

The California State University Employee Update

Friday, July 24, 2009

Faculty Union Agrees to Discuss Furlough Option

Members of the California Faculty Association (CFA) have voted 54 to 46 percent in favor of negotiating furloughs with the CSU as part of the university's plan to mitigate a \$584 million cut to its 2009-10 budget. The CFA represents approximately 23,000 employees; however, only 8,800 of the union's 13,000 dues-paying members cast ballots.

The CSU is proposing to furlough its employees (except public safety personnel) two days per month to reduce spending by \$275 million and to preserve jobs. Employee salaries and benefits make up 85 percent of the CSU's operating budget.

"We are facing a financial crisis and need to move forward to reduce our employee costs," said Gail Brooks, Vice Chancellor for Human Resources. "The faculty vote to negotiate furloughs will help save jobs, preserve health and retirement benefits and allow us to better serve our students."

The CSU, since June 3, has been negotiating furloughs with several of its labor unions as their labor agreements do not include provisions for furloughs. Chancellor Charles B. Reed announced a deadline of July 28 at 5 p.m. for those unions who have not reached a final agreement on furloughs so campuses have time to prepare for the new academic year which begins August 24.

"The CSU is prepared to work continuously with the leadership of the CFA to finalize a furlough agreement to meet the deadline," said Brooks.

Two of the CSU's labor unions--the California State University Employees Union (CSUEU), representing 16,000 non-academic employees, and the United Physicians and Dentists (UPD), with 117 members--have ratified a furlough agreement. They will begin observing furloughs August 1 along with CSU's executive, management and non-represented employees.

The CSU is in the process of negotiating furloughs with the Academic Professionals of California (APC), representing 2,400 student service employees. The remaining unions have opted for layoffs per their contracts.

In addition to employee furloughs, the CSU has implemented student enrollment reductions and a student fee increase, a salary and hiring freeze, and travel and purchasing restrictions to close the budget deficit. Campuses will also cut their 2009-10 budgets proportionally \$183 million.