered without affecting the value of others. In the past, many financial decisions were made one at a time. Going forward, we must take a competing goods approach. Each solution will affect others to follow. Any increase in support in one area inevitably has lost opportunity costs for other priorities. The overarching task is to define a balance among these priorities that is consistent with CSU's mission, our commitment to quality, and that best serves our students.

Relax the Restrictions on the Use of One Time Money: The distinction between state appropriations and tuition/fees needs to be altered. All money, including Auxiliary and Enterprise funds, can be usable to support our main business operation, instruction. The concept of one time money and base budget ceased to make sense as soon as the state stopped funding 70% of the CSU's operating costs. Restricted funding categories create an impediment to finding solutions to our financial problems. Resources must fund our primary business operation, instruction, first. It is better to charge higher tuition and provide required classes than to charge a tuition which is insufficient to guarantee timely progress to degree. Tuition must be sufficient to support the graduation rate initiative.

Enrollment Management: The Chancellor's main tool for increasing revenue has been the manipulation of enrollment and tuition. We continue to see these variables as dominant in revenue calculations. Increasing enrollment by a moderate pace of 3-5% over the next 3 years will ease the immediate financial needs of the university, while serving more students. The increased enrollment can be absorbed by most campuses at a fairly low cost. While this approach may not be sustainable in the long run, as all exponential models fail at some point, it can have a stimulus effect.

Decrease the Politics of Fear: We want to abandon the strategy of reducing supply to increase the strength of political demands. That strategy has run its course and now we believe it is time for a change in direction. We also call for CFA and Management to come to table. We ask faculty to be less dependent on the state and show greater initiative for contributing positive solutions to our financial problems.

More Cost Effective: State resources are limited. Student resources are limited. The means of producing goods and services are limited. Scarcity limits our options and necessitates that we make choices. We need to do better at estimating our marginal costs and benefits. We can utilize more mathematical modeling and practices from private enterprises.

We favor strategies that result in slow growth, full employment (no lay-offs, proper replacement of retiring faculty), local autonomy, less legislative control, more equitable distribution of resources between campuses, reduced capital expansion, and improved academics. We have the capacity to produce more with existing resources.

We can look at facts, formulate cause and effect (test, modify), develop models, and make some predictions of the probable effects of certain actions (such as state funding will decline at a certain rate). We need to have greater clarity as to what and how services will be offered, who will receive the services, and how the system will accommodate change.

Examine Funding Differences between Campuses: The CSU's money belongs to the state and the students. Different campuses have different abilities to be self-supporting. This topic deserves greater public scrutiny.

SUG: Perhaps we can rethink State University Grants. Here are two alternatives:

* SUG can become a mixture of a grant and loan program, or

* SUG can become a work study program; this means that student do not receive an outright grant, but rather fill temporary positions on-campus or off-campus for some specified number of hours. The university and community can benefit from the student labor and at the same time students will continue to receive funding and work experience.

We can increase the number of students working on service learning projects including caring for the elderly, teaching or tutoring at schools, factories, or in adult education classes, and preparing high school students for the ELM exam. We can even apply for federal or state grants or private funding for students to work instead of receiving grant money.

On Academic Standards: There has been a cultural change in thinking about the notion of education as more of a private rather than a public good. The universities and the colleges come to budget hearings in Sacramento pitching the idea that every dollar invested in CSU is going to come back several fold because graduates are going to get jobs and they will be paying higher taxes. External voices are really premising the purpose of higher education upon filling jobs. The CSU shares in making that argument in Sacramento because the fight over scarce resources encouraged the CSU to point out that higher education provides an investment that pays returns. However, we are concerned that our notion of investment has just become so narrow, particularly for a public university system. An older notion of the university is that it serves a broader public interest in terms of the society, in terms of democracy. We must be cautious about narrowing that notion, out of expediency as a way to try and get a larger share of that pie, for it can come back and haunt us as these arguments shape policies in Sacramento and higher education has to sit on this very narrow pedestal of economic gain and private benefits.

The original meaning of the word university is a community of teachers and scholars. It is important to maintain proper levels of instructional personnel; it is our *raison d'être*. We must replace retiring faculty with the best available tenure track faculty, and ensure there is no disruption in educational services.

Set Priorities

- Improve instruction and increase research experiences.
- Streamline the path to graduation. Be sure that all necessary classes are provided, otherwise, close the program or change the requirements.
- Be more competitive with the for-profits over government funding and be highly averse to turning away college eligible students.
- Work on improving the pipeline with the high schools. If we accept college eligible but not college ready students, it is our responsibility to provide the fundamentals in a rigorous manner. We can not do more with less here; fundamentals provide the basis on which all further academic achievement rests. The need for remediation will not decline greatly in the near future. Unless we can fix K-12 or change admission standards, it is our responsibility to address this problem.

Align Spending with our Mission:

- Estimate the effect of any proposed change on the revenue by funding category.
- Discuss how changes in resources will impact human resources.
- Assess the proposed changes impact on academic quality.

Decrease Costs

- Schedule existing space more efficiently and automate registration waiting lists to better judge demand for classes and help to fill class openings quickly and efficiently.
- Reduce expenditures on supplies, equipment, furniture, and technology.
- Decrease capital expenditures; in particular, spend no General Fund monies on Capital Outlays. Use auxiliary funds for this purpose.
- Run Advancement as a self-support auxiliary. There is no reason for general fund money to support an entity that returns restricted money.
- Reexamine all the smaller university operations. Most are top heavy with management. Aggressively increase enrollment. They must make significant progress to cut costs and increase revenue.

Increase Revenue

- Allow for more campus autonomy over enrollment.
- Increase tuition for student with units loads in excess of 140 units or repeated courses.
- Optimize self-supported summer and intersession.
- Expand non-resident enrollment as long as resident students are not supplanted.
- Explore different fee structure models. Consider tuition increases.
- Examine the cost of graduate programs. Consider increasing tuition for resident graduate students to 150%.
- Consider two and three-year certificate programs (non-B.A.) which reduce general education requirements.
- Devote part of the State University Grant money to a new work-study and/or student loan program.

Thanks for considering these ideas,

Carol Shubin
Professor, Math, CSUN

Ivor Weiner
Associate Professor, Special Education, CSUN

Cheryl Spector
Professor, English, and Director of First Year Experiences, CSUN