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BAD BUDGET YEAR THREATENS FUNDING FOR CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY

**-- CSU faculty refuse to give up fight to save funding
to education of 400,000+ students at 23 campuses --**

SACRAMENTO — Although the governor did his best to lower funding expectations in today's State of the State address, the California Faculty Association said today it is not prepared to give up on quality public higher education in the state.

CFA president Lillian Taiz, a history professor at Cal State L.A., said it is too soon to give up on higher education.

Taiz explained, "While the threat to the CSU is very real, we must remember that the governor's January budget is just the opening salvo. Final decisions have not been made. We know that higher education is part of the solution to a struggling economy. We are fully prepared to get the message out to policy-makers and the public."

Taiz cited "broad public support" for preserving the state universities and holding down tuition, based on a Public Policy Institute of California survey that found 76% of Californians, cutting across income, ethnic and party lines, deem the state's public higher education system "very important" to California's future.

On Thursday, the governor will present his budget plan for 2008/09 which will include a proposal for state funding for the CSU. The CSU is in the most vulnerable part of the state budget, protected neither by propositions (as is K-14) or court ordered funding (as are prisons).

During the previous budget crisis, the CSU was cut by a half billion dollars. The state universities never recovered that lost funding so in inflation-adjusted dollars, the CSU budget remains below the 2002 level. As a result, the CSU turned away eligible students, cut classes, and increased class size, all of which resulted in longer times to graduation. Most importantly, these cuts threatened the faculty's ability to offer quality education.

The governor also has indicated he will declare a fiscal emergency for the current budget year which began last July. If drastic cuts are applied to the CSU, there is the threat of reopening hard-fought CSU employee contracts, including the agreement that narrowly averted a faculty strike in spring 2007.

See the details of the CSU 2008/09 budget request at <http://www.calfac.org/budget08-09.html>

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