LONG BEACH — Another hike in student fees may be approved when the California State University Board of Trustees meets on July 12, according to Chico State University President Paul Zingg.

The trustees definitely will consider raising the university fee at their next meeting, said CSU spokesman Mike Uhlenkamp. The amount of the possible hike is still being discussed.

In November, trustees raised the university fee by 5 percent for the spring semester of 2011 and 10 percent more for the fall semester, which begins in August.

As it stands now, for students who attend a CSU campus in the fall, the yearly university fee will be $4,884. If trustees vote in July for another fee increase, it would take effect in August, Uhlenkamp said.

Students pay other fees in addition to the university fee.

Trustees aren't eager to raise fees, but there seems no alternative, given the cuts the CSU has been dealt in the state budget, Uhlenkamp said.

Earlier this year, trustees learned their budget would be cut by at least $500 million and possibly by as much as $1 billion.

Last week, Democrats in the Legislature passed a budget that would have cut the CSU by $650 million. Gov. Brown vetoed that spending plan.

The Legislature voted on another proposed budget Tuesday, which Brown had worked out with Democratic legislative leaders. It called for cutting the CSU budget by at least $650 million. The cut would be $750 million if the state's income turned out not to be as high as is being projected.

The new fee hike CSU leaders contemplate is a response to cuts in the latest version of the state budget, Uhlenkamp said.

"There's a lot of uncertainty about the future," he said. CSU officials wouldn't know until January whether their budget cut would be $650 million or $750 million.
It would be one thing to know now by how much the CSU will be cut, Uhlenkamp said. Finding out half way through the year that there will be another $100 million cut makes things much more difficult.

Joe Wills, a spokesman for Chico State, said to respond to budget cuts, the CSU has a few options, such as fee hikes, cuts in operating expenses and decreases in enrollment. But in January, in the middle of the year, implementing any of those is "extremely difficult if not impossible."

In an email Tuesday, Zingg wrote that, if adopted, the latest budget proposal means "losses in access, affordability and quality for California higher education."

It seems certain Chico State and other CSU campuses will be told to reduce their enrollments at some point, Wills said. That hurts both the schools and the communities around them.

Chico State's enrollment in the fall of 2010 was 15,989 students, Wills said. About 100 fewer students are expected to attend the local campus when classes start in August.

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