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ALLIANCE FOR THE CSU “e-MARCH” HITS THE CAPITOL

--Over 31,000 Emails Have Been Sent to the “Big 5” Responsible For State’s Budget; Alliance Members Warn Legislators That Cuts to the CSU Will Set Back California’s Economy --

SACRAMENTO – Supporters of the Alliance for the CSU, a growing coalition of advocates for the California State University, sent over 31,000 emails to state leaders urging them not to further damage California’s economy by cutting more funds from the California State University System. The Governor’s latest budget proposal calls for \$288 million in cuts to the CSU, and student fees have been hiked 10% for the sixth time in seven years. Over the last week and a half, students, parents, faculty, and staff launched an “e-march” targeting the “Big 5” legislators responsible for deciding the State’s budget: Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, Senate Pro Tem Don Perata, Assembly Speaker Karen Bass, Assembly Republican leader Mike Villines and Senate Republican leader Dave Cogdill.

“Cuts to the CSU have a devastating impact on the economy, which is the last thing we need in California given the fragile state of our economy today,” said Lillian Taiz, president of the California Faculty Association and Alliance for the CSU Founder. The CSU produces over half of all four-year degrees in California and contributes over \$7 billion to the State’s economy. Businesses need the skilled workers that graduate from the CSU and with a \$15 billion budget deficit, the State desperately needs the revenues that the 23 Universities bring in. The Alliance ‘e-march’ is a reminder to the Legislature that the CSU is the Solution, not the Problem in California.”

The combination of budget cuts with another 10% student fee hike makes it very difficult for students to graduate. Many students drop out because they cannot afford the increase in fees and campuses are forced to limit the number of students they admit because of the lack of funds. For those students fortunate enough to attend the CSU, the path to graduation becomes more difficult due to larger class sizes, less classes offered, and fewer staff members to help students navigate their way to graduation.

Taiz added, “Many CSU students are already working two jobs to get through school. The one-two punch of the fee hike and budget cuts is going to reduce the number of graduates, adding another burden to our struggling economy.”

For more information on the Alliance, go to www.alliancefortheesu.org.

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BACKGROUND

The CSU is Essential to California's Economy

Funding for the California State University should not be a difficult choice. As explained in a recent report prepared by the state's former Director of Finance, Tim Gage, publicly funded higher education is a help, not a detriment, to a troubled economy.

The CSU is an economic driver. It grants some 90,000 four-year college degrees a year—half of all the degrees granted in California—in fields vital to our state's businesses. The CSU contributes \$4.41 to regional economies for every \$1 spent by the state. From small shops in college towns to large suppliers of goods and services, such cuts would ripple through whole regions.

The CSU is a ladder of opportunity by putting degrees into the hands of people who in other states would never get them—people with degrees pay more taxes, rely less on public assistance, participate more in their communities, are healthier, and pass these advantages to their children.

The Planned Cut is Severe

Five years ago, previous cuts to the CSU topped a half billion dollars. The governor's funding increases since then have not kept up with inflation, while 44,000 students were added. Funding per student has actually decreased under this governor's watch.

\$288 million is equivalent to the entire budgets of four California State University campuses — CSU Channel Islands, CSU Monterey Bay, CSU Bakersfield, and CSU Stanislaus. It's like closing them completely, and more would still need to be cut.

Instead of closing campuses, the CSU would spread the cuts to all campuses resulting in fewer, larger classes that are harder to get. Students will need more than four years to graduate, run up more debt and take longer to enter the workforce where they are needed as nurses, teachers, engineers, public safety personnel, and professionals of all kinds.

Thousands more high school graduates and community college transfers will be turned away. Fees will go up and more students will drop out. The outcome of this budget debate will determine the future of the CSU, its 420,000 students, some 50,000 employees, and millions of future students it might — or might not — serve.

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Learn more about the CSU and its budget at www.allianceforthecsu.org

See the Tim Gage/Blue Sky Consulting Group report "Examining the Fiscal, Economic, and Social Impacts of the California State University," at <http://www.calfac.org/csureport.html>

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