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CFA CSUN Chapter Faculty Senate Report

CFA GOES TO CAPITOL FOR LOBBY DAY

CFA Lobby Day (April 4-5) at the State Capitol was an empowering experience for the 170 faculty and students who rallied, talked with news media, and most important, met with State Assemblymembers and Senators about the California State University.

They made the case for key CFA-sponsored bills and for more state funding for public higher education, even as the CSU Trustees and its managers prepared to raise student tuition by 5 percent.

Over breakfast at CFA Headquarters, before the campus delegations set out, State Senator Ben Allen told them it is a smart idea to come to Sacramento. Given the thousands of bills floated at the legislature this year, he said, "If you are not there, your issues don't get prioritized." Allen, who praised CFA for promoting AB 21 to help protect immigrant students, said of the need for robust funding for the CSU. "I can't agree with you more." Referring to the governor's plan to provide less than the amount requested for the coming year by the CSU Trustees, he said, "I am going to be advocating to increase that amount."

CFA'S 2017 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

CFA is asking members of the California State Legislature to step up funding for the CSU. Also, there are three key bills CFA has sponsored and CFA supports other bills that also would help public higher education.

Here's a quick overview:

CSU FUNDING: The CSU Trustees asked Gov. Brown to increase CSU funding by \$343.7 million in his 2017-18 state budget plan. Brown proposed less. CFA says the state legislature should fund the Trustee's whole budget request. This debate assumed added urgency when the CSU Board of Trustees voted to increase tuition by 5 percent, but promised to roll it back if their funding request comes through in full.

THREE KEY BILLS: The CFA-sponsored package consists of these bills:

AB 393: The Student Protection Act (author: Assemblymember Sharon Quirk-Silva) would freeze tuition and statewide fees for CSU and Community College students, and urge the UC Regents to do likewise, through the end of June 2020. Go to www.StopTheFees.org and #StopTheFees to express your support.

AB 21: Access to Higher Education for Every Student (author: Assemblymember Ash Kalra) would direct public colleges and universities to enact a broad range of protections for undocumented students.

AB 1464: (author: Assemblymember Shirley Weber) would increase tenure density in the CSU to 75 percent tenured and tenure-track faculty by 2025. It follows up a 2001 Assembly Resolution calling on the CSU to

change its hiring practices to do just that.

CFA HONORS CSU GRADS NOW IN STATE LEGISLATURE

CFA Lobby Day kicked off with a celebration of the 37 State Assemblymembers and State Senators who have attended a CSU campus.

A new seriousness about the state of public higher education found its way into the festivities as speakers noted unprecedented challenges facing students today compared to earlier generations. CFA President Jennifer Eagan noted to those gathered, “A few years ago, this conversation was not even on the table.”

CFA Political Action Chair Lillian Taiz explains, “There is an enormous interest right now in the state legislature about taking action for public higher education. Lots of ideas are percolating, many of them developing into meaningful bills. It’s a great context in which to pursue CFA’s sponsored legislation.” Taiz adds, “We will zero in on the CSU budget, of course,” says Taiz. “You can’t think about the future without dealing with the present, and that means keeping up the necessary funding for our People’s University even while we find ways to open it up to all Californians.”

Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon (Fullerton) received the CFA 2016 Higher Education Champion Award and Senator Ricardo Lara (San Diego) the CFA 2016 Senate Higher Education Champion Award.

Assemblymembers Ash Kalra, Patrick O’Donnell (Long Beach), Kevin McCarty (Long Beach/Sacramento), Sebastian Ridley-Thomas (Dominguez Hills), and Freddie Rodriguez were there, as were Senators Stephen Bradford (Dominguez Hills/San Diego), and Ed Hernandez (Fullerton).