March 15, 2010

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Joint Legislative Budget Committee  
State Capitol, Room 5035  
Sacramento, CA 95814

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Chief Clerk of the Assembly  
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RE: Report - Meeting 2009-10 Enrollment Goal

The Legislature included language in the 2009-10 Budget Act directing the California State University to provide a report to the Legislature in March on whether the university has met its 2009-10 academic year enrollment goal.

Enclosed is the CSU’s report on this issue.

Should you have any questions concerning this report, please contact Robert Turnage, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Budget at (562) 951-4560 or rturnage@calstate.edu.

Sincerely,

Benjamin F. Quillian  
Executive Vice Chancellor and  
Chief Financial Officer

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Report - Meeting 2009-10 Enrollment Goal
March 15, 2010

c: Members, Joint Legislative Budget Committee (17 copies)
   Assembly Member Noreen Evans, Vice Chair, Joint Legislative Budget Committee
   Bonnie Reiss, Secretary of Education
   Charles B. Reed, CSU Chancellor
   Jeri Echeverria, Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer
   Garrett Ashley, Vice Chancellor, University Relations and Advancement
   Robert Turnage, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Budget
   Karen Y. Zamarripa, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Advocacy and Institutional Relations
California State University
Report to Legislature on Meeting 2009-10 Enrollment Goal
March 2010

The Legislature included language in the 2009-10 Budget Act directing the California State University to report to the Legislature by March 15, 2010, on whether it has met its 2009-10 academic year enrollment goal. (Provision 6 of Item 6610-001-0001 of the 2009-10 Budget Act.)

Meeting 2009-10 Enrollment Goal

We understand that the general enrollment goal that is the focus of the legislative language is the full-time equivalent student (FTES) enrollment of California residents, as it is this enrollment that the state funds through the Budget Act. The CSU seeks to admit and serve all CSU-eligible California residents who apply to CSU campuses. At the same time the CSU seeks to maintain a high quality of instructional programs and student services as well as assure that students are able to move in a timely way to degree. These objectives require that the CSU operate within resource constraints and try to keep actual enrollment levels in reasonable alignment with funded enrollment levels. For the 2009-10 academic year, the CSU’s enrollment goal is to continue working towards this process of realignment that began in the 2008-09 fiscal year.

The operational objective for 2009-10 is to not exceed the level of resident enrollment that the State funded in 2007-08—which was 342,893 resident FTES. The 2007-08 fiscal year was the last fiscal year before the State imposed massive reductions to support of the CSU. With 2009-10 General Fund support for the CSU set $625 million, or 21 percent, below General Fund support in 2007-08, we estimate that the true level of supported FTES enrollment has fallen by about 9.5 percent. However, given that the CSU was above funded enrollment levels in 2007-08 and 2008-09, and given the operational constraints against rapid changes in FTES, the university chose reducing to 342,893 FTES or below as a pragmatic goal for 2009-10.

In 2008-09, CSU attempted to manage enrollments to the 342,893 California resident FTES. In 2008-09 CSU campuses served 357,222 California resident FTES, or 14,329 FTES above target. Although above target, the CSU managed to reduce the rate of growth in California resident enrollment to less than one percent from the prior year – a significant change in the nearly four percent annual trajectory that was experienced in actual FTES growth in the two prior academic years.

Despite its success in reducing the rate of growth in 2008-09, the CSU faced a daunting challenge in its 2009-10 goal of reducing from 357,222 resident FTES served in 2008-09 to the 342,892 resident FTES goal for 2009-10. Demand for student access continues to rise. The CSU implemented intensified enrollment management measures in 2009-10, including earlier campus deadlines for Fall 2009 applications. Most campuses essentially closed applications for Spring 2010, with scattered exceptions for some
programs. In July 2009, the CSU Board of Trustees revised regulations to authorize campus presidents to review the academic status of so-called “super seniors” (students with more than enough credits to graduate) and to confer degrees on students as appropriate. This policy change helps free up space and resources for students still in need of credits to graduate.

Official census numbers for the CSU will not be complete until late April 2010, as data for the six campuses on quarter term calendars are submitted and reviewed. Enrollments at most of the semester campuses are at or below target, and the CSU’s preliminary projection is that the university will meet its 2009-10 goal of managing enrollments to a level at or below 342,983 resident FTES.