

From the California Faculty Association
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CFA HEADLINES

January 15, 2013 · Weekly news digest from CFA

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· Udacity, San Jose State to partner for online ed pilot program

CSU Chancellor Timothy White joined Gov. Jerry Brown, the San Jose State campus president and Sebastian Thrun, the head of an online education company, at a news conference today to announce a pilot online teaching project.

Three courses (six online course sections) will be offered to 50 matriculated San Jose State students and 50 community college and high school students. The curriculum and teaching is being prepared by San Jose State faculty working together with Udacity, a new company offering free, very large online courses commonly known as MOOCs (Massively Open Online Courses).

This experimental project is designed, in part, to see if the drop-out and failure rates (as high as 90%) in so many online courses can be improved.

In his remarks at the news conference, Chancellor White highlighted what he sees as some key questions that need to be answered in studying this project:

“This is an R&D [research and development] project for us right now to figure out what are the moving parts. What is the role of faculty and the human contact? What can be done with technology? How they interface? Do students learn? Do they advance?”

“And [we are now] working out the bugs on a handful of courses with a handful of students.”

“Then the next question is a business question. Can it be scaled up? And how do you scale it up and still maintain the learning environment that the students of today need to be successful?”

“And if we can't do that last piece, well then, we have to start again.”

CFA President Lil Taiz agrees on the importance of asking questions about student success:

She said, "It's good the CSU is actually testing out these methods and starting on a small scale. We must find out which online tools work well (or not), for what kinds of students, and for what kinds of subject matter. There is a lot to unpack in the pedagogy."

CFA and CSU managers have met on how the terms of work in the first semester of the pilot accord with the faculty contract.

"You can't have quality learning conditions for students—online or in a classroom—without professional working conditions for the faculty. Our contract is an important piece of making sure we have fairness, equity, and quality in all aspects of CSU teaching."

· **Gov, new chancellor highlight upcoming CSU Trustees meeting**

The CSU Board of Trustees will convene next Tuesday and Wednesday Jan. 22-23 in Long Beach.

The meeting of CSU's governing body will be the first for new Chancellor Timothy White. Reports also indicate that Gov. Jerry Brown will also be in attendance, his second time in as many meetings.

The Democratic governor said during his news conference on the budget last week that he will attend the meetings of both the UC and CSU governing boards this month to press for improved graduation rates and operational efficiencies, including online education.

Brown said he will be "listening a lot, meeting behind the scenes and figuring out, can we turn down this relentless increase in (student fees) that is so much higher than the normal cost of living."

While every governor holds an ex-officio seat on both the CSU Trustees and UC Regents, Brown is the first governor in recent memory to actually attend a meeting.

· **Gov's state budget plan provides CSU with a needed boost**

Last week, Gov. Jerry Brown introduced his budget proposal for the 2013/14 fiscal year, which included a much-needed funding increase for the CSU.

The governor proposes to increase CSU funding from the state's general fund by \$125.1 million, while also back-filling \$125 million in CSU resources that the system refunded to students and their families as a result of the tuition rollback last fall.

"This budget proposal is the first step in restoring a prosperous future for California," said CFA President Lillian Taiz, a professor of history at CSU Los Angeles. "We appreciate the governor's commitment to public higher education and, in particular, to keeping the CSU affordable for our students."

While the funding portions of the budget plan are a positive for the CSU, the governor also proposed some policy changes that CFA will continue to monitor as they proceed through the legislature.

View the proposal in its entirety at: <http://www.ebudget.ca.gov>

· **Fourth gathering of Campaign for the Future of Higher Ed this weekend**

The fourth national gathering of the Campaign for the Future of Higher Education (CFHE) will take place this weekend in Sacramento.

The meeting will take up the campaign's next steps to ensure that affordable quality higher education is accessible to all sectors of our society in the coming decades.

The Campaign for the Future of Higher Education (CFHE) is a national movement that has been undertaken to ensure that the voices of faculty, students, and communities are part of the conversation about the changes to and policy about higher education.

More about the CFHE can be found at: www.futureofhighered.org/

· **Links of the week**

Jerry Brown wants changes at state university systems

Gov. Jerry Brown said he will attend meetings of the University of California Board of Regents and California State University Board of Trustees later this month to pressure the systems to change their ways and hold the line on student tuition. – [Los Angeles Times](#)

Students Rush to Web Classes, but Profits May Be Much Later

Students Rush to Web Classes, but Profits May Be Much Later – [New York Times](#)

How Free Online Courses Are Changing the Traditional Liberal Arts Education

As tuition costs continue to rise, it seems counterintuitive that professors at top universities would give away their courses for free. But that's exactly what they're doing, on web-based platforms known as "Massive Open Online Courses." Spencer Michels reports on how a boom in online learning could change higher education. – [PBS News Hour](#)

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