



As we near fall break, I urge all of you to rest and rejuvenate before our last push towards the end of the semester. We have accomplished tremendous work while enduring pain to realign with the fewer number of students on our campus. In fall 2022, we had 25,046 students and this fall 2024 we have just over 22,357 students, an 11% decline from two years ago. This has impacted colleges differently. Graduate College of Education has had the smallest percent decrease at 4% whereas the College of Liberal and Creative Arts has had the greatest at 19%. These figures are in addition to the declines we saw from 2018-2022.

Together, we have done incredible work making \$18 million in salary reductions in Academic Affairs since Spring 2023, which is more than an 11% reduction in salary. Still, with our continued declining enrollments, we anticipate having to make another round of adjustments for Academic Year 2025-2026. We expect to have enrollment projections before January to guide us in determining adjustments before the spring semester starts. To give you a clear sense of the work it may entail, under current enrollment projections Academic Affairs is facing an additional \$7.9 million reduction as it plans for next fiscal year [University Budget Committee October presentation](#). We will, of course, continue to chart a pathway through these difficulties through shared governance. Our request to Senate to convene the Institutional Review Committee to review academic discontinuance is one such step in multiple steps we have engaged in to include a broad range of voices.

As you know, we may also need to prepare for an additional potential 7.95% reduction of state funds for the entire CSU system in next year's state budget. And, with the election of [an administration hostile to higher education](#), we face even more uncertainty around what the future holds. Still, we continue to serve more than 22,000 students who are gaining the skills to transform not just their own lives, but the world around them, as we impart on students the value of collective good on a campus that holds equity, diversity and justice as core values.

Serving students well remains our mission, our north star, as we continue this difficult journey together. I urge all of you to revisit [our strategic plan](#) and lean on our values to strengthen our resolve for our students, the overwhelming majority of whom are BIPOC, first generation college students, or Pell Grant eligible.

In Academic Affairs, we have taken deliberate steps to support high demand programs and re-envision low enrolling programs. We have been conscious of the challenge of doing this while continuing our commitment to a [liberal arts education, which is foundational to our](#)

[democracy](#). This goal has always been our guide. While it is difficult to paint a specific picture of what this campus will look like in five years, we must stay committed to an expansive intellectual experience that imparts a strong sense of social responsibility and empowers graduates to successfully navigate a complex and ever changing world. This means that our curriculum must change in a rapidly shifting technological landscape that impacts not just how we work, but also how we interact with one another. We must change ourselves to provide students an education that they see as relevant. And that revision and innovation must come from faculty experts in respective fields. It also means that we cannot pit our different disciplines and areas against one another. We must work together to reorganize ourselves in a manner that remains in service to our students.

Last year, our colleagues in Academic Planning created a useful [reference document](#), on questions for departments to consider in revising their curriculum to better serve students while reducing expenses. Are there core courses in the major that could be taught by tenure line faculty, particularly at the lower division where they could have a important impact on new students? Are there any pre-requisite or bottle-neck courses that could be removed to facilitate advancement in the degree program? What is the maximum number of electives a program should have and in what areas to align with the current socio-economic context? These are just a few of the curricular considerations that programs can undertake in restructuring. This past year, I have seen degree programs courageously decide to discontinue a baccalaureate degree and revise it into a concentration within another degree or change it into a minor. I realize that changes such as these require deep and sometimes painful introspection.

This past week I learned of a faculty member in a low demand program who had volunteered to teach a class in a high demand program. Many years ago, while still an associate professor, I was asked to teach courses in Women and Gender Studies as well as Asian American Studies (though my official appointment was in Race and Resistance Studies and Sexuality Studies) when the departments could not hire lecturers. In this spirit of collaboration, I ask that departments continue to be open to drawing tenure line faculty from across the university to teach their high demand General Education classes where appropriate. Faculty Affairs will be assisting in a process to pool our faculty resources to more centrally facilitate the sharing of teaching across different departments. When faced with diminishing work for some faculty, our first choice is always to have them teach in other areas when their own area may not draw enough students. And, our hope is that departments will engage in this process collegially.

We also realize that with decreasing enrollments, lecturer faculty will continue to bear the brunt of having fewer students to teach. While there is no way to fully mitigate the impact of this, Faculty Affairs will be creating a limited resources guide drawing in part from the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity for lecturer faculty who are forced to seek other employment.

Since I came into this seat two years ago, I have seen incredible movement from staff and faculty collaborating across divisions and colleges in an effort to reduce expenses while still maintaining student services. I have also witnessed departments taking impressive

action on their curriculum to become ["student ready"](#) in order to better meet students as they come to our campus. I am very grateful for the work being done.

As we enter into a period of what will inevitably become another contentious chapter of American if not world history, let us build a narrative in which we will become agents of our collective well-being. We must consciously commit to working with and supporting each other. What lies ahead of us will not be easy, but I am certain that our strategic purpose to provide accessible and transformative higher education to the underserved will be well worth the struggle.



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