CHICO — Gov. Brown's proposal for this year's state budget is nothing short of terrible, Chico State University President Paul Zingg said Friday.

In November, the California State University Board of Trustees voted to ask the Legislature for an increase in funding. For the current school year (2011-12), the CSU received just over $2 billion from the state.

Trustees asked that the state boost its contribution in the next budget (for 2012-13) to $2.33 billion.

In announcing his budget proposal on Thursday, Brown said no to the trustees.

The governor said the CSU would once again get a little more than $2 billion, and that's only if a proposed increase in taxes is approved by voters.

If the tax increase isn't approved, the CSU would receive $1.8 billion, according to a news release from the CSU Chancellor's Office.

"Before the recession, in 2007-08, we got $2.97 billion," said Mike Uhlenkamp, a spokesman for the CSU, in a phone interview Friday.

In allocating just over $2 billion to the CSU for 2011-12, the state provided the system with $750 million less than the previous year.

Brown's proposal to give the CSU the same amount in the next year, essentially makes the $750 million cut permanent, the release stated.

"Our campuses have done everything they can just to get through this fiscal year with a $750 million budget cut," Chancellor Charles Reed was quoted as saying in the release.

He said the CSU "survived" by being extremely frugal and employing various strategies, including spending money that was in reserve. Those reserves are now gone and won't be available to help get through the coming year, he said. "We are just about out of options," he was quoted as saying. "If the state does not begin to reinvest in the CSU, we will need to take
more drastic measures, including cutting enrollment and programs, raising tuition and reducing personnel."

Next year's state budget is in flux, Uhlenkamp told the Enterprise-Record. "It's kind of a moving picture."

What the governor outlined Thursday will likely change by May, when he issues his revised budget, he said. Between now and then, the CSU will engage in some intensive lobbying, hoping to convince the governor and Legislature to boost support. "We'll probably ramp up our efforts," Uhlenkamp said.

He added, "We wholeheartedly believe that in order to get the state economy back to where it was, there has to be a reinvestment in higher education." He said educated Californians work for companies in the state, sometimes start their own companies, and once they start working, they become taxpayers, he said.

"This is a budget that undermines the prospects for economic recovery in the state and threatens the future well-being of the people of our state," Zingg wrote in his email. "It lacks vision, commitment, compassion, and, most of all, hope for the people of this state who have aspirations for higher education and its promise."

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