

When I speak to groups about Cal State San Marcos, I always begin with: “How many of you are alumni?” A few hands go up. Then I ask: “How many of you *hire* our alumni?” The number of hands raised is gratifying. It means we’re doing our job of educating the workforce and meeting your need for teachers, accountants, nurses, and many more. And when I say, “How many of you are going to go back to your place of employment and ask if you hire our alumni, and if not, why not?” – *every* hand in the room goes up!

Will I be able to ask those questions and get that enthusiastic response in a few years? Or will I hear, “My son/granddaughter/neighbor tried to get in, but you stopped taking applications”, or, worse, “my son/granddaughter/neighbor started there, but couldn’t get the classes to graduate and finally dropped out”?

I don’t want to hear those answers. And, quite honestly, I don’t think you do either. But Governor Schwarzenegger’s proposed budget for the California State University—10% cut across the board, whether we’re doing a good job for you and filling your needs or not—may do just that. The proposed budget would reduce our funding by \$2.5 million, and also cut \$3.1 million in enrollment growth. That means approximately 700 qualified students will not be able to enroll this fall.

CSUSM’s budget comes from the state’s general fund (70%) and student fees (30%). Both of these revenue streams are under duress. Cuts like this are cuts that will be felt by the regional economy and not just by our students, faculty and staff. CSUSM generates a total of \$307 million, sustains 5,000 jobs, and generates more than \$16 million per year in tax revenue. Wouldn’t you think that would make us a solution to the budget problems of California? This is not the time to cut back on education. It is the time to invest in education. It is clear that a diverse and educated workforce will fuel the economy and assure California’s position globally.

Cal State San Marcos is committed to transparency, to showing you how well we do with your tax dollars, to proving that we prepare our students to be exceptional. I invite you to check out our College Portrait at www.csusm.edu/ipa to see how we’re doing at educating the workforce of tomorrow. Our graduates overwhelmingly stay in our region, and we have been growing rapidly, a 25% increase in students in the past three years. We have grown by trying to respond to the demands from our fast growing region and because of the reputation of our academic programs.

On behalf of Cal State San Marcos I have urged the legislature and our Governor to support alternative options to maintain the state’s investment in California’s higher education. There needs to be a more balanced budget approach that considers the CSU as a valuable investment for the future economy of California.

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(North County Times — online 4/29, in print 5/4)