

CSU, REELING FROM BUDGET CUTS TO CLASSES AND FACULTY, DECRIES MORE PROPOSED STATE REDUCTIONS



LOS ANGELESTIMES | TERESA WATANABE | JAN. 30, 2025

“

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Leaders of California State University voiced alarm Wednesday that proposed state funding cuts would be “catastrophic” and cripple the nation’s largest four-year public higher education system’s ability to serve as a powerful engine of progress for low-income and underserved students.

Under Gov. Gavin Newsom’s proposed 2025-26 budget, CSU faces a \$375-million funding cut—a 7.95% reduction, the equivalent of 20% of its entire full-time faculty—university officials told the Board of Trustees. The shortfall would leave no new funds for student support, mental health, basic needs, employee pay, infrastructure and other needs, they said.

“Cuts have consequences, and with a proposed cut of this magnitude those consequences will be stark, painful, heartbreaking,” CSU Chancellor Mildred García told the board.

The CSU’s 23 campuses enroll more than 450,000 students—and graduate 125,000 each year, with alumni accounting for 10% of the California workforce. Nine of 10 CSU students are Californians who generally mirror the state’s demographic makeup, with nearly half Latino, 20% white, 15.7% Asian and 4% Black students. About 46%

are low-income and nearly 30% are the first in their families to attend college, leading to several rankings as national leaders in helping students move up the social and economic ladder.

But the proposed cuts could jeopardize that mission, García and others said during a finance committee meeting in Long Beach.

“You can’t have us be the economic engine of the state and destroy the system at the same time with these budget cuts,” Trustee Jack McGrory said.

H.D. Palmer, state Department of Finance spokesman, said in an email to The Times that the 7.95% proposed reduction is being applied to all state agencies, not only the public university systems.

“Neither CSU nor UC are being singled out, and are being treated consistently with the rest of the state and with a half-year of advance notice (the current budget was signed last June 29th),” he said in the email. “Further, there’s significant discretion in how these reductions are applied across the system, and can take into account the financial condition and/or student enrollment of a campus when determining how to schedule this reduction.”

The proposed cuts would exacerbate reductions that some campuses have already made in the last few years. Systemwide, 73 degree programs were suspended and 63 degree programs were discontinued by the trustees last year; course sections were reduced. Among 23 campuses, 17 cut positions while six increased them, for a net loss of 823 jobs between 2023 and 2024. Eight campuses with ongoing, declining enrollment trends—including San Francisco, Sonoma and Humboldt—accounted for nearly half the cuts.

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For now, CSU leaders said they plan a full-scale advocacy campaign to ramp up public pressure against the cuts.

“It’s a political campaign, and we’ve got to be aggressive acting like it is,” said Trustee Douglas Faigin, who has served on the board for 12 years. “This is the biggest crisis that I’ve experienced since I’ve been on the board.”