

From: Governmental Relations Officers **On Behalf Of** Chancellor's Office of Communications

Sent: Friday, January 14, 2011 1:26 PM

Subject: Facing New Cuts, California's Colleges are Shrinking their Enrollments - Chronicle of Higher Education (Thursday, Jan. 13, 2011)

Good Afternoon Colleagues,

In case you missed this article, you will find that Josh Keller does an excellent job describing the challenges California students are facing at every level of higher education.

Please feel free to call or e-mail us with questions. We would like to encourage you to pass this article along to others on your campus, in your network and via your social media outlets.

Thank you,

The Office of Communications

<http://chronicle.com/article/Facing-New-Cuts-Californias/125945/>

January 13, 2011

Facing New Cuts, California's Colleges Are Shrinking Their Enrollments

Gov. Jerry Brown of California released a budget proposal on Monday that would trim \$1.4-billion from the state's public colleges, making further enrollment drops likely.

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Hector Amezcua, Sacramento Bee, MCT, Newscom

Gov. Jerry Brown of California released a budget proposal on Monday that would trim \$1.4-billion from the state's public colleges, making further enrollment drops likely.

By Josh Keller

The [\\$1.4-billion in budget cuts](#) proposed this week for California's public colleges could prompt a new year of protests that decry higher tuition, stagnant employee salaries, and the growing inability of Californians to afford college.

But as a barrier to student access, rising tuition may ultimately pale in comparison with a more fundamental shift: The state's colleges have started to shrink.

California's public-college enrollment declined by 165,000 during the past academic year, even as the number of people trying to get into college grew. Community colleges accounted for most of the decline, the largest in a single year since 1993.

The combination of a growing college-age population and a reduced budget has turned what was once a model for college access into a much scarcer commodity. California State University at Long Beach, which has lost more students than most colleges, enrolled only 9 percent of applicants last fall, a lower rate than at the University of California at Berkeley and the University of Virginia, and only slightly higher than at Dartmouth College.

The cuts that Gov. Jerry Brown, a newly elected Democrat, has proposed would ensure that the nation's largest set of public colleges—comprising three systems—would continue downsizing well into 2012.

The campuses in the Cal State system, which had planned to grow this fall, may reverse course and cut undergraduate enrollment for the second time in two years. The University of California, which has managed to hold its numbers fairly steady, will begin to consider major enrollment cuts for 2012 at a Board of Regents meeting this month.

"The physics of the situation cannot be denied—as the core budget shrinks, so must the university," Mark G. Yudof, president of the University of California, wrote in response to the governor's plan.

Where California's Transfer Students Ended Up

Far fewer community-college students were able to transfer to California State University campuses last year because of budget cuts. As the capacity of public universities has stagnated, the number of Californians who transfer to private colleges has grown.

	2003-4	2004-5	2005-6	2006-7	2007-8	2008-9	2009-10
California State U.	48,321	53,695	52,641	54,391	54,971	49,770	37,647
U. of California	12,539	13,114	13,510	13,871	13,909	14,059	14,702
Private nonprofit colleges	20,110	20,977	20,958	20,277	21,774	22,366	*
Private for-profit colleges	10,473	11,248	11,004	11,990	14,201	13,388	*

* Private-college data for 2009-10 are not yet available.

Where California's Transfer Students Ended Up

Source: California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office

Mr. Brown's budget is only a proposal, of course, and unhappy lawmakers from both parties will try to change it. But few college officials believe that the situation will improve in the coming months.

The community colleges, which face a cut of \$400-million, or 6.5 percent, were nonetheless asked by the governor to expand the number of students they serve. Jack Scott, chancellor of the community-college system, said in an interview that he would resist the idea.

"If indeed this \$400-million cut is enacted, I will make the argument that we should not be required to educate the same number of students," he said. "It's a quality issue."

It is impossible to predict just who would be shut out of a college education in California's next round of budget cuts. The state's three higher-education systems employ a complex calculus of ability, seniority, local priorities, and chance to determine which students get in and which ones don't.

But the effects of the most recent round of cuts, in 2008, offer a guide.

Transfer students in California, who try to leap from one sputtering system to another, have been shut out of four-year universities at a much greater rate than have incoming freshman applicants. Cal State enrolls more community-college transfer students than any other university system in the country. But in the 2009-10 academic year, fewer than 38,000 students were able to transfer from community colleges to Cal State, down from a high of 55,000 two years earlier.

Students with strong but not sparkling grades and test scores have found that public colleges that were shoo-ins for people like them just a few years ago have raised their academic standards.

Students who live in Los Angeles, Long Beach, San Diego, San Jose, and other cities with overcrowded colleges have been shut out in record numbers. Community colleges and Cal State campuses there simply cannot keep up with regional growth.

Only four or five years ago, says Michelle Ponce, a college counselor at Millikan High School, in Long Beach, students could feel comfortable going the traditional route: earning good grades and going to Cal State's Long Beach campus.

But the sheer number of applications that the college receives—69,000 last fall, for 6,250 slots—has forced her to encourage students to look at other options. Private colleges are often a good choice, even if they can be more expensive, she says. Colleges in other states tend to have more room.

"I'll tell students in my presentations that if you want to leave the state, good for you," Ms. Ponce says. "We have too many people in the state of California. We need someone to leave right now."

Many of the students are in denial, she adds. Their parents don't understand how the landscape has shifted. "I will break out the numbers, and they kind of look at me in complete confusion," she says. "They have no idea."

Long-Term Effects

Reduced enrollment has far-reaching effects in part because recovering from it is difficult for colleges. Even after the recession has ebbed, smaller cohorts of students will still be working their way through the system, limiting the state's degree production for four years or more.

James C. Blackburn, Cal State's director of enrollment management, says some of the system's universities also have a difficult time raising enrollment once they have reduced it. Cuts in faculty, staff, and courses are difficult to reverse, and institutions can be hurt by the loss of the tuition income. After the previous round of budget cuts, he says, "it was amazing how hard it was to pump it back up again once the resources started to flow."

"It doesn't always communicate in California, but it's like driving a car on an icy road," he adds. "You don't want to overdo anything because if you swing left or swing right or try to stop too abruptly, the consequences are sometimes fatal."

Given those concerns, Cal State officials say they may not cut into enrollment quite as sharply as they have in the past. Instead, they will consider being more aggressive in other ways to reduce costs: layoffs, reduced pay or furloughs for employees, cuts in the chancellor's office, or, as a last resort, they say, more tuition increases.

But that attitude may change if Californians do not approve a \$9-billion extension of tax increases that is the foundation of Governor Brown's proposed budget. If the package is voted down or fails to get on the ballot because of opposition from Republican lawmakers—a real possibility—colleges could see budget cuts that make the crises of the past few years look mild.

Mr. Scott, the community-college chancellor, estimates that the failure of the ballot measure could mean that the state's community colleges would face double the amount of cuts proposed by the governor, \$800-million rather than \$400-million.

Mr. Brown, who has been in office only since January 3, warned at a news conference introducing the budget proposal on Monday that no state agency would be spared from such an outcome if the tax package were not adopted. "It will be draconian," he said. "And Draco was not a very kindly chief executive."