



Jan. 27, 2025

CSU Board of Trustees
The California State University
401 Golden Shore
Long Beach, CA 90802

Dear Chair Jack Clarke, Jr.:

CSUEU members are deeply troubled by an apparent disconnect between Gov. Gavin Newsom's proposed state budget for the California State University system and the alarmist, premature, and permanently damaging cuts some campus administrators are enacting.

The Administration's opening budget proposal makes a clear commitment to the CSU Compact, setting \$252 million for the University, above the \$227 million specified in CSUEU's contract as needed to fully fund Salary Steps system wide. If the CSU does face a deferral in funding, the expectation is the University would use financing and other means to bridge the temporary gap in payment.

There is a proposed 7.9% cut to state agencies, but campuses' first step should be to assess and eliminate vacancies rather than turning to layoffs. Each campus also has reserves which could be used to maintain stable operations. And let's not forget there remains \$777 million in "Rainy Day" reserves.

Yet with the New Year, administrators are prematurely slashing budgets and academic programs, irreparably damaging the student experience - and scaring away future enrollees. Some may call these "tough leadership choices," but they are grievous errors because they are shortsighted and lack any long-term vision. There are campuses with positive enrollment engaging in austerity measures by not filling positions, promoting early exits, and even issuing layoffs.

If the existential core crisis of the CSU is declining enrollment at a number of campuses, does shutting down a popular athletic program, slashing personnel by a quarter, and earning negative headlines help the cause? We are referencing the shocking news from Sonoma State University and Dominguez Hills just this last week. But other campuses have engaged in corporate-style cost-cutting to fight falling enrollment - and more will follow.

Here's an alternative path: Let's invest in building the CSU as foundational to California's continued economic dominance. Let's demonstrate that our academic programs pave the way to good jobs for our graduates. Let's advocate with legislators and demand full funding that will sustain CSU's long-term future.

It is all too easy to say cuts are needed to meet deficits. But after the cuts, then what? It is the challenge and responsibility of CSU leadership to craft a bolder vision and rally all its resources to build a stronger future for the nation's largest public university system . Our students' future depends on it.

Sincerely,

Catherine Hutchinson
President
California State University Employees Union