

August 17, 2011

To the Executive Committee Academic Senate CSU,

This is a call for the formation of a CSU Choices Group to review the overall state of the CSU system.

The Choices Group is guided by principles of maintaining access, affordability and the highest levels of quality in instruction, research, and public service. These principles can be "competing goods:" One cannot be altered without affecting the value of others. In the past, many policy decisions at CSU were made one at a time, often without considering the impact of changing one variable upon the others. 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 opportunity costs for other priorities.

The Choices Group and five working subgroups will identify multiple positive attributes worthy of promoting, but priorities must be established to balance the budget. The overarching task is to define an overall balance among these priorities that is consistent with CSU's mission, commitment to quality, and best serves California.

The working groups – which will focus on the size, shape, and autonomy of CSU, its education and curriculum, access and affordability, and funding and research strategies – are composed of a wide spectrum of members drawn from the CSU Board of Trustees, faculty, students, alumni, administration, staff and other experts not affiliated with CSU. Much of the expertise lies with our faculty. Close consultation with the Senate is essential for recommendations pertaining to curriculum and other core faculty responsibilities. For recommendations in all other areas, the Academic Senate will have full opportunity for consultation and review.

I have a list of suggested topics for the five subgroups and a timeline for a draft of CSU Choices, see attached files. This work grew out of many conversations and emails with CSUN faculty and makes free use of all the work already done by the UC Future Commission, see <http://ucfuture.universityofcalifornia.edu/>

It would be great to see the Academic Senate launch this collaborative study drawing on all work already accomplished by many people and committees of faculty and management with funding constraints and trade-offs more clearly in mind.

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