

## **Leaders of CSU, UC and Community Colleges Make the Case for Investing in Public Higher Education**

**March 21, 2008, Sacramento** – California’s three segments of public higher education stand united in urging the state of California to invest in its colleges and universities as a path of creating greater opportunity for the next generation of Californians, and to ensure the state’s economic vitality. That was the message when leaders of the three systems – California State University Chancellor Charles Reed, University of California Provost Rory Hume, and California Community Colleges Chancellor Diane Woodruff discussed the impact of the proposed budget cuts to higher education on a recent interview on KQED radio heard in the Bay area. The three leaders have committed to work together to urge the Governor and the Legislature to reinstate funding cuts proposed in the upcoming budget, with the message that such cuts will hurt opportunities for students and further erode the economy.

Among the main messages conveyed by the leaders is that public higher education is an investment in the state’s human capital and in the strength of the economic engine that has propelled California to a position of global leadership. Budget cuts will force all three segments of public higher education to constrain access to students and to make program reductions that will threaten students’ progress toward timely graduation. Longer time to degree will mean more student fee payments for families, a less efficient community college transfer process, and a delay in getting talented students out into the California workforce.

Below are several of the comments from the three system leaders as they spoke with KQED’s Dave Iverson:

**CSU Chancellor Reed** said for the first time that the CSU had to close enrollment on March 1 for more than 10,000 incoming college freshman students normally eligible to attend the CSU. He also said that the proposed budget cuts will mean less student services, counseling and access to libraries and laboratories. Reed also said that not only are the three public higher education systems at risk, but there is a bigger risk to the state’s economy. “If these three great systems don’t feed the economy with the workforce that it needs, with the research that it needs, and with the technical skills that it needs, then California will no longer be as competitive as it’s been in the past. And, you’re going to see personal income start to drop in California, and that’s going to be devastating to the economy and citizens of this state.”

When asked what the impact of more than \$400 million budget cuts would have on the **UC system**, **Provost Hume** responded, “It would mean an enormous setback for access and opportunity for California’s families, for California’s young people, and for Californians all

through their life. We have an amazing system of public higher education in California, where anybody has access at any time of life to the finest education in the world, and that opportunity will be damaged by these cuts.” Provost Hume went on to say that if the proposed budget cuts are final, UC will have larger classes, less access to majors, longer time to earn a degree, and a higher cost for students – not to mention the economic impacts of reduced investment in the state’s research engine.

**Chancellor Woodruff** said if the \$483 million in proposed cuts to community colleges go through, more than 50,000 community colleges students will be turned away and not be able to get the classes they need to transfer or to graduate with an AA degree or certificate. Woodruff also noted that the impact of the proposed budget cuts will actually be felt by all 2.6 million California Community College students, because fewer classes will be available. Unlike UC and CSU which can limit their enrollment, California’s 109 community colleges are open access institutions so all students are admitted, but it becomes much more difficult and frustrating for students because they can’t get the classes they need to transfer on time or to graduate and go out into the workforce. In addition, she said that vital student services and financial aid are being cut which negatively affect the most educationally vulnerable community college students and makes it much more difficult for them to succeed. “Our whole wonderful master plan for higher education starts to unravel. And that is why the three of us have come together and are saying so strongly, please don’t dismantle this wonderful higher education system that is the envy of the world. All of us have had people from other countries and states come to visit us, to say with admiration: How have you done this? How have you built this higher education system that has created the eighth largest economy in the world in California? This is the time to invest in education, not to cut it back if we want to turn the economy around.”

All three segment leaders stressed that California’s public higher education systems are interconnected. “We are inextricably bound together,” said Woodruff. “One-third of all UC graduates are community college transfers and two-third of all CSU grads are community college transfers. When Chancellor Reed has to cut back 10,000 students, then it impacts us, because our community college students then can’t transfer.”

To listen to the interview in its entirety, visit:  
Forum - *Budget Cuts in Higher Education*  
<http://www.kqed.org/epArchive/R803211000>

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