

February 15, 2012

A Letter from the Fresno State Faculty to Central Valley Community

We, the undersigned, believe that California State University, Fresno needs to regain its focus on education and research. For too long, university administrators have shown a disregard for quality education and the advancement of research. Over the course of years, California State University, Fresno has expanded non-academic activities. University administrators have spent funds freely to create unnecessary offices with marginal or even adverse effects on the primary mission of the university: teaching and research. With expanded budgets, the university became a center for commercial public work projects that require continuous inflows of state funds to overcome shortfalls in revenue.

As state funds become scarce, the cost of education for students skyrockets, classes are cut, and existing classes packed. Faculty positions are lost, research facilities strained, and support for research declines while expensive administrative and staff positions and projects, not crucial to the educational mission of the university, remain relatively untouched by the budget cuts. The budget crisis is used as an opportunity to concentrate power over what is taught and how we teach by career administrators who have scant knowledge about the subjects we teach or how to teach well. Current proposals call for additional cuts to the academic functions of the university, including the elimination of Colleges, departments, and programs. All of these cuts to academics directly harm students and severely impact teaching, research, and faculty morale. The diminishing portion of the university budget devoted to academics cannot sustain further cuts in funding.

We insist that any future cuts must come from the non-academic and administrative side of the campus, beginning with the Chancellor's Office in Long Beach and on the individual campuses. Specifically, at California State University, Fresno, cuts should come from the portion of the budget not allocated to academics. Expensive and non-crucial administrative programs and activities should be suspended or eliminated. Commercial projects which drain university resources should be ended. Efforts to further devalue academics by eliminating academic Colleges, departments, and programs should cease. It is time to rebalance the scales in favor of students, teaching and research and to deflate the bloated administrative and non-academic divisions of the university.

We strongly urge our students, the parents of our students, our elected officials, and the general public to support our call to return the focus at California State University, Fresno to academic achievement and to channel increasingly scarce state budget resources to teaching and research.