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February 14, 2023

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
State Capitol, Room 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: CFA Response to Governor's 2023-24 January Budget Proposal

Dear Governor Newsom:

We are writing on behalf of the California Faculty Association (CFA) to provide our perspective on your 2023-24 January Budget Proposal as it relates to the California State University (CSU). The California Faculty Association represents over 29,000 faculty, including tenure-track professors, lecturers, librarians, counselors, and coaches from all 23 campuses of the California State University system. CFA centers anti-racism and social justice in our mission, work, and advocacy for the CSU and California.

The 2023-2024 budget proposal provides the CSU with an increase to base funding in line with the compact to which you agreed with the Chancellor of the CSU. As you're aware, and as noted by the Legislative Analyst's Office Brief on the Budget Proposal, that increase is not designated for any particular purpose. CFA believes strongly that the State Budget Allocation should be more explicit as to expected use of those resources. We urge you to consider directing the CSU to devote the increase in allocation to costs of Direct Instruction, as defined by the Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, which would most effectively enhance the CSU's capacity to meet its mission of providing quality public education to California residents.

CFA firmly believes that the success of the CSU is tightly tied to the talents and work of its employees. We note that the faculty and staff of the CSU engaged in herculean efforts to meet the challenges of the pandemic and continue those efforts as we adapt our universities and our educational programs to address the evolving needs of our students and our communities. Students of color make up much of the CSU student coalition, including Latinx, Chicana, Black, Asian American, Pacific Islander, Desi American, Indigenous, and Native American students. Many are the first in their families to attend college, and our faculty and staff are committed to maintaining an environment and support services that enable our students to succeed.



The progress we make to fund instruction in the CSU disproportionately affects the livelihoods and life trajectories of students we teach, mentor and support. The reality is this: compensation levels for all our dedicated employees are inadequate. Compensation increases have lagged significantly over the past decade, not keeping up with pandemic related costs, inflation, and the cost of living in California. Governor Newsom, you have campaigned on lifting up higher education, the working classes, and communities of color, and this starts through daily investments, including much deserved and earned pay increases.

CFA is requesting two modifications of the Budget Proposal. First, we ask that you and the Legislature address the accelerating underfunding of the CSU by providing additional resources above the level specified in the Compact. Current funding levels are inadequate for a sustainable and effective education system. Second, we ask that you reconsider the practice of providing undesignated funding increases to the CSU and instead provide the CSU with more direction as to the intent of the State in providing those resources. We urge you to require the CSU to devote additional resources to Direct Instruction, supporting the instructors and staff who give students the education and collegiate experience they deserve.

The California Faculty Association is grateful for your long record of support of public higher education. We look forward to continuing our work with you and the Legislature to craft a budget that provides the resources requisite to supporting the nearly 500,000 students in the CSU and the dedicated education professionals who serve them.

Respectfully,

Bryan Ha
Director of Governmental Relations
California Faculty Association

cc: Senator Nancy Skinner, Chair, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
Assemblymember Phil Ting, Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
Senator John Laird, Chair, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee #1
Assemblymember Kevin McCarty, Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee #2
Christy Bouma, Legislative Affairs Secretary, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom
Anita Lee, Consultant, Higher Education, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review
Mark Martin, Consultant, Higher Education, Assembly Budget Committee
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Erin Gabel, Consultant, Assembly Budget Subcommittee #2
Andrew Medina, Office of the Senate President ProTem Toni Atkins
Monica Henestroza, Office of Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon
Chris Ferguson, Education Systems Manager, Department of Finance