

## Chico State president lambastes recent cuts

By HEATHER HACKING-Staff Writer  
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CHICO — The realities of budget cuts, staff furloughs and higher student fees were the central theme of Chico State University President Paul Zingg during his annual convocation to college staff and faculty Thursday afternoon.



The President admonished state leaders for putting education spending below prisons. He urged faculty to use their days off without pay to let their discontent be known, as well as to keep the mission to provide the best education possible under the circumstances.

The president said the state budget crisis is unlikely to be resolved any time soon, and that the 2010-2011 could bring more bleak news.

Budget cuts have meant two days without pay for most staff represented by a union. Other cuts to the California State University system have meant layoffs. Student fees were increased dramatically this year, and the goal of the state is to cut CSU enrollment by 40,000 students over the next two years.

The president said there will be opportunities in the future for the campus community to ask questions, give comments "support one another, get fact straight and — yes — vent."

Zingg said Chico State was recently recognized by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges through the re-accreditation process. The Chico campus was given high praise for graduation and retention rates, for positive organizational momentum and other campus leadership.

Where most schools are re-accredited for seven years, Chico was given 10 years and "designated as a model in our region."

But those high marks might be more difficult to achieve in the future when the state has set out to reduce enrollment, raise fees and reduce payroll, Zingg said.

Over the past 10 years, since 1999, state revenue has gone up while the percentage of the state general fund for higher education has gone down, he said.

Meanwhile, general fund spending for prisons over the same time period has gone from \$5 billion to \$11 billion, he continued.

California spends about \$50,000 per prisoner, and less than one-tenth of that to support a student in the California State University System, he said.

"We are moving rapidly from being state supported to being state assisted" to being state located, Zingg said.

The lack of support for higher education is a "rejection of history and common sense."

Having educated people has helped California to reinvent itself again and again throughout history. State leaders should "take the long view," Zingg said.

"Education is as fundamental to our state as waterways, railroads, highways and the Internet," he said.

Ninety percent of K-12 teachers are graduates of the CSU system, as are two-thirds of the state's nurses, Zingg said.

"This state needs to increase the number of bachelor's degrees by 60,000 a year," yet has plans to reduce CSU enrollment by 40,000.

"Higher education is an investment and is not just a portion of the discretionary budget."

Zingg encouraged campus employees to use their furlough days off to "organize our dissent more aggressively."

"We must expand the chorus of those who stand with us," he said.

He spoke of many of Chico State's recent accomplishments, for volunteering, raising money for cancer patients, being leaders in sustainability, and several others.

"We have a lot at stake here. We must use this situation as an opportunity to reaffirm our principles."