

News Information

For Immediate Release Monday, July 20, 2009
Contact: Vanessa Rojas, 661-302-2331

Cal State U. Students Have Begun 48-Hour Vigil Protest to Speak Out about the Deep Crisis in Public Higher Education

- **Protest Vigil began last night at CSU Chancellor's HQ in Long Beach**
- **Students Will Continue Protest Vigil Through CSU Trustees Meeting There on Tuesday**
- **Students From All Parts of the State Protest 32% Fee Hike as Students' & Families' Debts Pile Up**
- **Students Pay More While Class Sizes Grow, Courses Are Cut, and it is More Difficult to Graduate**

(LONG BEACH, CA) —More than a dozen students were the first to set up outside the California State University's Chancellor's Office in Long Beach at 5 pm Sunday, to begin a 48-hour protest of what they consider policies that will ruin the university for current and future students.

They hung a large banner from their organization Students for Quality Education, that reads "Save Higher Education" and distributed flyers asking passing supporters to "oppose fee hikes, keep classes open and stop faculty layoffs."

TV, radio, and print news media were there to interview the vigilers. Meanwhile, many of the vigilers took to their cell phones to "phone bank" call fellow students to talk with them about the vigil. (See photo)

Chancellor's Office authorities denied the students permission to camp on the site, and therefore they had to remain awake all night or leave the vigil to sleep.

To pass the night, they took turns reading aloud passages from educators about the importance of higher education to society, including the California Master Plan for Higher Education, the document that spelled out the creation of the state's community college, state university, and University of California system.

The students who launched the vigil last night are from Southern California campuses including Cal State Los Angeles, CSU Dominguez Hills, CSU Long Beach, CSU Bakersfield, CSU Northridge, CSU San Bernardino, and Cal Poly Pomona.

On Monday and Tuesday, students are expected to arrive from as far away as Humboldt, Fresno, and San Francisco State University campuses. They will be joined Monday and Tuesday by supporters from the CSU faculty and staff, as well as supporters from the community and labor unions.

WHERE:

CSU Chancellor's Office, 401 Golden Shore, Long Beach, CA (also location of the CSU Trustees meeting)

WHEN:

Specific times good for media on Monday July 20 and Tuesday July 21 will include:

- Monday from 10 am to 11am, students will be available for interviews with the media
- Monday afternoon, making signs and painting a mural while others distribute leaflets in Long Beach
- Monday evening, vigil continues
- Tuesday, 8 am, students will greet Trustees as they arrive at the meeting

- Tuesday, 10 am rally with supporters
- Tuesday, 1 pm rally at CSU Trustees meeting -- outside rally of students, CSU staff, faculty and supporters, while also students will fill the meeting room to support our speakers who will address the Trustees directly.

BACKGROUND

CSU Students are holding a 48 hour vigil and protest building up to the Cal State University Board of Trustees meeting where Trustees will vote to approve another 20% student fee hike on top of the 10% they approved in May for a total of 32%.

Student fees, which were \$3048 in 2008-2009, have more than doubled since 2002. The Trustees have already raised fees in May by 10% to \$3354 and 20% more would make the 2009-2010 total be \$4026.

Debt is piling up for CSU students while the door to public higher education is being closed on thousands of incoming students. Classes are getting very difficult to get into, class sizes are already much bigger, staff for student services is being cut, and it is taking longer for students to graduate. Students will take our message directly to the Chancellor's office for a 48 hour protest and vigil.

For more information, visit our Facebook page at
<http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#/group.php?gid=66669617717>

Note to Media: There will be signs, chants, speeches and street theater in addition to the all night/day vigil.

###