

Chico Enterprise Record

Concerns remain at CSUC despite funding hike

By MELISSA DAUGHERTY - Staff Writer

Tuesday, January 11, 2005 -

Increased funding for the California State University system pledged by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger Monday at the Capitol isn't enough to quell concerns of educators and student representatives.

While the proposed budget adheres to the administration's higher education compact with the CSU by increasing the system's 2005-06 budget more than \$200 million, it's still far short of replacing the half-billion dollars in cuts during the past three years.

"It's the bare minimum," said Nicole DeMartini, Associated Students officer at Chico State University. "It's nowhere near the start of rebuilding the CSU."

Cut classes and services, along with decreases in financial aid, will be the result of the under-funded system, she said.

What's worse is that about half of the added revenue will come out of the pockets of students.

The governor's proposed budget requests an 8 percent rise in fees for undergraduate students. That's on top of repeated increases including last year's 14 percent hike.

"The burden is still on the students," said DeMartini, who is the AS director of legislative affairs.

Susan Green, president of the Chico chapter of the California Faculty Association, echoed DeMartini's displeasure with the outline of the budget.

"We're disappointed the compact has been used as a ceiling, not as a floor," said Green, who estimates about 1,500 to 2,000 applicants will be turned away from the CSU in the fall.

Green said the CFA would like to have been consulted when CSU Chancellor Charles B. Reed went behind closed doors with the governor to work out the compact last spring.

In a written response to Monday's announcement, Reed said, "We are encouraged by the support the CSU is receiving from the governor in this budget cycle. Funding for enrollment growth begins to restore student access from the previous year's enrollment decreases and reductions in CSU operations ..."

Chico State President Paul Zingg sent faculty a similar message, calling the news encouraging. Even though the compact will be scrutinized in the coming months, the CSU is in a position of strength.

"The governor has honored his commitment to higher education and to the compact," he wrote.

Green respectfully disagrees.

"I don't think it shows that at all," she said.

As it did last year, the CFA will spend this spring lobbying the Legislature for additional funds. The effort then meant a \$40 million increase for the CSU and subsequently \$1 million for Chico State.

"That makes a big difference," Green said.