Faculty, students to lawmakers: #FundTheCSU, support key legislation

CFA activists and students hosted a unique art installation and rally at the Capitol on Tuesday, where they met with legislators to advocate for increased investment in the California State University.

During a noon news conference, faculty and students urged lawmakers to #FundTheCSU, and support a state budget augmentation that would increase the number of tenure-track faculty, improve mental health counselor-to-student ratios, and increase student access to the People’s University.

The event also included an art display created by Sol Collective, which featured two giant speech bubbles stating #FundTheCSU.

“The Governor’s budget shows a serious commitment to investing in CSU students and faculty,” said CFA President Jennifer Eagan. “Now, we want to be sure the CSU administration uses this money wisely. Students deserve access to a quality higher education and that includes funding for instruction and the support and services they need to graduate.”

Gov. Gavin Newsom made history when he proposed an unprecedented 8 percent increase in state funding for the CSU – a total of $562 million more in ongoing and one-time funds for the 2019-20 fiscal year.

“I think what’s a little bit different is the fact that we now have a governor who understands how important public education is. We have a governor who understands that a high-quality, low-cost public education is the best way to transform the middle class,” Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon told the crowd. “We need to make sure that at all the Cal States, the students, have the mental health services they need. We need to make sure that at every Cal State, they have the food pantry they need to deal with food insecurities.

“Your voice, coming here to Sacramento, as you do, and as I used to before I had to come here, lending your voice and telling your stories is ultimately the most transformative.”
CFA’s proposed budget allocations would include $62 million to increase access for 8,571 students; $35 million for hiring more tenure track faculty, and $20 million to bring counselor-to-student ratios up to the standard recommended by the International Association of Counseling Services, ensuring that there is at least one mental health counselor per 1,500 students. Currently, only five out of 23 CSUs meet that professional recommendation.

“There is a growing crisis of students being unable to afford housing and it’s having a dramatic toll on our mental well being,” said Elybeth Alcantar, a fourth-year Chico State student. “When we are living out of our cars or don’t have enough to eat, that directly impacts our ability to succeed in the classroom. And that has a direct impact on graduation rates.”

For more than 30 years, the CSU was chronically underfunded, and public funding for the CSU decreased as the number of students of color increased, said Margarita Berta-Ávila, a Professor at Sacramento State and President of the CFA Capitol Chapter.

“Chronic, inadequate funding and disinvestment by the state has very real implications for these Californians, who are promised a chance at a college education by the state’s Master Plan,” she said. “The CSU is the economic engine of this state, and we provide the degreed professionals that keep our state at the forefront of the world economy. Reinvesting in the CSU is a down-payment on the future success of California.”

Click here to see a photo gallery from Tuesday’s Lobby Day activities.

Gov. Newsom, Sen. Mitchell honored as advocates for public higher ed, social justice

Gov. Gavin Newsom and Senator Holly Mitchell were the stars of CFA’s Lobby Day reception on Monday night, where they were both honored.

CFA presented Gov. Newsom with the 2019 John Travis Award to recognize a Public Higher Education Champion, and Sen. Mitchell with the Anti-Racism and Social Justice Leadership Award.

Mitchell is a social justice advocate who has worked tirelessly to reform juvenile sentencing laws, strengthen
safety net programs, and reform police policies. She also is co-authoring AB 392 alongside Dr. Shirley Weber. The legislation, which is co-sponsored by CFA, would update the standard for use of force from reasonable to necessary.

The award honored Mitchell for “standing with working families, students, and faculty of the CSU to promote anti-racist and socially-just policies, and equity in higher education,” CFA President Jennifer Eagan said.

CFA activists also presented Gov. Newsom with an award for his work in championing the CSU, and reinvesting in our university system. During his talk, Newsom thanked faculty and students for their constructive engagement and advocacy.

“Over the last decade, we stopped investing in the system and as a consequence we have paid a big price. You brought that advocacy to the forefront, you’ve been there in every forum, at every critical occasion—I just want to congratulate you for that,” Newsom said.

Click here to watch a video featuring Newsom’s full remarks.

To view a photo gallery from the reception, click here.

Faculty Rights Tip: Advice on audio/video recordings without faculty consent

Q: Can students legally record audio or video in my classroom without my consent?

A: You have the right to be free from unauthorized recordings in the classroom. Instructors may be required to allow for recordings if they are connected to disability accommodations. Such recordings are for the accommodated student’s personal use only and may not be distributed or used for non-course related purposes. If you have questions or concerns, contact the disability resources center on your campus.

Many faculty have strict policies about phones being off and stored away in order to facilitate focus and learning. Given the political environment in which we find ourselves, or in order to maintain a classroom in which everyone feels free to express themselves in a collaborative learning environment, you may wish to disallow recordings outside of the context of disability accommodations. It is your right to do so.

We encourage faculty to provide a very clear statement in your course syllabus about your classroom recording policy with clear limitations on use and distribution.

Here’s an example:

Students may not record (audio or video) in this class except in accordance with ADA accommodations. Any recordings made in connection with a disability accommodation are for the student’s personal academic use only and may not be distributed in any manner to any other individual.

You may feel otherwise and take a different position. In fairness, your students should understand and know your position, as they may be recorded during class discussions if someone records a class session.

Here’s a link to an informative piece on this topic by the San Jose Mercury News.
If you have questions about a Faculty Rights Tip or would like to suggest a tip, please write us at cfa@calfac.org with the subject line “Faculty Rights Tip.”

Click here to find faculty rights advocates on your campus.

In Other News…

MAY DAY: Today, May 1, is known around the world as International Workers Day and faculty will be participating in events throughout the state.

Click here to see May Day events near you!

UNION UNITY: Faculty have been coming together for Unity events throughout the CSU, highlighting the combined power that faculty gain when we work and interact in solidarity with one another.

At Fresno, faculty were invited to spin a wheel for prizes, and lecturers could enter to win a “rolling office” that included a computer bag filled with supplies. The chapter posted the raffle drawing on their Facebook page.

For more information about Unity week activities, click here.

WAGES AND WORKING PEOPLE: A delegation of CFA activists learned more about the connectivity of economic and political power during a forum featuring several prospective presidential candidates in Las Vegas.


CFA Associate Vice President North Rafael Gómez said the forum brought to light the fact that CFA is not only a key player in the labor movement in California, but we also have the expertise and organizing ability to be part of the solution for our country.

“Our values align with the values of the majority of the candidates who spoke,” Gómez said. “We can contribute to the discussion on economic inequality, education, immigration, social justice, racism, health care, and ecological survival.”

Links of the Week

The Backbone Of CSUDH: Adjunct Faculty
The Bulletin (CSU Dominguez Hills)

Ask nearly any university administrator why tenure track or tenured faculty are preferred over adjunct faculty,
also known as lecturers, temporary, or part-time faculty, and you’re likely to get a similar response as this: they have more time to dedicate to their teaching because they are full-time and can devote themselves to only one job. That means more attention to their students as well as a vested interest in contributing to the university in ways other than teaching.

**Police Violence and Public Mental Health**

**Inside Higher Education**

Exposure to police violence can leave a lasting mark on a victim’s mind. In today’s Academic Minute, Fordham University's Jordan DeVylder discusses how psychological distress can linger after an encounter. DeVylder is an associate professor at Fordham's graduate school of social service. Learn more about the Academic Minute here.

**Pay tuition or feed kids? Students tell California lawmakers about everyday choices**

**Sacramento Bee**

When money was really tight, Sacramento State University student Shamona Thompson Ross found herself chastising her 8-year-old son for putting too much milk in his cereal. Those days tested her decision to see through a degree in American Sign Language.

**Amid measles fears, more than 200 students and staff at L.A. universities are quarantined**

**LA Times**

Trying to stop a measles outbreak from spreading, health officials announced Thursday that more than 200 students and staff members at UCLA and Cal State L.A. who have been exposed to measles are being asked to stay home.

**Judge: No More Delays on State Authorization Rules**

**Inside Higher Education**

The U.S. Department of Education will be required to implement long-delayed rules around state authorization of online programs following a judge’s ruling on a lawsuit against the department, as first reported in Politico.

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