



Dear Staff,

Yesterday, this message was shared with faculty. I share it with you as well, because the challenges and opportunities ahead require all of us.

Your expertise, care, and commitment to students are central to our progress. As we adapt to our enrollment and budget realities, it will take all of us—staff and faculty alike—working in coordination, supporting one another, and staying focused on our shared goal of student success within a financially sustainable model.

Amy

Message sent to faculty on Tuesday, October 28

As you all already know, our enrollment decrease has been dramatic and rapid. At our peak in 2018, we served 29,586 students. This past fall, we welcomed back 20,698 students. This is a remarkable 30% drop in students. At last week's October 23rd UBC meeting, Enrollment Management projected that by 2030 we could have just 15,136 students if we continue on without significant changes in how and what we do. If the decrease remains unchecked, within five years we will likely be half the size we were nine years ago. And, as we know, enrollment declines precipitate significant budget reductions. These enrollment realities mean that we must act now and even more aggressively than we have in the past two years to align academic planning and programs with enrollment demand while continuing to reduce our costs.

What We've Done

Working hard to avoid faculty layoffs, we have been actively engaged in making adjustments such as increasing class size, teaching an additional section, collaborating on course sharing across colleges, reducing units in a degree program, and discontinuing programs. Faculty are also updating their curriculum and creating more relevant degrees for students today. Here are some examples below.

- Faculty have been hard at work reducing the number of units required in their majors. If we include those proposals that are currently being processed, eighty-eight programs have reduced their major units. So long as we do not replace the course reductions with additional courses, the university could save an estimated \$1.6 million in instructional costs. Reducing unnecessary units in the major also facilitates four-year graduation for students, which we have steadily been increasing for the past eight years and have improved by more than 30%. The financial benefits for our students graduating in four years are significant.
- Computer Science is revising their curriculum to better reflect innovations in technology; we will soon have a baccalaureate degree in video game studies; and a subset of chairs in Liberal and Creative Arts are working on creating a certificate in AI and the humanities. Psychology and Public Health are also collaborating on multi-lingual competency certificates with Modern Languages and Literature.
- We have also just begun working on a low unit degree focused on skills and experiential learning that will allow for stackable professional certificates.

What We Need To Do

I realize that many are exhausted from the efforts, but we must now dig deeper and do so with urgency.

- We still have 219 degrees for 20,000 students, while other campuses of comparable size typically have 100 to 130 degrees. Sacramento State, for example, with its 30,000 students, offers 120 degrees. In fact, 20% of our students are concentrated in just four majors. Our students would be better served with fewer degree options that draw on the wealth of expertise our faculty have. This means we must reduce the number of degree programs we offer to a financially sustainable number.
- We realize that we cannot simply cut our way out of reduced funding. We must also invest in growth. Thus, now is the time to consolidate or revise degrees to better reflect what students want and need from college. We must align our academic programs with enrollment demand and workforce needs.
- Increasing retention both helps students and our enrollment. We must aim to retain more students. By the time a Gator begins their fourth year, 40% of their classmates will have stopped out without graduating. We owe it to our students to get them over the finish line so that they leave SFSU with a college degree. We are working with colleges and departments to help you identify opportunities to improve. See how DFW rates for your department or just your own classes are trending. How is the retention rate for your specific degree program? Have you updated your curriculum or your pedagogy to address the new needs of Gen Z? How have you improved your interaction with students to make your program or class more “sticky?” I often think of how I would teach SXS 300 Introduction to Sexuality Studies differently from ten years ago. Check out [CEETL](#) for ideas on better teaching for GenZ. We have also developed a retention toolkit for chairs and faculty [here](#).
- We must be better ambassadors of our institution. We hear that some may be disparaging SFSU directly to our own students and in the press and even encouraging students to go elsewhere. Yes, times are hard, but we continue to provide students with high quality degrees and a path to upward mobility. Keep in mind that diminishing our students’ confidence in our institution will only contribute to our enrollment problem.

I also want to assure you all that every college and unit has experienced budget reductions. Some colleges have decreased more precipitously in the number of students than others. The

Lam Family College of Business and the College of Liberal and Creative Arts have experienced the greatest decline. Science and Engineering and Health and Social Sciences have experienced less of a decline. Thus, some colleges and programs have experienced more reductions. Still, all are doing their part.

	Fall 2018		Fall 2025			
College	Student Major Headcount	Student Major FTES	Student Major Headcount	Student Major FTES	Change in the Number of Students Fall 2018 to Fall 2025	Change in the Number of FTES Fall 2018 to Fall 2025
Business	5,821	4,956.7	3,525	3,071	-39.4%	-38.0%
Education	1,485	953.1	1,080	774	-27.3%	-18.7%
Ethnic Studies	232	199.2	174	142	-25.0%	-28.9%
Health and Social Sciences	5,406	4,680.2	4,616	4,006	-14.6%	-14.4%
Undeclared	1,305	1,111.4	354	216.0	-72.9%	-80.6%
Liberal and Creative Arts	7,732	6,655.4	4,268	3,604	-44.8%	-45.9%
Science and Engineering	7,605	6,537.5	6,679	5,889	-12.2%	-9.9%
Total	29,586	25,093.6	20,698	17,703.0	-30.0%	-29.5%

I realize that many of you already are already doing the painstaking work required above. The library recently installed [vending machines](#) and set up a ["living room"](#) to make their study spaces more "sticky." The vast majority of the staff and faculty I interact with daily are intent on improving our workplace. In fact, it doesn't make sense for any one of us to actively tear down the house in which we live, a place where many of us have spent our entire professional lives. Still, I understand that stressful times often incite us to do things that may be less than helpful. Thus, I ask all of us to stand taller than our fears and anxieties, recommit to saving our core mission, speak up for SFSU, and take bold curricular action. We will not survive if we are not intentional in how we re-create our institution, through a community of care and interdependence that is more expansive than our individual units.