CHICO — With a plan to cut higher education by $1.4 billion this year, Gov. Brown is failing California, Chico State University President Paul Zingg said in a speech Tuesday afternoon.

Colleges and universities are an essential investment, he said. "Having a smart, innovative population has enabled the state to deal with its challenges."

In what was titled "The President's Spring Address," Zingg spoke to hundreds of staff, faculty and students in Harlen Adams Theatre on the campus.

Brown's budget proposal paints, "to say the least, a sobering, discouraging picture," Zingg said.

But the president sounded a hopeful note, also: "We have been down this road before. We will rally around the things we can control — attitude and a strong sense of shared effort."

Zingg said higher education ought to "bear some of the pain" as efforts are made to get the state government to "live within its means."

But Brown is not proposing to deal fairly with the state's colleges and universities, he said, noting the last decade has been anything but prosperous for higher education.

Now, when demand for education is high, he said, the governor proposes huge cuts for the University of California, the California State University and the community colleges.
If these happen, prisons will be getting more state money than all of public higher education," he said.

Brown proposes to cut the CSU budget by $500 million, he said. That would bring the total amount of state support for the CSU to $2.29 billion, the smallest amount since 1999.

Another dismal trend, Zingg said, is how student fees have increased while state support of the CSU has decreased.

Twelve years ago, he said, the amount the state paid of a student's education was $8,000 more than what the student paid. Now, that difference is just $2,000.

It's clear, that with students paying more and more of the bill, California is heading toward "the privatization of public higher education," he said.

In addition to the budget, Zingg discussed Chico State's 2011-2016 Diversity Action Plan.

He said the plan will make the campus "a more inclusive learning community ... a place that makes excellence inclusive."

He announced that as recommended in the plan, Chico State will now have a chief diversity officer and a diversity council.

He said English professor Tracy Butts will "take on the role initially," of chief diversity officer. The council will be appointed.

"Diversity — social, cultural and intellectual — is at the heart of what it means to be an American public university," Zingg said.

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CHICO — With his budget proposals, Gov. Brown has turned his back on higher education and the state's true needs, Chico State President Paul Zingg said this afternoon.

Zingg spoke to hundreds of staff, faculty and students in Harlen Adams Theatre on the Chico State campus.

He said the governor's proposed budget, with deep cuts to the California State University, represents "a very disheartening perspective on public education."