

Good morning Chair Berman and members of the Committee.

I am Sharon Elise, Associate Vice President South, Council for Affirmative Action, for the California Faculty Association. The California Faculty Association represents more than 28,000 tenure-line professors, lecturers, librarians, counselors, and coaches on the 23 campuses of the California State University system, also known as the People's University. I am also Professor and Chair of the Department of Sociology at California State University San Marcos in North San Diego County.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to be on this panel to discuss Faculty and Labor Affairs in Higher Education.

You asked us to consider a number of questions as part of this panel so I will reference these in my testimony.

Your first question was, **“What do faculty need in order to support students?”**

Our answer is that first and foremost, we need our institution to assure that all admissible students have access. This is only possible with full funding of the CSU.

ACCESS

California high school students have risen to meet CSU qualifications: they deserve access. Yet, at the very end of Arnold Schwarzenegger's Governorship, and throughout Governor Brown's tenure, both the CSU and UC turned away tens-of-thousands of qualified California students annually. This is a crisis for California's long-term economic and social wellbeing because those prospective students will either go to other institutions (possibly out of our state) or even worse, decide not to pursue a college degree at all.

The state's proposal amounts to an underfunding of the CSU with an allocation of just \$92 million. The CSU administration had requested \$263 million but that is not enough. CFA recommends funding the CSU at \$422.6 million. This funding level would increase student admissions by more than 18,000 FTE students. Yet even with CFA's recommended funding, we would still be turning away thousands of qualified students.

CFA's research report, *Equity Interrupted*, has shown that the California State University system educates a far more diverse student body today than it did 30 years ago and that as the number of students of color has increased, public funding for the CSU has decreased. As we see it, when the student body grew darker, the funding became lighter. 94% of the student body in the CSU is from California, and nearly three-quarters identify as students of color.

We know that higher education is an important opportunity structure. Moreover, the economy needs college graduates to thrive. For these and other reasons, we urge you and the legislature to fund the CSU at a level that ensures that all qualified California high school graduates and community college transfer students get admitted to a public university. Note that our request

for \$422.6 million would still not return us to the level of support enjoyed by students in California of the 1980s.

EQUITY

A related aspect of student need is that faculty be able to provide students equity in education. This is not possible without attention to problems of implicit bias in faculty hiring and evaluation that obstruct the diversification of the faculty. Students need and deserve a faculty that mirrors the composition of California and of the overall CSU student population. We also know, from decades of research that underrepresented students and students of color need a “culturally relevant” curriculum and pedagogy to thrive. This means that we must transform traditional notions of the cornerstones of higher education to not just include, but even center, courses in Ethnic Studies and Women’s Studies along with pedagogies based in collaborative learning, service-learning and community engagement that articulate with the community ethos from which many of our students draw their strength.

Your second framing question was, “ **What are the challenges and barriers that faculty face in meeting the needs of students and how are these being addressed?**”

Faculty are challenged to meet growing needs of a diversified student body with its increased needs for mentoring and student-faculty engagement. We believe that central to addressing this need is having enough tenure track faculty to guide and support students. This is integrally related to how we better serve students.

TENURE TRACK FACULTY

Quality higher education can only be assured by ending recent trends toward reliance on “temporary” faculty. To render quality, we need tenure track faculty. We say this, not because our Lecturer (contingent) faculty are incapable of offering rigorous instruction, but because of the structure of lecturer positions versus tenure track positions. Lecturer faculty positions are, primarily, defined in terms of instruction whereas tenure track faculty positions also include scholarly and creative activity and service (e.g., advising, mentoring, collaborative work with students, committee service, academic program development and review, faculty peer evaluation, etc.).

Fifty years of research shows that students’ advancement in and beyond their college journey depends on the relationships they build with faculty through the kind of service tenure track faculty provide: collaborative research, mentoring, and advisement. For the growing numbers of students who are of color, immigrant, veteran, and first generation to attend college, these mentoring relationships are even more critical to their success. Only tenure track faculty are required to provide such service so the growing reliance on a contingent faculty workforce at the same time that we are increasingly serving a far more diverse student body means that a critical gap in service to students has emerged. At the same time, it means that there is a greater burden on those who are tenured. Faculty whose characteristics mirror those of the 21st Century CSU student are further “taxed” to provide such mentorship because of the poor ratios of faculty of color to students of color. Each year, at graduate time, we hear stories from

students who tell us that “Professor X kept me in school.” Or, “I didn’t feel like I belonged here and I had a lot of challenges because of work and family but when Professor X told us about her journey to the Ph.D. and she had the same struggles, it gave me confidence.” So “Professor X” is “culturally taxed” but making an incredible difference, keeping students invested in their academic journey and giving them confidence that it is possible.

I have seen that through the efforts of faculty like my colleagues who advise a student group of undocumented students, who advise a student group of formerly incarcerated students, who advise Black and Latino students, who advise veterans, students are not only able to survive the stress of deportation, food insecurity, poverty, racism, PTSD, and so forth, but even to achieve academic honors and the highest awards our campus offers. The primary support for such students is the tenure track faculty, often those who share, identify with, and offer advice on dealing with, aspects of these students’ challenges.

CFA is proposing a budget that sets aside \$50 million of existing ongoing funds to increase the hiring of tenure-track faculty beyond the baseline for maintenance of current numbers. CFA proposes that the CSU report expenditures to the legislature along with the impact of the funds on increasing tenure track faculty positions. Finally, the budget language would recommend, but not require, that CSU seriously consider their existing qualified lecturer pool as candidates for these new tenure-track faculty positions.

But we need more. Right now the ratio of tenure track faculty to non-tenure track faculty is about 1 to 1. 50% of our CSU faculty are non-tenure track. Our students deserve a high quality education and tenure track faculty can ensure they get the guidance and support they need.

Your third framing question (or questions) were, “**How should the Master Plan and/or California’s higher education system meet the needs of faculty? What is one action the state can take that would not require funding? What is one action the state can take that would require funding?**”

Shared governance costs nothing to the CSU. It is important that the CSU acknowledge and respect the ways that faculty, who are the key to instruction, can inform the direction and shape of education in our State. Yet, in recent decades, we have seen case after case of policy before/without consultation with the faculty. The recent experience with administrative fiat for changes in graduation requirements is a case in point. There must be shared consultation on changes to academic programs and graduation requirements, and faculty should have the lead as the experts. While faculty respect administrative concerns for improved student progress to graduation, slicing off chunks of curriculum faculty have deemed important is a poor substitution for increasing resources that would allow students to progress to graduation based on being able to access the courses they need to graduate.

In terms of one thing the legislature could do to support the needs of faculty that does have a cost, I would say that we need you to identify a long term funding source to support free public Higher Education.

DEDICATED SOURCE OF FUNDING

We need bold leadership, like the legislation Asm. Eggman introduced with AB 2351 this year, that advocates a dedicated funding source for higher education –like we have for K-14 education - so we can get back to free higher education – free of tuition and fees where additional support is provided to students that need it in order to live and learn.

My father's people are immigrants from the Caribbean who enjoyed free education in the UC system. My mothers' family are refugees from Texas who enjoyed free education in the community college system. My husband and one of my children are CSU graduates who, like me and many of the people in my generation, including many of our legislators, benefited from an almost free higher education. Why are we not offering our students the same deal we got? By the time my daughter graduated from a CSU her tuition was 400% higher than that her father paid.

There is a strong economic case for a free public higher education. The Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) estimates that California will be over 1 million college graduates short to meet the demands of California's economy by 2030. Yet the CSU turned away 31,000 qualified students this past year due to funding. This trend will worsen without action as more California high school students meet CSU qualifications and their access is not guaranteed.

Education is the driving force of California's economy and one of the strongest solutions to poverty. Every dollar the state invests in the CSU generates more than five dollars for California's economy. Research has continually confirmed that having a bachelor's degree increases long-term earnings. This translates into increased income tax revenue and a reduced reliance on other state services.

Let's do the right thing for students in the People's University: assure their access to an education based on equity under the direction of tenure track faculty who can devote time to mentoring them in an institution that thrives because it is reasonably funded.

Thank you for your time.