All-cuts budget would bring devastation, CSU trustees say

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California State University trustees considered a worst-case budget scenario Tuesday, as they discussed what they would do if the state approves an all-cuts budget.

Under that scenario, trustees would consider raising tuition by up to 32 percent and turning away as many as 20,000 more students, Chancellor Charles Reed said during the board meeting in Long Beach.

"If the governor gets the tax and revenue extensions, none of that would be necessary," Reed said.

Gov. Jerry Brown already approved a cut of $500 million to the CSU system for 2011-12. The university is handling that reduction "without devastating the system," Reed said.

But further cuts, he said, would amount to "nothing more than just devastation."

CSU is coping with the last cut by trimming enrollment projections by 10,000 students, raising tuition 10 percent for the coming school year and cutting the chancellor's office budget by 14 percent. Individual campuses are also planning cuts; Sacramento State has asked its departments to trim budgets by 9.7 percent.

Reed acknowledged that it's difficult to predict right now how much more funding the university might lose under an all-cuts state budget.

He said it could be anywhere from $100 million to $500 million more, with varying tuition hikes and enrollment reductions likely under each scenario.
Because of the uncertainty, CSU is planning to wait-list students who are applying now for the winter and spring terms. The university would hold off on making final decisions on whether they're admitted until a budget is approved.

Brown is scheduled to release his revised budget plan on Monday.

Two days later, University of California regents will discuss their plans for managing further cuts that could be proposed in the governor's revised budget.

Like CSU, UC already has taken a cut of $500 million for next year. And it, too, proposes raising tuition by 32 percent if the state cuts its budget by an additional $500 million.

UC regents also will discuss longer-term budget strategies that could include raising tuition by a set amount each year over five years.