



Gov. Brown tells CSU to ‘live within our means’

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By Kelly Puente

Gov. Jerry Brown urged California State University officials Tuesday to operate more efficiently on a tighter budget and forgo any plans for future tuition hikes.

The governor, who attended the CSU Board of Trustees meeting, has proposed a budget increase of \$125 million for the 23-campus system after years of cuts.

In Tuesday’s meeting at the Chancellor’s Office in Long Beach, CSU officials said the funding falls short of the \$371 million needed to pay for items including salary raises, maintenance and increases in enrollment. Brown, who is a member of the board by virtue of his position, said the \$371 million is “more dream than reality.” “It’s a tight ship we’re running and it’s going to get tighter,” he said. “Let’s live within our means and stay the course.”

The governor’s attendance at the CSU board meeting highlights his increased scrutiny on higher education policy and spending. Last week, he attended University of California Board of Regents meeting.

Among his initiatives, Brown has called for an additional \$10 million in funding for the CSU to develop more online classes to alleviate impacted courses and improve graduation rates. CSU officials said the system is already working on increasing online access to courses. This month, the CSU system launched a pilot program at California State University, Fullerton, as part of Cal State Online. The systemwide program will add up to 80 new online courses this fall.

While the governor’s proposed funding fell short of what was requested, officials nonetheless said the CSU is better prepared thanks to the passing of Proposition 30, Brown’s November tax measure. The system was anticipating an additional \$250 million loss in funding in the event that Prop. 30 failed. “As we head into 2013 the situation does indeed look better,” said Executive Vice Chancellor Ben Quillian.

When Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom asked about possible plans for tuition increases, Quillian said the system has no immediate plans to raise tuition. “At this point we are operating as if we will not increase tuition,” Quillian said.

Tuesday's meeting was the first presided over by Chancellor Timothy White, who replaced outgoing chancellor Charles Reed in December. Addressing the board and governor, White said the CSU will work to present a sound budget based on Brown's funding proposal at the next meeting in March. White said the system will continue to focus on becoming more efficient while improving access and quality. "We're going to be strategically focusing on the kind of investments that make us better," he said. "I think you'll be pleased with what we bring to you in March."