



CSSA President's Report, David M. Lopez
November 2016 Board of Trustees Meeting

Thank you Chair Eisen – Good morning, and as always CSSA is grateful for the opportunity to give a report and have a platform for the student voice at these Board of Trustees meetings.

Since the last CSU board of trustees meeting, we have held two CSSA plenary meetings in which our discussions primarily revolved around the potential tuition increase and our continued work on our ambitious policy agenda.

During our CSSA meeting in October, the governing board met at Fresno State, and were given information on the potential tuition increase proposal, this information included a presentation that was presented by the CSSA Executive Officers and CSU Student Trustees. The governing board not only discussed the proposal, but also passed a definition for shared governance. The definition that the governing board passed is that shared governance is the right to consistent collaboration among students, faculty, staff, and administration in making any decisions that impacts the campus and its community.

During our most recent CSSA Board meeting, which was held at CSU Channel Islands, our governing board continued the discussion on the potential tuition increase proposal. The governing board had the opportunity to engage directly with Chancellor White, Executive Vice Chancellor Blanchard, and Assistant Vice Chancellor Storm. After expressing concerns and asking clarifying questions with the Chancellor's Office leadership, the CSSA governing board took that information and developed potential advocacy plans to fight for students through various methods such as phone banking events or in-district lobby visits.

I would like to end my report with a discussion on the potential tuition increase and how an increase will be detrimental to our students. But before I get into that, I would like to echo

Trustee Carney's comment and encourage the board of trustees to develop a committee based off of what the students are requesting, this is a crucial time for all of us and all of our students need to feel safe.

The last time I spoke to y'all, I called upon the state legislature to fully invest in the CSU because the students of the CSU are California's future. Two months later, I still call upon the state legislature to fully invest in the CSU so that we can better serve our students, and so that we can promote their successes now and into the future. We are in this position of adding more to our student's debt because the state has disinvested in CSU students. Now it is time to reinvest in students, and in turn, in California. Our students are exceptional, they are unique, and they deserve for the state to recognize all that they have to offer and support them accordingly. You heard our students speak during public comment, now its time to come together and put pressure on our state, just how they do to us.

With this being said, students and faculty from across the CSU system have submitted their stories to CSSA's potential tuition increase website, tuition.calstatestudents.org, and have provided some insight into the variety of challenges a tuition increase would create or amplify. A freshman from Fullerton expressed concern that her parents are already struggling to pay for two kids in college. While another student from San Bernardino is worried that she is working at a job that pays minimum wage now to afford college and on top of that will be strapped with debt payments as she enters into a traditionally lower paying but noble job as a teacher. Another student from Monterey Bay states that the CSU system was created for the common people, such as first generation students who do not have the resources or guidance needed in order to succeed in college. A faculty member from Chico State wanted the Board of Trustees to know that the students who are a part of the School of Education graduate program will suffer from this tuition increase because many of the students will get very little financial return on their degree.

The financial challenges of pursuing a college degree are real. Recent research suggests that being in student loan debt negatively affects the psychological and emotional well-being of those in debt and discourages entrepreneurship. It is hard to imagine a healthy and thriving California economy when our fellow Californians are suffering both financially and emotionally.

But it doesn't have to be this way. Our CSU students are passionate and ambitious. They are caring and selfless. CSU students are the future leaders of this state, and that's great news for California. The bad news is that without the state's full investment in our students, many of them will find themselves unable to handle the financial and emotional burden that is increasingly associated with getting a college degree.

With that Chair Eisen, I conclude my report. Thank you.

David M. Lopez

CSSA President 2016-2017