



Dear Colleagues:

I realize that many of us on campus are holding a lot of worry about the future and the tremendous amount of change we are undergoing: the CSU is in negotiations with our unions; the Board passed a tuition increase; enrollment is down; and, as a result, some lecturer faculty may not be reappointed for spring 2024. While enrollment is at a historic low, we still remain a large university in our commitment to continue to serve the needs of more than 20,000 students and serve them well.

We now have 19,766 full time equivalent resident students or 23,404 students in terms of headcount, which is the lowest since 1979. There is no doubt that we are facing an [enrollment cliff](#) as are six other CSUs and many universities across numerous states. Our University has the ability to carefully back away from the cliff and reinvent ourselves as a smaller campus. As an institution we have not been as efficient at adjusting our class schedule to align with declining enrollments which have been incremental and were perhaps deniable until COVID. I remember as a faculty member I would be teaching classrooms filled with students to the classroom capacity, thinking to myself that *my* department should be growing even in the midst of decreasing numbers of students across the University. What I didn't realize then, was that fewer students university-wide would sooner or later impact the GE courses that I taught.

In the past five years, we've had an additional 19% enrollment drop in our already declining enrollments. We have lost \$34 million in tuition revenue and are facing a \$16.5 million deficit. As we plan for spring 2024, we are feeling particular pain since we have not been making needed incremental adjustments over the past ten years. We are asking departments to first schedule only the classes they need to keep students on track towards graduation in order to avoid scheduling too many classes for the current number of students. We will continue to offer students the courses they need for graduation.

We must do this hand-in-hand with all of us involved, since we will only be able to do this well if we act collectively during this difficult time. For lecturer faculty who may not be re-appointed to a class, it could mean applying for one of our student facing staff-positions available on our HR website, since we already know you are great with our students. For faculty search committees it could mean giving serious consideration to excellent lecturer faculty who apply for your tenure-track positions. For degree granting programs, it will mean reviewing curriculum to make sure requirements reflect student needs and align with the number of majors. For tenured

faculty, it could mean teaching a core class that you have not taught in a long while. For staff it means continuing to be open to change and learning as we reimagine the nature and organization of work.

We are indeed being strategic about the reduction. We are committed to resizing our university by aligning our workforce with our resources and needs through attrition, as well as curricular changes so that students can earn their baccalaureate degrees more smoothly. We are asking units to re-think how work is organized in light of the fact that we have a decreased number of students, so that we can be more deliberate about how we fill a position after a departure. We hope to grow high demand areas and are also asking areas of lower demand to rethink their curriculum. We are even asking programs that have stayed stable in terms of enrollment to consider whether they might better serve students with a curricular refresh or reconfiguration. These conversations will be initiated at the college level in which departments in partnership with the broader perspective of their Dean's office serve as experts in these redesigns. Moreover, we see alignment with our strategic plan, which is about putting student achievement and success first, as absolutely central in the implementation of creating a smaller university. Working together we can navigate the challenges that resizing brings, and we can do it well remaining among the largest CSU campuses in Northern California.

Last week as I was walking across campus to attend a Senate meeting, I came across two students who were meeting for the first time. "I follow you on IG," said one student to the other. "I follow you too, and your posts are sick," responded the other student. Then with broad smiles they both dropped their backpacks and exchanged phone numbers, as they simultaneously declared, "and now we are meeting IRL!" As weighty as our anxiety can feel in this moment, I drew strength from the palpable joy these students felt as they unburdened themselves of their own heavy load for just a moment and created a connection IRL. I realize the road ahead of us will not be smooth, but I also have great confidence that if any campus can travel that road, it will be ours in its connective and collective success.



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