

Letter to the CSUN Faculty Senate, August 2009

In response to a \$584 million dollar drop in state funding, the California State University (CSU) Board of Trustees approved

- (1) enrollment reductions of 40,000 students over two years
- (2) additional rate increases for full-time State University Fee by roughly \$672 for undergraduate students, \$780 for teacher credential students and \$828 for graduate students.

During the 2009-2010 academic year, all CSU employees, except campus police and teaching assistants, are furloughed, reducing salaries by more than 9%.

These measures were taken to preserve quality academic programs and student services.

The undergraduate fees total \$4,026 per year and most students pay an additional campus fee of \$801. CSU undergraduate students will pay approximately \$4,827 per year. There is no question that fee hikes hit the students who are not "poor enough" to qualify for grants, but not rich enough to go elsewhere. Nonetheless, the CSU continues to offer the lowest fee rate among comparable institutions and many students can receive some form of financial aid or grants.

As we watch essential services being cut, there is very little sign that Californians are in favor of higher taxes. Unemployment is growing and property values are still depressed. Therefore, it seems unlikely that the CSU will see state funding increase in the near future. The big plan is to seek a bailout from the federal government's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds. Indeed, the CSU is the largest recipient of federal Pell Awards, and the federal stimulus package will provide an additional \$81 million for 120,000 of the CSU's students. In this time of entitlement claims, the cry is to send us more money to prevent further lay-offs and cut.

All of us who have committed our lives to teaching, research, and service to the CSU are in favor of quality education. But many are dismayed that the CSU is turning away students with ready money from instructors and departments that are willing and able to teach. CSU campuses that exceed enrollment targets will be penalized and have fees removed. The idea that some programs can expand based on fees, and yes, further fee increases, and enrollment growth without huge increases in state money is rejected by the Chancellor's Office.

We are concerned that cutting revenue generated from the fees of 40,000 students, even if unmatched by state contributions, is unwise. (Lost revenue is estimated at  $\$40,000 \times 4000 = \$160,000,000$  from fees alone.) We question the management decisions that turn students away from the CSU, perhaps, permanently. Even the economic community surrounding the university will be adversely affected.

GM does not have to be the model for the CSU. We do not need to refuse revenue for the political aim of forcing California or America to pay more for education at a time when there isn't more or when we

could be more-sufficient.

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