New Budget Calls for Deeper Cuts; CSU Enrollment Growth To Be Capped

LONG BEACH -- The California Legislature has approved a 2003/04 state budget that calls for an additional $15 million in cuts to the California State University. Under the new budget, which Gov. Davis is expected to sign this week, the CSU is now slated to take a total net reduction of $345.2 million, or approximately 13 percent of its $2.6 billion General Fund budget.

The Legislature-approved budget package also carries a stark message about limitations on future enrollment growth at California's state universities. The budget cuts will mean that the CSU must limit enrollment growth to only 4.3 percent instead of the 7 percent anticipated for 2003/04. Additionally, the new budget includes trailer language that directs the state's Department of Finance not to include any funding for enrollment growth at the CSU or the University of California in its 2004/05 budget draft.

"We have entered a totally new budget environment," CSU Chancellor Charles B. Reed wrote in a memo on enrollment management that was sent to CSU campus presidents yesterday. "These legislative mandates not only are direct and clear, but represent wholly new expectations from those who fund higher education."

For 2003/04, the CSU "finds itself in a severe predicament," Reed added. "On the basis of admissions already made for fall and winter quarters and fall semester, the system has exceeded its new system target of 335,000 FTES (full-time equivalent students). Thus, even by taking no new students for spring semester and quarter we will still exceed target."

Reed said that he would give campus presidents flexibility in deciding how to manage enrollments to the new, lower enrollment targets for 2003/04. Possible enrollment-cutting options include closing admissions for spring/winter 2004 terms, turning down applications from non-California residents, or tightening requirements for transfer admission.

Reed warned, however, that the CSU will adhere strictly to the new enrollment targets in order to preserve educational quality for its students. Exceeding enrollment targets, he said, "would falsely convey that current funding is adequate to maintain our high access and quality."

As the state budget crisis has unfolded over the past year, the CSU has anticipated and made plans to manage deep cuts in its budget. The CSU has sought to cut back in every possible area before reaching the classroom.
Among other actions, the CSU has eliminated or frozen 2,300 vacant faculty and staff positions, frozen salaries for management employees and executives, reduced the Chancellor's Office budget by $4.5 million, and raised graduate and undergraduate systemwide student fees by 30 percent. Even with the fee increase, however, the CSU will continue to have the lowest fees among its comparison public institutions across the country. More information: Budget bill | Budget Central

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