To: The Chico University and City Communities

From: Joel Zimbelman, Dean, College of Humanities and Fine Arts

I’d like to give my strong support to the plans underway to construct a new parking structure for our employees, students and arts patrons at Chico State. I’m of course looking forward to moving forward on the construction of a new Arts and Humanities Building in the block now occupied by Taylor Hall, the University Police, and the University Box Office. Following the passage of the state budget in October 2010, that project is now in the planning stages. But that new facility won’t address the serious parking and access issues on this side of campus. In fact, it’s going to create some new challenges.

As I write this (but even more so once the new Arts and Humanities Building is built) better, more accessible, safer, and closer parking is vital for students working in studios and labs and for the patrons of the many arts destinations that will center on this part of campus. Every week, over a dozen events occur (mostly after dark) in the three art galleries, the Turner Museum, the Anthropology Museum, and the five auditoria, recital halls, and theatres that occupy Ayers, Laxson, the Performing Arts Center, Meriam Library, and the new building under construction. I know how difficult it is for some students, patrons, and others to find adequate parking. I hear of the challenges and risks they face in poor light and at night as they navigate the streets in our downtown neighborhood. Over and over I’m told that some of my most ardent visual and performing arts supporters can’t come to our productions or gallery openings because it’s at night and they are fearful of unexpected parking challenges.

We’re developing a comprehensive and efficacious transportation plan in Chico and around the University, which includes bikes, busses, walking, carpooling, and better and more accessible parking. I think we should be proud of what we’ve accomplished over the past few years, and the ways in which we’ve been able to incorporate the full range of resources we possess and challenges we face. Committing to the further enhancement of our classrooms, performance venues, and additional galleries through the new Arts and Humanities Building implies a commitment to the infrastructure that will support that endeavor. A new parking structure is a part of that picture.