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Santa Cruz Sentinel

TUESDAY
AUGUST 23, 2011

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An edition of the **San Jose Mercury News**

HIGHER EDUCATION

Colleges warn of midyear budget cuts

State revenue projections
point to future reductions

By **TERENCE CHEA**

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — As the new school year begins, California's public colleges and universities are preparing for yet another round of state budget cuts that could lead to higher tuition and fewer classes, higher education leaders said Monday.

The chancellors of California State University and California Community Colleges said their campuses

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are making plans to cope with midyear cuts that appear increasingly likely.

In the state budget for the fiscal year beginning July, the 23-campus CSU system lost \$650 million, while the 112-campus community college system lost \$400 million and raised fees from \$26 to \$36 per unit.

The two systems will face more funding cuts in the middle of the academic year if state tax revenue falls below estimates, triggering automatic cuts to education and social services.

Last week, State Controller John Chiang said tax revenue fell nearly \$539 million below projections in July, pushing the state closer toward the so-called trigger cuts.

"The budget is the big elephant in the room that we all need to worry about going forward," said CSU Chancellor Charles Reed during a conference call with reporters. "I need to figure out how to manage what could be a mid-year crisis."

The Cal State system, which has 412,000 students, stands to lose an additional \$100 million if the midyear cuts are triggered, which would likely result in fewer course sections, fewer instructors and larger class sizes, Reed said.

Reed said he wants to avoid a midyear tuition increase because CSU students will already be paying more than 20 percent more this year than last year.

The community college system, which served 2.75 million students last year, would lose an additional \$72 million and raise fees to \$46 per unit if midyear cuts are triggered.

Campuses would be forced to further reduce course offer-

ings and summer sessions, potentially turning away hundreds of thousands of students, Chancellor Jack Scott said.

"This is a tragedy for students, and this is a tragedy for the state of California that desperately needs trained personnel," Scott said.

Cabrillo College, in a worst case scenario, stands to lose approximately \$1 million in state funding.

Victoria Lewis, Cabrillo's vice president of administrative services, said the school has budgeted for the potential midyear cuts by setting aside reserves in the same amount.

On a brighter note, the chancellors said Monday the two systems have made significant progress in implementing a new state law to make it easier for community college students to transfer to a CSU campus.

So far the two systems have created 130 academic programs that will allow community college students to transfer to a Cal State campus with junior status after earning a two-year associate's degree in their major.

"Students are going to save time and money and will become workers in our work force more quickly," Scott said.

The University of California system, serving 234,000 students, also stands to lose \$100 million in funding if mid-year cuts are triggered.

"It's pretty speculative at this point," UC Santa Cruz spokesman Jim Burns said. "But if the state were to cut the UC system by another \$100 million, and if that mid-year reduction became the responsibility of the campuses to implement, our best guess is that we'd have another \$6 million to cut from our budget."

Sentinel staff writer Tovin Lapan contributed to this report.