

TO: Provost den Boer
FROM: CFA officers
DATE: June 22, 2009

SUBJECT: Comments from faculty on CFANet regarding budget cuts

“I suggest that anyone who believes we are overpaid and who cannot accept a monthly check with a clear conscience should send an email to their campus payroll dept volunteering for an immediate 100% furlough. I'm tempted to say that anyone who voted to recall Gray Davis and repeal the car tax should do so as well. If we had simply not repealed that one little tax, we would not have the current deficit. That was the tax break we couldn't really afford. Then there was the corporate tax break we gave last year, despite an increasing state deficit. Why?

When is someone going to point out that this not a budget problem but a political problem? Cuts only budget solutions are unacceptable. We have a revenue shortfall, not runaway spending. We need to increase taxes until they are comparable with the states Dr. Kageyama's link listed. Our faculty need to see the charts showing that CA pays less in taxes than other states, that our cigarettes are not as highly taxed, that we alone among other oil-producing states have no tax for taking oil out of the ground. This is not a budget problem. It is a political problem. We need a political solution that does not hurt the weakest, non-voters such as children and prisoners, and those unfortunate enough to work at the whim of the governor.

I have no intention of voting in favor of furloughs or lay-offs. I want to see our administrators earn their pay by making cuts that do not affect the classroom. Until I see serious budgeting (not 10% across the board cuts to everyone regardless of centrality to our mission), I will continue to believe this is yet another attempt to weaken the resolve of our union, circumvent faculty complaints about administrative initiatives and force reorganization of academic units without faculty input. I didn't vote for our Governor. I didn't vote for any of the Republicans holding our state hostage. I have no intention of suffering so that business can pay less taxes. I pay my fair share to our union and I suggest that any faculty who are not already doing so, should send their money that direction, not toward a university administration and a state government that clearly does not have the needs of its constituents at heart.”

“Another overlooked consideration is MPP salaries. Even though the administration has decided to hold off on giving any raises this year, what is not mentioned is that quite a few (n = 54) of the MPPs recently received raises that ranged between 8-35% even though it was known 2 years ago that the CSU would be economically hit very hard in the near future. (Why does this remind me of Wall Street and the banking system?) Several (n = 4) administrators on our campus alone have salaries that exceed that of our State Governor, and in recent years there has been a net increase of 20 to 28 MPPs added to our payroll which are cumulatively added @~\$100,000 per MPP for each successive year. Source: email from CSEA forwarded to the CFA by George Diehr.

Moreover, there is an instance where an MPP position was written into a grant. The administration decided that it wanted to convert the grant-funded position to a "permanent" state-funded position. The "administrative bloat" that we are experiencing is common to most Universities across the nation and is one of the main causes of increased college tuition. The increase in administrative costs have resulted in students having to pay more for less. For each MPP that is added to our payroll, we lose two tenure track faculty positions, or three lecturers, or eight or more TAs. Administrative bloat continues to bleed off precious resources like a late-stage tumor that has induced angiogenesis to draw in more than its share of oxygen and nutrients, while the rest of the organism starves. The last stage is metastasis, and most of you know what that means. I just think that better decisions could have been made for the long term viability of the University. Just as the administration has focused our attention on better managing the academic budget by systemic reorganization and the cutting programs, perhaps attention should also be on stopping the overexpansion of the administrative budget.

In short, in addition to a stay in administrative raises, there should also be a halt to creating any net increase in future MPPs (and even cut any unnecessary positions), and there should be a salary cap to all State (public) employees. Many administrators play the game of hopping from one place to another for a higher salary without regard to long term loyalty to our University. I have no respect for such administrators."

"According to AAUP Faculty Salary Survey (<http://chronicle.com/stats/aaup/>), the average annual salary for assistant professors at University of Illinois, Springfield, for '08-'09 is \$55,000.

According to the relocation cost-of-living calculator at CNNMoney.com (<http://cgi.money.cnn.com/tools/costofliving/costofliving.html>),

if an assistant professor moves from Springfield, IL, to Los Angeles-Long Beach, groceries will cost: 19% more; housing will cost: 228% more; and transportation will cost: 12% more.

As a result, the comparable salary for this assistant professor in Los Angeles-Long Beach should be \$91,092. How many assistant professors (including those at advanced levels) at Cal Poly Pomona receive \$91,092 for '08-'09, may we ask?"

"Suspending research isn't a serious option. It may make some faculty impossible to retain and impossible to hire elsewhere. Realistically, not every faculty member is going to start and finish his or her career at Cal Poly. Moreover, some faculty have grants in order to conduct research and can't suspend it.

The university may not value research when it comes to supporting it, but it sure as heck will when it comes to retention and promotion.

Are there not still some positions that are political

sinecures--"faculty" who do not teach and who have been hired at the level of a full professor with 25 years service? And are there not some administrators who have moved on but who are still receiving "transition pay"? I think the union leadership ought to submit respectfully to the Chancellor that we cannot afford to pay people who do little or nothing, especially if we are consider furloughs and layoffs of faculty and staff who work. Furloughs and layoffs ought not to be on the table until this is done.”

“Obviously the untenured are in a somewhat more precarious position than the tenured, and no one can be expected to take reckless action that would put their careers and livelihood at unreasonable risk. That is why, as ____ points out, we need much more specific guidance from our union regarding what types of work reduction are feasible, and what course of action we can and should all take. In strategic solidarity is our collective self-defense. If our statewide union guides us properly you will be much safer participating in collective action than you would be at a non-unionized university.

With respect to the impact of furloughs on progress toward graduation, you are reinforcing my point: To encourage public support for saner policies, the public (via the students) must experience the real consequences of service cuts, and must connect them with the budget mess rather than any institutional dysfunction. If the REAL impact of furloughs means impeded progress toward graduation, no one will blame the faculty - just as no one blamed the DMV employees for those service reductions.”

“I believe I speak not only for myself, but for other faculty members pursuing tenure. In order to keep our jobs past the probationary period, we have to "earn our keep", so to say. We have to meet rather rigorous requirements in teaching quality, service, and scholarly work. These requirements are not going to change because we are "furloughed" for 2 days every month for the foreseeable future (and I have not yet seen a discussion of a time limit on the possible furloughs). Therefore, unless our teaching hours are officially cut, most of us will work just the same not only because we are dedicated to our jobs (and we are), but also because we want to keep these jobs if and when the budget situation improves.

Another issue I would like to see addressed is the feasibility of reducing instructional time. The number of units students earn for each course depends on the number of instructional hours per week. If instructional time is cut, can we still claim that students earn 4 quarter units per course? Will we have to re-evaluate the worth of each "cut" course in units? And if so, how will it affect the number of units required for graduation? If we do not re-evaluate the number of units despite reduced instructional time, the reputation of CSU as a quality educational institution may suffer. After all, our students transcripts will only *say* that they have earned 180 units for their Bachelor's degrees, but the students will not actually have done so.”

“I agree that the only way the public will make the connection between taxes and the benefits of state supported education is to accompany any cut in pay with a cut in

service. When the State furloughs were initially imposed they closed down DMV offices and the public was outraged. Now they are keeping all the offices open, paying workers less, and working them harder. My husband works for Social Services and is overloaded with work due to the hiring freezes. He has only been able to take one day off since the policy has been in effect and often works late because he cares deeply about his work (child abuse in day care). The policy has amounted almost a 10% cut in pay masquerading as a furlough. If we are "furloughed", we need to decrease our work so the public understands the impact of the budget cuts. While faculty should have been consulted about the cancellation of state supported summer school, I do believe that it helped to wake up students, their families, and the faculty to the severity of the budget crisis."

"How will the furloughed time be accounted for? In daily increments? Or in hourly increments? If the latter, I suspect the CSU will tell us to take 2 hours off, for example, by assigning one less paper or giving one fewer quiz during a given week. The effect of this, of course, would be to distribute the "furloughed" time so as to render it nearly invisible, minor changes to courses for which we will end up devoting practically the same time and energy for less money--a simple pay cut.

So, perhaps we should lobby for the following: If furloughs are to happen they must be counted only in 8 hour increments, which translates into the (very visible) loss of an entire instructional day. As Lynda said, such visibility is essential if anyone is going to feel the pain besides us."

"I find it unlikely that the administration will agree to shave the length of a quarter or to reduce a course's unit count by 10%. They seem to be suggesting closing the University two days per month (probably on Fridays). But closing the University in this manner would not reduce the amount of work we do, as faculty would shift work (advising, grading, researching, etc.) to other days. This type of furlough would be a pay cut pay cut with no real alleviating of the amount of work we are expected to complete.

If the administration furloughs us by 10%, we should request a 10% reduction in WTUs. Full-time faculty typically contract for 15 units per quarter (3 for service and 12 for teaching). Over three quarters, a full-time contract covers 45 WTUs. A 10% reduction of this would be 4.5 units per school year per full-time faculty member. This would result in hundreds of canceled classes at Cal Poly and send a message to the state: furloughs reduce services (as in the DMV example mentioned in an earlier e-mail).

The question that remains revolves around the most fair way to handle

lecturers. Perhaps full-time lecturers could accept a 10% reduction in WTUs, but the scenario is problematic for part-timers. For part-time lecturers, a furlough will be a de facto lay-off.”

“It is difficult to have confidence in the CSU administration, either on our campus or system-wide. They do not provide leadership in any direction I want to follow. Their idea of enhancing the educational impact of the university is to increase class size, keep tenure-line faculty numbers low, monitor everything faculty do from the syllabus to the grades, and push whatever is the latest ed admin fad in measurement, use of non-human technology, tracking and reporting, etc. The Chancellor’s strategy of pandering to and palling with the governor and legislators resulted in financial losses over the last couple of years, and their reward to him now is to punish us for not getting those propositions passed – as if anyone could have convinced the electorate that the state government had the slightest idea what they were doing. Although the administrators talk a lot about learning-centeredness, their actions have been mainly to have the faculty do a lot of assessment and evaluation, then write reports and plans for WASC. Their actual priorities seem to have more to do with swelling their numbers, power, and income. I’d like to see some creative new ideas coming out of these people whose job it is to lead and make decisions, not the same tired old routine of eliminating academic programs, stuffing students into classes, cutting classes, combining departments or colleges, reducing faculty support, and turning out the lights on Fridays.

This depression is a gift from the gods for the anti-tax, anti-government people who think only those who can pay for it should get an education, enjoy wild lands, have excellent health care, be able to use a library that is open a lot and has plenty of books, travel safely, have good police and emergency services, and so on. I think the Chancellor’s job is to be an advocate for public education, to speak out honestly about the wreckage brought upon our state by a small group of people who have stripped the state and communities of revenue sources. He should be talking about the importance of having fundamental institutions, services, and resources in common, paid for collectively by the citizens, whether they personally need them or not. Instead of doing this, he and other administrators slight and smear the faculty whenever we are disagreeing with some initiative they’ve come up with, and talk about the loss of state support as though it were a law of nature. I haven’t seen a single media article on our Chancellor giving a press conference on the actual short- and long-term consequences of the incredible cut we are experiencing and excoriating the government for exacting it. He should be denouncing the governor and legislature for their sorry performance in running the state, for defunding public programs put in place by their predecessors, their constituents, or themselves, and for promoting a caste system in the population – the very wealthy and the rest of us.

Faculty would like to have more information on what is going on at the other campuses – are they cancelling summer? furloughing administrators? transferring money to Grand Cayman? We don’t know because the Chancellor’s communications lack detail, and the President’s either tell us just what he is doing here or make invidious comparisons to non-CSU situations.”

“One further observation by way of a quick anecdote. I was speaking about the budget cuts to a friend who is a pharmacist at a local hospital--a progressive democrat and unashamed liberal. I was chagrined and disappointed when he responded to my laments about the state of the CSU and the incompetence of our state leadership by complaining about "professors who only teach one class and sit around writing and collecting a big pay check." This man is not ignorant, generally speaking. I realized afterward that even the well-meaning allies we might have in and out the legislature are not likely to be moved by our collective plight as faculty: higher SFR, no assigned time, no resources for research. Hoping they will take pity upon us a non-starter. This suggests the following strategy: hammer relentlessly upon the impact of further (and catastrophic) reductions upon our students: i.e., no classes, no advising, no help, cancelled summers, cancelled courses, whole departments dissolved and their remaining faculties merged. While the idiot libertarians in the legislature may simply not care about basic education for their kids as a "public good," my guess is that the bulk of Californians still do.”

“In regards to a furlough, a reduction in class time might not be in the cards, but a reduction in assignments or assessing said assignments, or a reduction in office contact hours might be a form of tough love to get across the painful message of budget cuts to the students' parents and general taxpaying population. I, for one, do not work for free. Call me callous, but twelve years at CPP as a perpetually underpaid, overworked, voiceless "temporary part-time" lecturer has formed this response.

Of course, if the only alternative to furloughs is "layoffs" (and that is a big IF), then we should all remember that part-time lecturers are dismissed, and not laid off (per CBA language), so even if the vote goes for furloughs, chances are, I and many of my part-time, temporary colleagues will be given the boot. I hope you tenured and tenure-trackers like teaching Freshman Composition.....

And since I am ranting, why does the Academic Senate keep sending emails out for faculty to sit on committees to continue to hire Administrators? Why do faculty members continue to agree to serve on these search committees?”

This is a small, but representative, selection of remarks posted on CFANet by faculty subscribed to that listserve. I have removed the names of senders and of faculty mentioned in the posts. I hope the tone and arguments will stimulate the administration to include faculty in any budget decision-making processes that affect us and the educational mission of the university.

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