



CSU chief concerned about Brown's higher ed plan

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By Karen Kucher

California State University Chancellor Timothy White expressed concern Wednesday that the governor wants to tie state funding to increasing the number of freshmen who graduate in four years and to other targets that could undermine the mission of the nation's largest university system.

In a visit to San Diego, White said CSU needs to be accountable for how it spends tax dollars. But he said such requirements tied to financial incentives could detract from the system's ability to serve working parents and other students who take a longer time to finish their degree programs.

"I want to make sure we measure what we value and not value what we measure, and part of the conversation about performance-related measures is: Are they going to drive us from our mission?" White said in a meeting with U-T San Diego's editorial board.

White is visiting San Diego State University Wednesday and Thursday. The new chancellor, who has been in his new job less than four months, intends to visit all 23 CSU campuses by the year's end.

Gov. Jerry Brown also is seeking a four-year freeze on tuition and fees at the state's higher education institutions and a stipulation that more students coming from community colleges finish their studies within two years, the Los Angeles Times reported this week after obtaining a copy of the governor's budget proposal.

"We teach students from all walks of society, the traditional 20-somethings who go to college and get through in four years to the 30- to 40-year-old single parent who is working a couple jobs and going half-time or third-time," White said. "The metrics have to be considered with our mission."

White said his office was not consulted about the proposals and CSU officials are now talking with state Department of Finance officials on "refining what those measures are."

“To have our funding tied to something that we don’t actually control all the pieces of could get you in a box,” he said.

“...I never want to get the financial incentives in place that say we are going to ignore those kinds of students or we are going to ignore the students who need remedial work because they take five or six or seven years to get through.”

In a wide-ranging hourlong meeting with the editorial board of UT San Diego, White also said he’s working to get all CSU campuses on the semester system and is talking with UC officials about joining together on purchases in order to save money.

“We end up buying a lot of pillowcases and laptops and test tubes between our two systems,” he said.