Subject: Budget Update From the President
Date: Tuesday, April 8, 2025 at 1:21:00 PM Pacific Daylight Time
From: Office of the President
To: Christine Paik

(View this email in a browser)



Dear CSUSM colleagues,

Welcome back from spring break! I hope you had some time to rest. As we move into a new month, I wanted to continue to keep you informed on budget-related matters.

Advocacy

Last month, I attended CSU Advocacy Day in Sacramento, where I had the opportunity to meet with our local state lawmakers on behalf of CSUSM and the entire CSU system, and advocate against Gov. Newsom's proposed budget cuts. In my conversations with our state assemblymembers and senators, I emphasized the critical role that CSUSM plays in shaping the future of our region – preparing leaders, fueling workforce development and driving economic growth. This week, I am traveling to Washington, D.C., for CSU Hill Day for more advocacy – to reach our federal lawmakers. Our legislators understand and appreciate our impact, but we must continue to make our voices heard.

Additionally, for those who wish to take action, we have created a template letter that you can personalize and send to your local lawmakers. Every voice matters in this advocacy effort, and I urge you to help us reinforce the importance of protecting CSU funding.

Voluntary Separation Incentive Program (VSIP)

As we continue to evaluate cost-saving measures for the long-term sustainability of CSUSM, one immediate step we are implementing is the Voluntary Separation Incentive Program (VSIP) for eligible employees. This program provides an option for those considering retirement or career transitions while also helping the university manage budget constraints. The application period is this week and next, **April 7-18**. We recognize that decisions about participation are deeply personal, and we encourage those who are eligible to review the details carefully and consider whether this program aligns with their future plans.

Additional Cost-Saving Measures

Beyond the VSIP, we are working diligently to assess additional cost-saving strategies generated from our World Café discussions. We have been meeting with the President's Budget and Advisory Committee (also known as University Cabinet) and the Academic Senate's Budget and Long-Range Planning Committee to review the ideas gathered from our World Café discussions. These ideas were evaluated for alignment with the strategic plan, level of implementation difficulty and amount saved or generated. These conversations have provided valuable insights, and we are prioritizing initiatives that are both practical to implement and highly impactful.

Based on the ideas generated, some areas where we are moving forward to save state dollars will include:

- Slowing the automatic technology refresh program – extending the life of existing technology where feasible to reduce immediate expenses, effective immediately.
- Voluntary time reduction of work schedules – exploring reduced scheduling options that provide budget relief while maintaining operational effectiveness.

Look for additional communication around these measures.

This is a start; we are going to explore the viability of the additional ideas through small working groups, including:

- Expansion of dual enrollment and pipeline programs
- Reduction in travel and hospitality
- Continued attention to low-enrolled courses
- Streamlining business processes
- Chargebacks
- Outsourcing
- Centralizing services (following VSIP)
- Consolidating building spaces
- Investing in marketing and enrollment

Following the VSIP, we will hold another budget forum for the campus with any updates or progress on our budget efforts. As a reminder, the governor's May revise will be the next budget-related update we receive from the state, so keep an eye out for that as well.

Thank you for your continued engagement as we navigate these financial challenges together. Our collective efforts – through advocacy, innovation and responsible stewardship – will help ensure that CSUSM can move forward together toward long-term sustainability. I will continue to provide updates as we proceed.

Sincerely,

Ellen J. Neufeldt, Ed. D.
President