I had the opportunity with other CSU Presidents to meet with Governor Brown today, May 24, in Sacramento. The fact that the Governor took time to meet with us to explain his revised state budget proposal is encouraging, and demonstrates his concern for higher education. Yet, he made clear that if tax extensions were not approved, further budget cuts could include an additional $500 million reduction in General Fund support for the CSU, bringing the total 2011-2012 cut to the CSU to a staggering $1 billion. This is the equivalent of closing ten of the smallest CSU campuses, and dis-enrolling 85,000 students, and represents a 36-percent cut in state funding. Chico State and other campuses have begun plans to address a $500 million cut to the CSU, but an additional $500 million would be devastating, and would result in significant tuition fee increases and an extreme reduction in admissions opportunities among other lasting negative effects.

The other presidents and I voiced our support for the need to consider tax extensions. But, more importantly, we urged the Governor to prioritize investing in the CSU and higher education long-term as a vital means to aid and sustain the state’s economic recovery and renew California’s stature in the world as a leader in education. We emphasized, in particular, that the times are filled with hard choices. But the times compel us to make choices that focus on the future, lay a foundation for a new era of prosperity in our state, and renew the story of California as a place of opportunity and promise.