Deans List Hiring Spree Fattens College Bureaucracy—And Tuition

Walls Street Journal

December 28, 2012, 10:30 p.m. ET

By DOUGLAS BELKIN and SCOTT THURM

MINNEAPOLIS—When Eric Kaler became president of the University of Minnesota last year, he pledged to curb soaring tuition by cutting administrative overhead. But he hit a snag: No one could tell him exactly what it cost to manage the school.

Like many public colleges, the University of Minnesota went on a spending spree over the past decade, paid for by a steady stream of state money and rising tuition. Officials didn't keep close tabs on their payroll as it swelled beyond 19,000 employees, nearly one for every 3½ students. "The more questions I asked, the less happy I was," Dr. Kaler said.

Many of the newly hired, it turns out, were doing little teaching. A Wall Street Journal analysis of University of Minnesota salary and employment records from 2001 through last spring shows that the system added more than 1,000 administrators over that period. Their ranks grew 37%, more than twice as fast as the teaching corps and nearly twice as fast as the student body.

Across U.S. higher education, nonclassroom costs have ballooned, administrative payrolls being a prime example. The number of employees hired by colleges and universities to manage or administer people, programs and regulations increased 50% faster than the number of instructors between 2001 and 2011, the U.S. Department of Education says. It's part of the reason that tuition, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, has risen even faster than health-care costs.

The University of Minnesota illustrates the trend. Its main Twin Cities campus had the largest share of employees classified as "executive/administrative and managerial" among the 72 "very-high-research" public universities in the 2011-12 academic year, according to data compiled by the U.S. Department of Education. Minnesota officials say the figures are misleading because not all schools report administrative spending the same way.

At Minnesota, tuition and fees for state residents have more than doubled in a decade, to $13,524. That far exceeds the average at four-year public colleges of $8,655, which also represents a doubling, according to the College Board. Private-college tuition averages $29,056, but has risen more slowly.

For students, the effect is striking. In 1975, a University of Minnesota undergraduate could cover tuition by working six hours a week year-round at a minimum-wage job, the Journal calculated. Today, a student would have to work 32 hours at minimum wage to cover the cost.

Gregory Kiss, a sophomore business major, expects to graduate owing more than $30,000. Trying to economize, he bought a dining plan that provides only 10 meals a week.

Mr. Kiss tapped a nerve when he launched a website listing campus events where free food was to be had. He has attended lectures about evangelical Christianity, (with free Korean BBQ), cell regeneration (burritos) and something called "the feast of nations," which he says was the tastiest.

"I think it's a good school and it's a good value, but I know I'm going to be paying it off for a long time," Mr. Kiss says.

The bureaucracy finds numerous ways to spend money. Officials have spent millions planning a not-yet-built residential community 20 miles from the University of Minnesota Twin Cities campus designed in part to showcase sustainable energy and environmental stewardship.

Administrative employees make up an increasing share of the university's higher-paid people. The school employs 353 people earning more than $200,000 a year. That is up 57% from the inflation-adjusted pay equivalent in 2001. Among this $200,000-plus group, 81 today have administrative titles, versus 39 in 2001.

Administrators making over $300,000 in inflation-adjusted terms rose to 17 from seven.

Many forces besides administrative overhead add to universities' cost pressures, among them health-care and retirement expenses. And among the administrative spending, some is unavoidable, such as that owing to federal rules requiring greater spending to oversee research grants or accommodations for students with disabilities.

Schools also compete—by necessity, they say—to offer fancier dorms, dining halls, gyms and other amenities, to raise their rankings and attract students. "It's a competitive business, and institutions compete for students the same way Lexus and Mercedes compete for car buyers," says Paul Lingenfelter, executive director of the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association.

To compete, schools have stepped up borrowing for construction. Total debt at public four-year colleges more than tripled between 2002 and 2011, to $88 billion, according to the Department of Education. At the University of Minnesota, the yearly cost of servicing debt more than doubled to $106 million in that time.
For decades, public universities were somewhat insulated from financial rigor by steadily increasing state funding. That has slowed or stopped in many states in tight budgetary times. Minnesota's government last year contributed $570 million to university operations, which was about the same as in the 2003-04 school year despite inflation and roughly 10% increased enrollment.

Higher education now faces pressures similar to those that reshaped other segments, Minnesota's Dr. Kaler says. "You look at American industry in general—the car industry got comfortable until the Japanese showed up, the airline industry was comfortable until it got deregulated," he says. "Now it's higher ed's turn."

Academia's contemplative culture can provide fertile ground for growth in bureaucracy. In a speech after becoming president, Dr. Kaler told the story of 33 words inscribed on the auditorium in 1936. It took the creation of an inscription committee, the hiring of an "inscription consultant"—and 12 years—before chisel met stone, he said.

The number of employees at the University of Minnesota with "human resources" or "personnel" in their job title—272—has increased by a third since the 2004-2005 academic year, a period during which the enrollment grew approximately 8%.

In its Office of Equity and Diversity, the number of people with "director" in their title grew to 10 in the 2011-2012 school year from just four directors five years earlier, by a university official's count.

Growth in the diversity office is an attempt to make the campus "more inclusive and more welcoming to people of different backgrounds," Dr. Kaler says.

Caution fed bureaucratic growth after the school agreed to pay the federal government $32 million in 1998 to settle allegations relating to sales of an unlicensed transplant drug. The school acknowledged mismanagement of grant funds, and the National Institutes of Health put its grant applications under special scrutiny, creating research delays and faculty departures.

To prevent a repeat, officials imposed "fairly onerous bureaucratic processes," said R. Timothy Mulcahy, vice president for research. He said the university "evolved a very, very risk-averse, very, very conservative culture."

Several years ago, Russell Luepker, a professor of epidemiology at the school of public health, sought reimbursement for a $12 parking bill. The form went from a secretary to the head of his department to an accountant who entered it in a computer to a senior accountant responsible for approving it. Richard Portnoy, chief administrative officer in the epidemiology department, estimates it cost $75 to move the paperwork. When Dr. Luepker heard of it, he stopped filing for parking reimbursements.

The Journal, using payroll data provided by the university, calculated that across all of the system's campuses, administrators consume 24% of the payroll, up from 20% in 2001. Employees who teach, such as professors, lecturers and instructors, account for 37% of the payroll, down from 39% in 2001, the Journal calculated.

The university hasn't maintained a consistent definition of an administrative employee through the years. The Journal based its analysis on 151 job titles the university classified as executive, administrative or managerial at some point between 2001 and 2012.

To make year-to-year comparison valid, the Journal included all 151 such job titles for each year. Likewise, the Journal's totals for teaching jobs include all 42 job titles the university has considered instructional at some point between 2001 and 2012.

The university said many employees at the school wear several hats, so that some who have administrative titles also teach, and some job titles don't accurately describe the work an employee actually does.

In June, the university did its own analysis of compensation, which totals well over $1 billion a year. One conclusion it reached was that salary and fringe benefits for those in "leadership"—previously 6% of the compensation total—had risen to 7% of total compensation.

A university spokesman, Chuck Tombarge, said administrative efforts such as giving guidance to students do generate benefits. He pointed to the Twin Cities campus's rate of four-year graduation: about 58% in 2008, up from 41% in 2002.

Dr. Kaler, in his inaugural address in September 2011, criticized the costs of "long meetings, excessive committee deliberations and endless email chains" that contribute to a "tangled web of bureaucracy that dogs us." He pledged to reduce administrative expenses.

One hurdle: The system's chief financial officer, Richard Pfutzenreuter III, says that while he can track the cost of heating a particular floor of a building or of serving a cafeteria meal, he can't specify elements of the hierarchy such as how many people report to each manager. The human-resources system doesn't track such chain-of-command information, he said, because "it wasn't a priority in the past."

Streamlining the chain of command has proved important in controlling costs elsewhere. A 2010 analysis of the University of California Berkeley by Bain & Co. found that supervisors oversaw an average of 5.1 employees. The school raised that to 7.1 and saved $20.5 million annually, says Andrew Szeri, dean of Berkeley's graduate division.

Dr. Kaler ordered a review of Minnesota's spending. A survey found that in the system, which has about 43,800 undergraduates and 68,400 students in all, people were calling 73 different numbers for help with computer trouble. He is trying to reduce that to one.

Some things the school uses money for are arguably distant from its teaching mission. Since 2006, it has spent $10 million on consultants and others for UMORE Park, a planned 30,000-resident community that the university will build on land it has 20 miles from the Twin Cities campus.

School officials say the community reflects the changing mission of a public university in the 21st century. They also say it will one day yield a large return, partly from gravel that can be extracted on the land and sold.

Meanwhile, however, the project is decades from completion but already has four staff members, including a $171,000-a-year director.

The University of Minnesota system employs 139 people in its promotions, marketing and communications departments. It has spent more than $8 million since 2006 on an ad campaign to buff its image. A university spokesman said these efforts encourage donations that, in part, help fund scholarships.

When state funding initially grew tighter, Dr. Kaler's predecessor, Robert Bruininks, says he responded with a wide range of steps that included freezing or reducing salaries, eliminating 14 car allowances, restructuring the health-care and retirement systems and closing dozens of extension-school offices. Dr. Bruininks said he "reduced the number of vice presidents by three during my last year," and "we reduced the number of deans by three in closing and combining colleges."

The austerity measures weren't evenly distributed. Traditionally, professors who had temporarily taken administrative roles but were returning to teaching have been given a year of paid leave to refresh their skills. The pay traditionally was not at their higher administrative level but the academic level.

Before leaving last year, Dr. Bruininks approved more than $2 million of such transition packages, in some cases at the employees' higher administrative salaries.

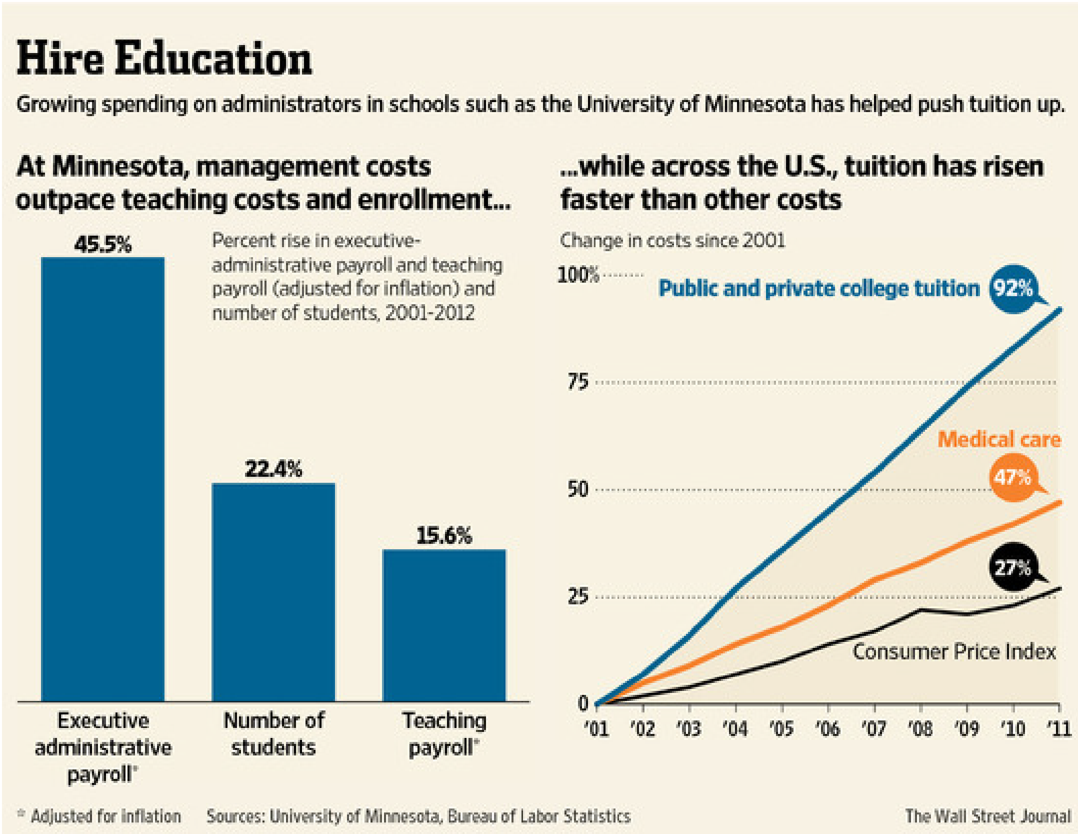
An uproar that ensued when the Minneapolis Star Tribune reported on the payments earlier this year led the school's Board of Regents to tighten its oversight of the packages, diminishing the president's discretion. Dr. Bruininks said that the dollar amount was high in part because there were so many administrators transitioning back to academia and that the packages were appropriate "to attract and retain leaders in higher education."

Dr. Kaler has a salary of $610,000 and his chief of staff of $195,000. Minnesota's governor makes $120,000. Mr. Kaler, 56, said his pay "is competitive in the marketplace." He has turned down an $18,000 raise.

Among his efforts to economize, Dr. Kaler said he recently eliminated the office of academic administration after its head took a job elsewhere. He said the move will cut 5.5 full-time positions, including a senior vice president who earned $300,000-plus.

Dr. Kaler said he wants to bring discipline, accountability and transparency to the school's administration. Fifteen months into the job, he figures he is about 45% of the way there.

To Dr. Luepker, in the public-health department, such goals are up against an institutional inertia that inhibits the periodic streamlining common in business. "We establish things and programs and they never quite go away," Dr. Luepker says. "They're nice people and they're colleagues and they're good people …but in this environment, you have to ask can we continue to do this?"


Hire Education
Growing spending on administrators in schools such as the University of Minnesota has helped push tuition up.
At Minnesota, management costs outpace teaching costs and enrollment...
Percent rise in executive-administrative payroll and teaching payroll (adjusted for inflation) and number of students, 2001-2012
45.5%
22.4%
15.6%
Executive administrative payroll*
Number of students
Teaching payroll*
...while across the U.S., tuition has risen faster than other costs
Change in costs since 2001
100%
75
50
25
0
Public and private college tuition
92%
Medical care
47%
27%
Consumer Price Index
'01 '02 '03 '04 '05 '06 '07 '08 '09 '10 '11
* Adjusted for inflation
Sources: University of Minnesota, Bureau of Labor Statistics
The Wall Street Journal

CCSF making big changes to stay afloat

Education

SFGate - Nanette Asimov

December 27, 2012

It's like changing tires on a speeding car.

That's how college officials describe their efforts to transform City College of San Francisco from dysfunction to efficiency - upending its culture, priorities, leadership and size - by the March 15 deadline imposed by a hard-nosed accrediting commission willing to shut down the school of 85,000 students if the changes fall short.

Negotiations between the college and labor leaders have begun, and painful concessions - including the first layoffs in memory - represent at least one tire on the car. The college expects to lay off at least 30 full-time clerical employees and dozens of part-time faculty and counselors in January.

All sides say they've managed to change other tires since July, when college leaders, faculty and students were stunned to learn that their future depends on running the huge college in a more productive, businesslike way. Nobody says the work is done and nobody is happy about every change.

But everyone - from those who quickly accepted the accreditation commission's requirements, to those who still resist them - acknowledges that City College is changing, like it or not.

"We are light-years ahead," said Pamila Fisher, who served as interim chancellor from May through October. "We have a long way to go, but we're light-years ahead."

Here is a look at what City College has done so far to meet the demands of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges:

Teaching effectively

If you're a college faculty member anywhere, chances are you know the term "student learning outcomes."

It's a practice in which instructors study each other's teaching, then change their methods if grades and other data show that students aren't learning enough.

It's so common - student learning outcomes are required for accreditation - that colleges call it "doing your SLOs."

At City College, they weren't doing their SLOs. Faculty generally saw them as something intrusive, weren't entirely sure what was required, and managed to ignore them for years.

Then the accreditation team showed up.

Fisher brought in experts to help City College faculty understand what student learning outcomes mean and how to do them.

The idea is that faculty have to agree on what skills should be required for each course, then look at what kind of teaching yields the best work from students. But key to the process, and most disconcerting, is that faculty have to be open to scrutiny by their peers and willing to discard methods they've relied on for years if they aren't good enough.

"We're testing our teaching," said Diana Markham, chairwoman of the Physics Department. To make the process possible for the college's 1,800 full- and part-time faculty members, Tom Boegel, curriculum dean, gathered large amounts of data on student achievement while Katryn Wiese, chairwoman of the Earth Sciences Department, spent months building a website so that each department could see the data and have the tools to do the work. It's all up for public viewing at ccsf.edu/slo.

Now Wiese said she hears her colleagues say they appreciate sharing ideas and advice.

"That used to feel like a burden to most people, but I've definitely seen a change over the past three months," she said. "We've really pulled together. There are so many who care deeply about creating the best classes, programs and services possible for our students."

What to teach

Fisher, hired in May for a six-month stint as interim chancellor, hadn't been on the job two weeks before she noticed that City College had an almost random way of deciding which courses to offer each semester and how many instructors to deploy.

Whatever their method, it had little to do with student demand or even how much money was available.

The college, Fisher realized, was neglecting to do "enrollment management," an essential calculation that relies on data, not intuition, for decisions about courses and instructors.

Without it, City College was offering duplicate classes across its nine campuses, too few courses that students needed and too many that they didn't.

"That's not true anymore," said Fisher, who sent deans, department chairs, directors and vice chancellors to intensive training in enrollment management.

Now, college officials say, they're communicating more and trying to schedule classes that students need and want. Class sizes will probably be larger as a result, and students will have to visit more campuses for classes they want. But they're more likely to get them.

"The test," Fisher said, "will be this spring."

Narrowing the mission

If one theme underlies the problems at City College, it's that the good-hearted school has tried to be all things to all people despite losing $25 million in state funds since 2008.

So when the accreditation team saw that City College's mission still included "lifelong learning, life skills and cultural enrichment," it considered that a problem.

Across California, other community colleges had already begun to narrow their missions, focusing almost exclusively on preparing students for jobs, careers or transferring to a four-year university. A new state law was passed this fall that will deny fee waivers to students who linger too long at school or can't get focused.

Now City College trustees have revised their mission statement, dropping the emphasis on enrichment classes, such as music appreciation, memoir writing and other free classes enjoyed by many older adults.

A glance at the spring schedule shows the classes are still there. But the primary purpose of City College has officially changed. Its new statement emphasizes the basic business of a college, now described as preparation for jobs and university.

The mission statement still says that other programs and services are offered - but "only as resources allow."

Streamlining authority

In the early 1990s, state lawmakers gave college students, faculty and employees a voice in campus decision-making with a new approach called "shared governance."

Committees soon sprang up on campuses around the state, offering opinions on everything from student discipline to athletic subsidies. They continue to this day.

But at City College, shared governance went further, metamorphosing into a multi-headed hydra of 46 committees that did not merely advise leadership but often served to obstruct and control decision-making.

In its report, the accrediting team cited "indirect resistance to board and administrative decision-making authority" on the part of these governance groups.

In October, the college Board of Trustees voted to suspend dozens of governance committees, pending an overhaul of the system. Step one was a new name: "Participatory governance."

"Participatory governance makes it clear that any committees will be advisory, not decision-making," said Gohar Momjian, who oversees the college's response to the accreditation commission.

Back to class

Sometime after midnight on a cold October morning, City College trustees voted to dismantle a decades-long system of faculty leadership that the accreditation team deemed too costly.

They did so over the strong objections of department chairs.

Under the system, the chairs taught few classes and performed administrative work for a stipend. The college hired more part-time faculty to make up for the missing instructors and had to scramble to get administrative work done during the summer because, like most faculty, department chairs are off work then.

With their vote, the trustees sent most of the chairs back to the classroom full-time and had them cede administrative work to academic deans.

They also agreed to group academic departments under eight schools, each headed by a dean. The changes are expected to save the college $2 million a year.

Fewer instructional sites

City College is a big place. It has nine campuses, including one in Chinatown that opened this fall and more than 100 small "instructional sites" scattered around the city. Nearly 49,000 students take classes for credit, and nearly 36,000 more take noncredit classes, ranging from computer skills to tai chi.

How much does each campus cost to operate?

That's what the accrediting team asked in July. No one knew the answer, and a team is still working to figure it out.

Meanwhile, the college has extracted itself from leases for three small sites - in the Richmond District, in Chinatown and in the Castro - which are closing this month.

The college will also move its business operations from 33 Gough St. a prime site in Hayes Valley near Market Street, and is looking to lease the property to a developer.

Budgeting

The typical planning method used by schools, governments and businesses is a basic budget projection a few years into the future.

But City College never saw itself as typical.

"This is a college that has tended, over 10 years, to live from year to year," said Peter Goldstein, vice chancellor of finance and administration.

Not anymore. This summer, the college created its first three-year budget projection, with plans to update it continually.

"City College will have to spend money in ways much more similar to the ways other colleges do," Goldstein said.

One change in particular has prompted deep disappointment among students: City College will no longer look the other way when students register for class without paying required fees.

The practice of letting students slide has cost City College $8.5 million over several years, or about $400,000 a year, Goldstein told trustees.

Now, unless their income is low enough to qualify for a fee waiver, all students will have to start paying for classes, the trustees recently decided. The college will also try to collect fees owed from prior years.

The future

After March 15, the fate of City College will move to the accrediting commission, which will decide in June whether college doors may open again in the fall. Until then, administrators, faculty and staff say they will keep trying to change tires on the speeding car.

Many tasks remain.

One of them is a "closure report" that lays out what students should do if City College's accreditation is withdrawn.

But perhaps the most daunting is a self-evaluation describing how well the college is able to satisfy every requirement needed for accreditation: reforming finances, expenditures, staffing, organization, programs, instruction and decision-making.

All colleges have to do a self-evaluation to help accreditation evaluators better understand them. The one City College did last year - just before it was put on notice - was filled with self-praise and high marks for itself. Like a family protective of its secrets, no one had wanted to admit the college was in disarray.

For the new report, "I've told everyone, you air your dirty laundry so we can fix it!" Fisher said as she concluded her term with the college. "Always be thorough and honest in a self-evaluation, and then you address it."

The accrediting commission will want to see that the college is well on its way toward implementing the changes required by the team and promised by the college.

Once-gloomy City College employees are verging on optimism.

"We've done an incredible amount of work," Momjian said. "It's been gratifying to see so many people focused on keeping us accredited, making the painful changes, and making us better."

How Many Administrators Are Too Many?

The Chronicle of Higher Education

January 7, 2013

By Jenny Rogers

For years, faculty members have pointed to the sluggish growth in the number of tenured professors and complained that university payrolls are filled with too many administrators. This, they maintain, adds unnecessary costs and takes the focus away from teaching and learning.

But whether such "administrative bloat" is really occurring and how much it matters on campuses are complex questions to answer.

To examine the issue, The Chronicle obtained detailed payroll information from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln for the past decade. The data help resolve the questions but pose more: Who really counts as an administrator? Are the jobs of librarians and student advisers academic at their core, or do they do more to fulfill technological or service-oriented functions? And just how many scientific illustrators, sewing technicians, and meat cutters does a university need?

The debate about counting faculty and administrative staff often takes an "us versus them" tenor, and in the conversation important nuance may be lost. Much of the growth has been in jobs that are not new layers of managers and administrators but rather in positions that provide a growing array of services to students, support research functions, and respond to changing technological needs.

The way that work has evolved on Nebraska's flagship campus, for example, has led to rapid growth in information-technology jobs and research staff, an increase in positions in sports and recreation and in campus security, and downsizing in the library.

Among Nebraska's 6,119 current employees, 29.3 percent are in faculty positions and 70.7 percent fill other kinds of jobs, working as administrators or staff members largely outside of the classroom. Those proportions haven't shifted much over the past decade.

The number of people working in administrative faculty positions, such as department heads, chairs, and deans, has actually declined, by 5 percent, from 2001 to 2012, a trend suggesting that concerns about bloat in administration might be overblown.

During the same period, the ranks of tenure-track faculty, not including administrative faculty, grew by less than 0.2 percent, while the number of faculty members working off the tenure track increased by 26.4 percent, a trajectory that gives empirical backing to the concerns of professors who say faculty influence on key university decisions is weakening. When administrative faculty are included, the growth in tenure-track faculty becomes a decline of 0.3 percent.

In recent years, the debate over administrative bloat has taken on more weight as public scrutiny of higher-education costs has intensified. Concerns about universities paying the salaries of too many administrators have been fueled by worries about the increases in college and state budget cuts, which have forced the downsizing of academic programs.

Symbolic Debate

In some ways, though, the conversation about what would make for the best administrator-to-faculty ratio is as much a symbolic debate as a budgetary one. As the number of administrators increases, and the proportion of faculty working off the tenure track grows, some worry that faculty are becoming marginalized.

"There was a time when the university was its faculty," says Jane Wellman, executive director of the National Association of System Heads. "A lot of universities really kind of talk about themselves that way. That's your biggest asset, your brand, that's who you are: your faculty."

No one disputes the importance of the faculty. But, Ms. Wellman says, the increasing number of nonfaculty members at universities may be a new reality, one that incites those professors and researchers who feel that a university should be guided more by the people who are directly involved in teaching than by those who are supervising or supporting the instructors.

At Nebraska, the number of jobs that directly involve teaching has increased faster over the past decade than the number of positions that do not directly involve the classroom. But, amid budget reductions that have led to program cuts in recent years, the sheer size of the nonteaching ranks still troubles some professors.

"There's a lot more people sitting in a lot more desks," says Michael W. Hoffman, a professor of electrical engineering. If a university is an organism, he says, the students are the lifeblood, the administrators a disease, and the faculty the immune system. "While it's a joke," he adds of his metaphor, "there is perhaps more than a kernel of truth in that."

In 2011, Nebraska eliminated three academic programs—a graduate degree in classics, an undergraduate program in industrial engineering, and the elementary and secondary art education program—to absorb budget cuts. At the time, Christopher Marks, an associate professor of organ studies, found himself and his program on the chopping block, too.

Eventually an academic-planning committee recommended that the organ stay at the university, and Mr. Marks with it. "The message is what you're teaching isn't valuable anymore," he says of the cuts. "That's horrible for morale."

Now with tenure, he feels more secure at the university, but the increasing number of nontenure faculty worries him. "I understand the economics behind it," he said, "but I think it's too bad that economics are driving all of the decisions."

The university added a new category of faculty job in 2007, the professor of practice, a contract position designed for people who wanted to focus on teaching rather than research. This year there are 80 such professors. But administrators now want to increase the number of tenure-track professors, by as much as 20 percent by 2017, says Ellen Weissinger, senior vice chancellor for academic affairs. She wants to see tenure-track professors increase in number and in percentage of all faculty.

Even when academic programs aren't in danger of elimination, "administrative bloat" can be an issue, says Jonathan Robe, a research associate at the Center for College Affordability and Productivity. "It takes away resources from the research, teaching, and public-service mission of the university and diverts them to other areas of spending that don't have a direct relation to those core missions," he says.

Ms. Wellman, though, says the cost of adding administrators is simply not significant enough in universities' overall budgets to be the cause of increasing tuition or higher-education costs. At the University of Minnesota, for example, the cost of administrative oversight accounts for 9 percent of expenditures.

Different Conclusions

The Platte Institute for Economic Research, a think tank in Nebraska, commissioned Richard Vedder, director of the Center for College Affordability and Productivity, and two of his colleagues, including Mr. Robe, to analyze staff trends and the value of the University of Nebraska system for students. The institute's report, released in May, criticized the system for having high administrator-to-faculty rates compared with national averages and for having low four-year graduation rates compared with peer institutions.

The study found that American universities have an average of 17.34 full-time-equivalent staff but only 6.21 full-time-equivalent faculty per 100 full-time-equivalent students. The Nebraska system has 20.34 full-time-equivalent staff and 7.07 full-time-equivalent faculty per 100 full-time-equivalent students. The report concluded that, with a relatively large staff and a relatively low graduation rate, the university system was not providing a good value for students.

Mr. Vedder says he joked at the time of the report's release that if he stretched all the system's excess administrators end-to-end, they would extend from the steps of the state Capitol across the Cornhuskers' Memorial Stadium football field. "Everybody laughed," he says. "But no one disagreed with my calculations."

However, James E. McClurg, chairman of the university system's Board of Regents, did object to the study. In July he released a statement noting the 5-percent drop in the number of administrative employees. The university, he added, had made $76-million worth of budget cuts since 2000 to try to keep tuition as low as possible.

Nebraska administrators say they hold important roles in facilitating the work of professors and students. They fight the image that "administrator" is a bad word, and take pains to point out the ways in which administrators are professors and scholars, too.

"There's a conception among some that administrators aren't doing anything," says Harvey Perlman, Nebraska's chancellor. "The problem is if it's work that has to be done, then somebody's going to do it." That could mean anything from taking out the trash to making sure the university complies with research regulations. If administrators aren't there to do it, Mr. Perlman says, the burden of the work falls on the faculty.

The details of how employees are counted and categorized can make a big difference in how wide the faculty-administrator divide appears.

It's difficult to come up with a universal answer to the question of what exactly an administrator is. Some observers consider only top-level administrators, such as chancellors and vice chancellors. Some count all supervisory roles as administrative jobs. Others categorize all nonclassroom personnel as administrative staff.

The wide array of jobs in the non-faculty category, and the many reasons for growth in different positions, also complicate calculations about whether the rise in employment outside of the classroom signals something good, bad, or otherwise about the direction of the higher-education workplace.

At Nebraska, nonfaculty jobs include computer programmers, instrument makers, and mail carriers. Over the past decade, the number of jobs with "director" in their titles has been cut in half, to 34. Meanwhile, research staff doubled, technology jobs grew by nearly 80 percent, and student-life positions increased by 53 percent.

The university's research staff has expanded as its research expenditures grew, from $136-million in 2000 to $232-million in 2011. As compliance regulations have grown, so has the staff, along with the numbers of postdoctoral research associates, research/agricultural associates, and nontenured research faculty.

On the Lincoln campus, as elsewhere, technology experts are now needed in numerous departments. Enrollment offices have added digital-recruitment tactics, libraries have added software systems to track books, and researchers are doing more technology-intensive computational work.

Student services, meanwhile, have grown as the university has hired more advisers and career counselors. Where there were once 16 advisers, in 2001, there are now 31. They're joined by dentists, mental-health practitioners, and sports-and-recreation specialists, all hired to respond to students' changing demands, says Juan Franco, vice chancellor for student affairs.

"If we focus on some other basic needs, like housing, dining," Mr. Franco says, "if we do that—and I think we're doing a good job—then they can focus on their academic subjects much easier."

Monitoring Bloat

In an increasingly complex university, critics of evaluating the campus workplace through calculations of faculty-to-administrator ratios say, the "us versus them" nature of the debate doesn't account for the diversity of campus roles or the individual missions and environments of different universities. The employee roster for Minnesota, for instance, includes one captain and two chief mates for a university research vessel on Lake Superior.

The one aspect of the debate that most agree on is that administrative growth should be monitored. If universities were more transparent about their staff data, the debate could be more informed and constructive, says Mr. Robe, one of the authors of Mr. Vedder's Nebraska study.

Minnesota is one institution that wants to better track its own campus work force as it looks for ways to become more efficient. After Eric W. Kaler became the university's president, in 2011, he urged staff to put a high priority on analyzing hiring data by job title, and to set spending and staff size benchmarks against which to measure the university subsequent performance. The goal, says Lincoln A. Kallsen, director of financial research, is to use the analysis in the budgeting process.

Over the past 13 years, data from Minnesota show significant increases in technology, research, communications, and student-services staff, similar to the trends at Nebraska. The number of directors, which peaked in 2008 at 988 positions, has declined in recent years, to 969 in 2012. That number is still higher than in 1999, when there were 529 directors.

Taking a closer look at who the university is hiring will help keep tuition increases under control and may help reallocate some money from jobs that are focused on administrative oversight to those centered on teaching and research, says Mr. Kaler. Showing and increasing the university's efficiency, he says, also could help the institution's case before state lawmakers.

To help the analysis, Mr. Kallsen and a cross-departmental team are looking at making job titles more descriptive. A "coordinator" might in the future be a "coordinator of" something specific, he says, answering more clearly the question, "What do administrators actually do?"

When administrations begin analyzing themselves, they bring agendas to the table, some observers say. Mr. Kallsen's team decided from the beginning that they would let the numbers speak for themselves, without reclassifying or ignoring any data. They wanted their analysis to be truly objective and, in a way, as pure an academic undertaking as possible.

"Just because it's complex," he says, "doesn't mean you shouldn't try to understand it and explain it."

IRS Says Colleges Must Be 'Reasonable' When Calculating Adjuncts' Work Hours

The Chronicle of Higher Education

January 7, 2013

By Audrey Williams Jun

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, the new law designed to expand health insurance to more Americans, has put adjuncts and their workload in the spotlight.

The Internal Revenue Service this month issued proposed rules for employers that acknowledge the special work circumstances of adjuncts—among them, the way adjuncts rack up work hours outside of the classroom—that need to be considered when evaluating whether their employers must provide them with health benefits.

Under the new law, which takes effect in January 2014, employees who work at least a 30-hour work week must receive health benefits from their employers. Some colleges are concerned about how to tally up the hours adjuncts spend on the job to determine if they have reached that full-time status. Most adjuncts don't receive health benefits, and the legislation appeared to pave the way for them to finally get access.

The proposed rules, announced in the Federal Register on January 2, don't provide a hard and fast formula for how to calculate an adjunct's workload, but "further guidance may be provided," the announcement says. The agency is collecting comments on the proposal through March 18.

In the meantime, colleges must "use a reasonable method for crediting hours of service," the IRS document says. In the case of an adjunct faculty member, the document adds, it would not be a reasonable method of calculating an instructor's work hours for colleges to take into account "only classroom or instruction time and not other hours that are necessary to perform the employee's duties, such as class-preparation time."

'A Huge Step Forward'

Although the rules are still in the making, Maria Maisto, president of the New Faculty Majority, a national advocacy group for adjuncts, said what the IRS had proposed so far seems promising.

"I think the IRS is on the right track in recognizing that adjunct faculty constitute a unique category of worker in terms of how their work is currently recognized and compensated," Ms. Maisto wrote in an e-mail. "It is helpful that the IRS is recognizing that there is a lack of uniformity in the way that adjunct work hours are currently calculated and how adjuncts are treated. This seems to be a huge step forward in the government's education about the true nature of contingent academic work."

But even as the IRS is working to provide colleges with the guidelines they have sought from the agency, a few institutions have made pre-emptive moves by cutting back the number of hoursadjuncts are allowed to work—among them, Youngstown State University, Stark State College, and the Community College of Allegheny County, where at least 200 adjuncts face a newly instituted cap on the number of courses they can teach. The goal is to keep them below the 30-hour-a-week threshold that would trigger the health-benefit requirement, which institutions say they cannot afford.

Ms. Maisto said the New Faculty Majority was trying to track whether other colleges have followed suit, but so far a pattern has not surfaced. Some adjuncts fear talking about the existence of such measures on their campuses, while others are largely protected by contracts their unions have negotiated, she said.

Several higher-education organizations have sought guidance from the IRS on adjuncts and the new health-care law, including the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources. The group's president, Andy Brantley, said in an e-mail that "while we appreciate the efforts" of the IRS to note that tracking hours for adjunct faculty is difficult, "we hope that they will be able to provide additional clarity beyond what was issued."

Groups that have previously submitted comments to the IRS on the issue include the American Federation of Teachers, which told the agency that the method to calculate work hours for adjunct faculty members should be based on work done inside and outside the classroom.

The agency's newly proposed rules took note of the federation's explanation of how, typically, an instructor works at least three hours a week for every credit hour taught. By that formula, an adjunct who teaches four three-credit classes would be considered full time under the new legislation.

Ms. Maisto said part of the New Faculty Majority's response would be to push "for a very clear definition of faculty work that is consistent with professional standards such as those articulated by the MLA and other disciplinary organizations."

El Camino College to hire outside firm for president search

By Rob Kuznia The Daily Breeze

Posted: 01/08/2013

After some debate, the governing board of El Camino College has decided to select an outside firm to assist in the statewide search for a president to replace the retiring Thomas Fallo, rather than using in-house experts.

The board on Monday went back and forth for a while about whether the Torrance-area college's human resources department could handle the vetting process. But it ultimately decided in a 5-0 vote to proceed with the consulting firm option, winnowing from 11 to three the number of such companies that submitted proposals for the work.

Now, El Camino is inviting representatives from those three California firms - Professional Personnel Leasing, Community College Search Services and Ralph Andersen and Associates - to each make a sales pitch not to exceed 10 minutes at the next regular meeting on Jan. 16. The cost of the firms' services range from around $22,000 to $25,000, plus expenses.

This week's discussion essentially marked the first time in 18 years that El Camino's elected board has had to grapple with what is arguably its weightiest responsibility: hiring a new president - the only position for which it hires and fires directly.

Meanwhile, because the job opening hasn't been formally announced, it's too early to know whether the pool of applicants will include any of the college's five vice presidents: Francisco Arce (academic affairs), JoAnn Higdon (administrative services), Jeanie Nishime (student services), Linda Beam (human resources) and Barbara Perez (vice president of El Camino's Compton center).

Fallo, a Los Angeles-area native and El Camino alumnus, himself was a vice president at the college (of administrative services) when he took the top job in 1995. He was ultimately selected from a statewide pool of some 40 applicants, all of whom were vetted by a consulting firm.

Before he became an administrator at El Camino, Fallo was the acting chancellor of the Los Angeles Community College system. Fallo, 66, makes about $277,000 annually.

At the beginning of Monday's meeting, two board members - Ray Gen and Mary Combs - were leaning toward going the route of farming the vetting task out internally.

"The people we have in human resources are qualified," Combs said.

Gen questioned the wisdom of spending money on a search firm "in hopes of finding one chunk of information" not already known.

El Camino officials pointed out that search firms not only conduct professional and criminal background checks of applicants, they also help recruit qualified applicants.

Trustee Maureen O'Donnell - who has also served on the Torrance City Council and Torrance school board - argued that hiring a firm for a task like this is standard practice.

"They're worth the money," she said. "This kind of thing is too complicated for human resources departments. The city of Torrance and the school district both have HR departments and they both work with research groups."

A California Drought: Not Enough Children

Wall Street Journal

By MIRIAM JORDAN

Declining migration and falling birthrates have led to a drop in the number of children in California just as baby boomers reach retirement, creating an economic and demographic challenge for the nation's most populous state.

"After decades of burgeoning population and economic growth…the state now faces a very different prospect," said a report released Tuesday by the University of Southern California and the Lucile Packard Foundation. The report, "California's Diminishing Resource: Children," analyzed data from the 2010 census and the American Community Survey to conclude that the trend marks a "historic transition" for the state.

In 1970, six years after the end of the baby boom, children made up more than one-third of California's population. By 2030, they will account for just one-fifth, according to projections by lead author Dowell Myers, a USC demographer. "We have a massive replacement problem statewide," Mr. Myers said in an interview.

California's demographic shift mirrors that of many Northeast and Midwest states, including New York, Massachusetts, Illinois and Michigan, where the percentage of children fell even more sharply from 2000 to 2010. But unlike those states, California has always relied on migrants from other states and abroad to fuel its economy, and the change represents a new reality for the Golden State.

Ever since the Gold Rush, the majority of Californians has been born elsewhere. That pattern began to change in the 1990s, when migrants were attracted by the lower cost of living and rapid growth in other Western and Southern states. Then, the housing bust and 2008 financial crisis hit California harder than most states. By 2010, more than half of all adults 25 to 34 years old were born in California.

At the same time, the state's birthrate fell to 1.94 children per woman in 2010, below the replacement level of 2.1 children, according to the study. California's rate is lower than the overall U.S. rate of 2.06 children in 2012, according to the Central Intelligence Agency.

The shrinking pool of youngsters coincides with a bulging population of older people. Nationally, "we are approaching a period of very large retirement, something like two million people a year for the next 20 years," said Stephen Levy, director of the Center

for Continuing Study of the California Economy, an independent research group.

In 1970, California averaged 21 seniors for every 100 working-age adults. By 2030, that ratio is expected to rise to 36 seniors per 100 working-age adults, according to the report.

That retirement wave will place "massive pressure on institutions and programs for an aging population," the report said.

Today's children will be the workers who pay for those programs and who take jobs vacated by boomers in the state's high-technology hub in Silicon Valley, its entertainment industry in Los Angeles and its farm belt in the Central Valley.

"Unless the birthrate picks up, we are going to need more immigrants. If neither happens, we are going to have less growth," said Mr. Levy. The report wasn't optimistic, saying that "with migration greatly reduced…outsiders are much less likely to come to the rescue."

Investments in the state's education system will be vital to meet labor-force needs and prevent the economy from contracting, said Mr. Levy. With less migration to the state, the skills and human capital necessary to keep California's economy afloat will need to be homegrown, both Mr. Levy and Mr. Myers said.

With more than 90% of the state's children under age 10 born in the state, "the majority of the next generation of workers will have been shaped by California's health and education systems," Mr. Myers said. "It's essential that we nurture our human capital."

Many of those future workers, however, will have grown up in poverty. More than 20% of children in California now live below the federal poverty level.

The report found that the birthrate had tumbled for every population group. In 2010, it was below replacement level for whites, Asians and African-Americans.

The birthrate for Hispanics, who account for 51% of children under 18 in the state, was slightly above replacement level. But Hispanic birthrates are seeing the steepest drop of any group and are expected to fall to the replacement level in 2020, the report said.

7 Worst Bosses In 2012

- By Claire Gordon
- Posted Dec 21st 2012

Most working humans have experience with incompetent or fearsome or totally irrational bosses. Some of us, however, have bosses so heinous that lawyers get involved. America's Worst Bosses of 2012, by anonymous boss-rating website eBossWatch, catalogs what it sees as the country's 50 creepiest job-creators -- who have had been taken to court.

The top seven are listed below, and notably, all seven of the employees allegedly harassed are women, and all of the employers who allegedly harassed them are men (except for one, who was implicated because of comments made by her husband). The top finishers are selected and ranked by a panel of five workplace experts -- consultants, trainers, and authors -- from all the bosses named in workplace lawsuits in the last year. Check out the full list here.

7. James Schwartz

Nyesha Artiaga was a secretary at El Camino College in Torrance, Calif., when she claimed that the dean, James Schwartz, who was in his 70s, offered her money to have sex in hotel rooms, and once raped her in his locked office, ejaculating on her underwear.

Soon after, a female administrative assistant claimed that Schwartz had subjected her to unwanted touches and kisses, and told her that he would give her negative job evaluations and even fire her if she didn't have sex with him. Schwartz denied the allegations by both women, but the college settled the two lawsuits, for $2.5 million and $750,000 respectively.

6. Susan Piel

Nadiya Williams-Boldware was a prosecutor handling misdemeanor cases for Denton County, Texas, working for Susan Piel. Piel and her husband, felony prosecutor Cary Piel, had won several high profile cases in their time. "Cary is a good trial lawyer, but he's rude and doesn't care what he says," said Williams-Boldware's attorney Bill Trantham, after his client was awarded more than $500,000 in a racial discrimination suit against the county.

Cary Piel was prosecuting a case against a black woman, when he made a racial comment in front of Williams-Boldware, who is black, referencing the Klu Klux Klan's lynching of black people. He admitted that he knew it was inappropriate at the time, and claims that he repeatedly apologized afterwards. But the apology wasn't enough; in July, the Piels and two other felony trial prosecutors were forced to resign.

5. Richard Moore

Ashley Alford worked for Atlanta-based rent-to-own furniture company Aaron's, and her boss Richard Moore allegedly made frequent comments about her appearance, groped her breasts, and snuck up behind her while she was sitting on the floor of the stockroom and hit the top of her head with his penis.

Then on one occasion, according to Alford, Moore threw her to the ground, lifted up her skirt, and held her down, while he masturbated over her, cleaning up the semen with a paper towel. In July, Alford was awarded $95 million in federal civil damages against Moore and Aaron's, but Moore was not found criminally guilty of sexual abuse.

4. Fred Beans

Cherie Santai was a service manager for the large Pennsylvania car dealership Fred Beans Hyundai, and in early 2008 told her boss Fred Beans that she was pregnant. Beans allegedly responded with "visible and obvious disgust" and told her that she would have to be demoted until she had the baby. Before that happened, however, she was forced to hire and train her temporary replacement -- a man who she says was less experienced than she.

More: 10 Things Bosses Wish They Could Tell Employees

A few weeks before Santai's maternity leave was to start, Beans fired her, saying the service manager position was being eliminated. A few weeks later, however, Santai's male replacement began identifying himself as "Service Manager of Fred Beans Hyundai." Santaiwon $150,000 in her wrongful termination suit. (Beans' daughter and company vice president, Elizabeth Beans Gilbert, was also named as a defendant).

3. Trent Bertrand

Philips Entertainment Lighting originally hired KeWanda Lawson as a temporary employee at its Dallas warehouse, but within a few months she became a permanent warehouse lead. Lawson was the only female, and according to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, male co-workers groped her, called her names like "bitch" and "slut," forced her to kiss them, and in one case a male colleague even exposed himself to her.

Not only did the manager, Trent Bertrand, do nothing; he allegedly took part. Since all her complaints were ignored, Lawson ended up resigning. In September the company was forced to pay $30,000.

2. Edward Globakar

Mirella Salemi was a chef and manager for Mary Ann's Mexican Restaurant in New York for five years. She was a Catholic and a lesbian, and claims that every Wednesday her boss Edward Globakar would lock the doors of the restaurant and force all employees to attend a two-hour prayer service during which Globakar and his pastor would declare homosexuality a sin. He also told Salemi on various occasons to be more "effeminate," get married, and have kids or else face eternal damnation.

Salemi says that she asked Globakar repeatedly to stop condemning her sexuality and forcing her to attend services for a religion that was not her own, but Globakar allegedly retorted that unless she changed her orientation and attended church, her job was at stake. In April, Globakar had to pay $1.6 million for discrimination against sexual orientation.

1. Timothy Young

Mary Getts Bland wanted to be a firefighter for Fairfax County, Va. During her recruitment interview, however, fire department Lt. Timothy Young allegedly asked her a series of sexually inappropriate questions, like whether she enjoyed being watched while she had sex and masturbated, and if she enjoyed sex with more than one partner.

Bland got the job, but claimed that the sexual harassment didn't end. Young allegedly continued to make inappropriate comments, such as telling her "this looks like it would hurt"while walking past with an 8-foot, metal "pike pole." Last year a jury awarded Bland $250,000, but after appeals Bland ended up settling for an undisclosed amount.

Consultant firm to assist with recruitment of next EC president

EL CAMINO COLLEGE – UNION, January 7, 2013

www.eccunion.com/news/2013/01/07/consultant-firm-to-assist-with-recruitment-of-next-ec-president/

Viridiana Vaca-Rios, Union Online Editor-in-Chief

After much debate, the board of trustees have agreed to hire a consultant firm to assist the human resources department with the recruitment of EC's next president.

In November, EC President, Tom Fallo announced during a board meeting that he was retiring effective June 30.

Of the 11 consultant firm submissions, the board voted on three to choose from: Professional Personnel Leasing (PPL), Community College Search Services (CCSS) and Ralph Andersen and Associates.

Tom Fallo, EC president said he thinks of the choices as "three reputable firms."

Linda Beam, vice president for human resources, said they would benefit from the help as it would serve as an additional source. She also clarified that the job of the firm would be to act as a liaison and not run the search.

"The firm would facilitate a process. They would do a lot of outreach on behalf of the district and go out and recruit," Beam said.

Beam also added that using the firm during the selection process should not be seen as "being handed over to a third party" as these firms are objective and provide an insight.

Although Ray Gen didn't think additional help was needed, he said choosing the best firm would depend on the direction the college is looking to take.

"If our goal is to make big changes to take the college in a new direction, then a big national search is where we are headed," Gen said. "If we like the direction we are taking, I don't think we need a national search. We should be looking closer to home. Frankly, in my opinion, I like the direction our college is headed, president Fallo has done a great job."

Mary C. Combs, trustee member expressed her concern as to whether the human resources department had a qualified person that could do the job as efficiently without the help of the firm.

Ken Brown, board of trustees vice president, said he is more concerned about having a large amount of candidates to select from as well as "not breaking the bank." He also said that although he does agree with the help, he is unsure of what areas human resources will need assistance in.

Jasmine Hormati, student trustee, suggested possibly having the firm assist with a specific task rather than the entire candidate selection process itself.

The three firms will be in attendance at the Jan. 16 board meeting where they will pitch their proposals to the board.

“I’m interested in saving money, I’m interested in experience and I’m interested in California community college experience,” William Beverly, board of trustees president said.

California's debt still a heavy cloud over state's future

Y EVAN HALPER AND CHRIS MEGERIAN, Los Angeles Times

January 13, 2013,

SACRAMENTO — Gov. Jerry Brown proclaimed last week that California, which now has enough cash to pay its day-to-day bills, can no longer be described by naysayers as a "failed state."

But even though it appears to be free of the deficit that dogged the Capitol in recent years, the state is no model of financial health.

Sacramento is legally obligated to pay many billions of dollars withheld from schools, local governments and healthcare providers as lawmakers struggled repeatedly to balance the books. It owes Wall Street more per resident than almost every other state. And it has accumulated a crushing load of debt for retiree pensions and healthcare, now totaling more than taxpayers spend each year on all state programs combined.

The budget Brown proposed Thursday addresses only a small portion of the overall debt, which stems from the same types of bills that drove cities like Vallejo, Stockton and San Bernardino into bankruptcy. The state is likely to find its debt consuming an ever larger share of money meant for the basic needs of government.

"Every year we fail to acknowledge or fix these things, it just makes the cost bigger," said Joe Nation, a former Democratic assemblyman who teaches public policy at Stanford University.

When he released his budget plan, Brown vowed to knock down the state's "wall of debt." He presented a timeline for repaying nearly $28 billion the state owes to government programs that it raided for cash or deprived of funds over the years, as well as some bonds sold to balance the budget.

Payments of $4.2 billion would be made in the budget year that begins in July. Subsequent payments, growing to as much as $7.3 billion a year, would continue into 2017.

At that point, Brown says, $4.3 billion in debt would remain, mostly for delayed payments to healthcare providers and money owed to municipalities and schools for implementing state mandates.

"By paying down the debt, we've put ourselves in a stronger position when things go bad, as they inevitably do," Brown said.

But numerous reports by state agencies, think tanks and academics have shown the wall of debt to be many stories higher than $28 billion — hundreds of billions of dollars over the next few decades. Brown's repayment plan does not significantly reduce the sizable debt to Wall Street or account for promises the state has made to its current and future retirees but is not setting enough money aside to cover.

"If we just ignore these longer-term pressures, we're going to be back in the soup soon," said Mike Genest, who was budget director for Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

State officials must grapple with a major shortfall in the retirement fund for teachers. Fund officials have warned that Sacramento needs to immediately start contributing about $3 billion annually to keep the pension system solvent.

Sacramento could kick the bill to school districts, requiring them to start paying more pension costs from their own budgets. But the money needed now to stabilize the fund is enough to wipe out the $2.7-billion budget boost the governor is proposing for schools after many years of cuts.

"That is a demand that will have to be met," said David Crane, who advised Schwarzenegger on pensions and the economy. "Even if there is an increase in funding for schools, the districts may have to use that — and more — to meet that demand."

So far, lawmakers have taken no action to fill the gap. They have opted, for now, to let it grow. (The changes legislators made in public pensions last year do not fix the problem.)

They have taken the same approach with the escalating cost of retiree healthcare.

State employees on the payroll 10 years or more are guaranteed insurance coverage for life — a benefit bestowed decades ago, before the cost of medical care exploded. Now, the state is facing a bill of $62.1 billion for those employees over the next 30 years, according to state projections. Sacramento has set no money aside to cover the payments, and the tab grows each year.

Brown proposed that lawmakers confront that cost last year. Lawmakers balked and excluded his plan to limit the number of state workers eligible for retiree healthcare.

The cost of closing the gaps in California's major public pension funds would be considerable. The State Budget Crisis Task Force, a bipartisan think tank based in New York, reported in September that every Californian would have to contribute $3,635 to cover the shortfalls. Paying for retiree healthcare might add a couple of thousand dollars to that tab.

The state's borrowing from Wall Street in recent years also comes at a cost. According to the state treasurer's office, it will cost $2,559 per Californian to pay that back. Texas, by contrast, has taken on just $588 of debt per resident.

Genest said California undeniably has made major strides since the darkest budget days of recent years. "We've finally got through the worst of it," he said.

But the mess is far from cleaned up, he cautioned: "We can't jump for joy."

Near-Term Outlook Is Bleak for All of Higher Education, Moody's Says

The Chronicle of Higher Education

January 16, 2013, 3:11 pm

By Don Troop

Across-the-board pressure on all of the revenue sources that support higher education has prompted Moody's Investors Service to issue a negative short-term outlook for the entire sector in a report issued on Wednesday.

"It basically means that there's nowhere to hide, even for diversified market leaders, the top-tier universities," said Eva Bogaty, the credit-rating agency's assistant vice president and analyst who wrote the report. For the past two years, research universities have escaped criticism from Moody's because of their diverse sources of revenue. However, state-government appropriations, investment earnings, gifts, research grants, and patient-care reimbursements are all facing economic pressure, the report says.

The outlook report, which is released annually at the beginning of the calendar year, expresses the agency's expectations for the fundamental credit conditions of the industry over the next 12 to 18 months. Moody's attributed its negative outlook to five key factors:

Depressed family incomes and household net worth have suppressed net tuition growth.

All revenue sources are strained; financial diversity no longer helps colleges.

Rising student debt and default rates have hurt perceptions of the value of a diploma.

Public and political scrutiny has increased the risk of more regulation.

Colleges face a challenging future without strong leadership and better governance.

"It's easy to lead a university when you're in an environment of double-digit investment returns and all your revenue sources are pointing in the right direction," said Karen Kedem, co-manager of the Moody's U.S. higher-education team and an editor of the report. "It's much more challenging when you have to start making programmatic and resource decisions because you're not able to grow your revenue."

Despite the gloomy tone of the report, the analysts emphasized that the fundamental demand for and value of higher education remained solid.

"We're not believers that higher ed is in a bubble," Ms. Bogaty said. The outlook for the industry, she said, "is bleaker for the next 12 to 18 months. That's not to say we think it's doomsville."

The report says that the outlook could be changed to stable if the nation's economic growth and housing market improve, the unemployment rate drops below 6.5 percent, and stock-market returns are strongly positive in consecutive years.

But, Ms. Kedem added, "we don't expect these pressures to go away quickly."

The report also casts an eye on emerging and potentially destabilizing trends like the rise of massive open online courses, or MOOCs, and offers forecasts on sectors related to traditional four-year higher education.

Community colleges, it says, are being challenged by enrollment declines and potential cuts in Pell Grants. Nonprofit institutions, including public universities' foundations, will face pressure as Congress scrutinizes tax deductions for charitable contributions. Revenue and enrollment declines continue to hurt for-profit higher-education companies, the report asserts. Global higher education is still nagged by some uncertainties, but the long-term prospects for that sector remain strong, Moody's says.

The entire report is available online to Moody's subscribers.

This entry was posted in Revenue and tagged moodys investors service. Bookmark thepermalink.

Long Beach City College may cut slew of technical courses

LONG BEACH - The Long Beach City College Board of Trustees on Wednesday will consider a final list of 12 programs slated to be cut this fall under a round of budget reductions, officials announced Thursday.

The 12 programs include: auto body technology, aviation maintenance, audio production, interior design, welding, automotive technology, real estate, photography, air conditioning/refrigeration/heating, diesel mechanics, carpentry and diagnostic medical imaging.

The plan has been met with backlash from faculty and students who say the programs, especially the career technical courses, are essential for the local workforce.

In a statement released this week, Long Beach Councilwoman Gerrie Schipske said the aviation maintenance program is an important supplier of jobs in the region's many airports and airfields.

"We have to think seriously about the types of jobs for which we are training our workforce," Schipske said in a statement. "With the Long Beach Airport here, and our important place in the nation's aviation history, it makes sense that we maintain this highly ranked program."

Lynn Shaw, president of the faculty union, said the arts and trade programs are a vital part of the college.

"These programs prepare people for jobs that can't be exported to other countries. We need carpenters, we need mechanics," she said. "A college should be more than just math and English. The city of Long beach deserves a comprehensive

community college."

Shaw said the course reductions would result in layoffs for up to 25 full-time faculty. The college has about 200 academic programs and more than 300 full-time faculty.

In September, more than 200 students and faculty flooded a board meeting in protest of the planned cuts. Many were from the photography department.

College administrators said the cuts are necessary to help fill a $6.4 million dollar budget hole left from years of state funding reductions. LBCC officials originally planned to cut up to 17 programs but decided to save a few following the passage of Gov. Jerry Brown's November tax measure.

Programs planned for elimination that were saved include: film, sheet metal, human services, medical assisting and radio-television.

Officials said the recommendations were made following input from faculty, union representatives and administrators.

LBCC President Eloy Oakley has said the reductions will allow the college to focus more resources on the core courses needed for transfer and graduation as the college faces growing demand. Last fall, hundreds of students were put on waiting lists for core courses despite efforts to increase class sizes by about 10 percent.

Oakley said the college remains committed to career technical education.

"I am painfully aware of the tremendous impacts these reductions will have on our students, faculty, and staff, but these recommendations are critical for the long-term fiscal health of the college," Oakley said in a statement.

The college would save $2.4 million from the proposed program cuts, but the savings will not be enough to close the budget shortfall. Officials are considering additional cuts including reductions in management, full-time faculty and other staff.

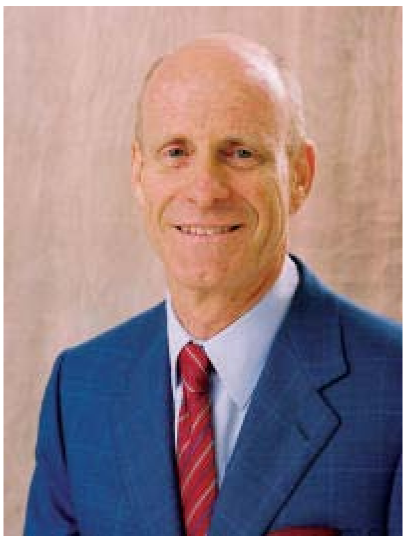
The Board of Trustees will consider the issue at 5 p.m. Wednesday at the Liberal Arts Campus T Building, Room 1100, at 4901 East Carson St.

Faculty and students plan to protest at the meeting.

kelly.puente@presstelegram.com, 562-714-2181, twitter.com/kellypuente

El Camino College expected to offer Thomas Fallo raise to stay as president

By Rob Kuznia The Daily Breezedailybreeze.com
Posted: 01/21/2013 07:45:52 PM PST
January 22, 2013 3:53 AM GMTUpdated: 01/21/2013 07:51:08 PM PST


Thomas Fallo

In a surprise development, the El Camino College board is expected to terminate a search for a successor to college President Thomas Fallo in favor of offering him a nearly $40,000 raise to dissuade him from retiring.

The proposal, which the board plans to formally approve or deny at Tuesday's regular meeting, is already raising hackles in some quarters of the faculty union, whose members haven't received a raise since 2008.

"It's obscene - it really is an obscene amount of money at this time," said Nina Velasquez, executive director of the Torrance-area college's faculty union. "It's a slap in the face."

Fallo, president of the community college since 1995, quietly announced his intention to retire at a board meeting in November. Although Fallo is 66, trustees say his announcement came as a surprise to them. Fallo could not be reached for comment Monday.

Some of Fallo's critics - such as Velasquez - point out that he has twice before signaled an intention to leave, only to stay after the board has offered him a raise. However, his defenders point out that in 2009 - about the time Fallo was being courted by the Riverside Community

College District - he declined an offer by the El Camino board to boost his salary by $36,000.

In any event, the current four-year proposal is perhaps a sign of more bountiful times to come for public education in California. In November, the state's voters approved Proposition 30, a temporary tax increase designed to stop the fiscal crisis that has gouged K-12 schools and community colleges.

The current proposed offer would boost Fallo's base pay from the current $277,000 to $313,000 beginning Feb. 1. It would also add a net $3,500 annually for automobile and other expenses. Further, it includes a 5 percent increase for each of the next three years, ultimately bringing Fallo's salary to $362,000 by February 2016.

El Camino board President Bill Beverly - who has clashed with the union in the past - said he doesn't disagree with the equity issue being raised by Velasquez. But he believes the proposal makes sense, given what Fallo is worth on the open market.

"There's no question that he was underpaid when compared to similar positions in like districts," he said. "For example, the president at Santa Monica (community college) was making almost $100,000 more than he was making here."

Interestingly, the president of the faculty union, English professor Sean Donnell, was far less pointed in his criticism of Fallo and the board than Velasquez, who, unlike Donnell, is employed by the union, not the college.

"The board has been magnanimous with Dr. Fallo's salary," he said. "We hope they have reciprocal magnanimity with faculty and classified salaries as well."

Donnell added that he believes Fallo has been a good president. Among his successes is the passage of two construction bonds - one in 2002 and another in 2012 - that are bankrolling a complete overhaul of the campus.

"Honestly, I prefer dealing with a known quality than an unknown," he said.

Donnell doesn't view the latest development as a ploy on Fallo's part to hike his salary, but "I did say, when I heard about the retirement, that `I will believe he's retiring when I see him drive away.'"

The board and the college are attempting to frame the raise largely as a restoration of the salary increase he declined in 2009. It is also characterized as a "modification" due to El Camino's administrative stewardship over Compton College, which lost its accreditation in the mid-2000s due to what was then a climate of corruption.

But Fallo's critics have a more cynical take, speculating that he backed away from the 2009 offer only because of the resulting union unrest. They also point out that, five years prior to that incident, Fallo was courted by the Ventura County Community College District. The El Camino board responded by giving him a 14 percent raise, as well as future 5 percent hikes annually.

Velasquez said she believes the latest development amounts to a repeat of those interplays.

"It's definitely a calculated attempt," she said, adding that, in the earlier events, "he did it exactly the same way - by holding them hostage."

Beverly said it simply isn't true that Fallo is manipulating the board. For one thing, he said, the board came to Fallo with the unofficial offer, not vice versa. (When pressed, Beverly added that he wasn't among the board members who floated the proposal to keep him.)

Still, Beverly guesses that Fallo probably isn't quite ready to call it quits, even though he has accumulated enough experience to essentially take home his full salary in retirement.

"When he was standing on the door stoop, looking at the rose garden, I think his feet got cold and his heart probably tightened a little, and he had a bit of a change of heart," Beverly said.

He added that the question of Fallo's intentions are irrelevant anyway.

"The real issue is, what's the best decision for the long-term interest of the community college district?"

Is keeping Fallo the best decision?

"That's a tough call," Beverly said. "I think the district is well served having Tom Fallo remain as president, because of the economic climate, because of the status of those two bonds, and because of our relationship with Compton College. But I was prepared to deal with (Fallo's retirement)."

Brown seeks to reshape California's community colleges

By Carla Rivera, Los Angeles Times

January 20, 2013, 5:45 p.m.

With a slate of bold and controversial budget proposals, Gov. Jerry Brown has placed a renewed focus on the state's struggling community colleges, the world's largest system of two-year schools that are often overshadowed by the University of California and Cal State systems.

The governor's recommendations are aimed at keeping community colleges affordable, keeping classes accessible and moving students faster through the system to allow them to graduate or transfer to a four-year university at higher rates. Brown's spending plan must clear the Legislature, and some college officials have vowed to oppose — or at least try to modify — some portions.

These proposals are among the most significant policy shifts in years and could reshape many campus operations.

"It's a courageous plan," said Eloy Oakley, president of Long Beach City College. "The governor is focusing on policy issues we've been talking about for many years but dancing around the margins. A lot of this has been on the table in statehouses throughout the nation, but we're addressing these issues in California in a meaningful way."

Community colleges play a vital role in California's higher education system, training large segments of the state's workforce. But the 112-college system has strained under the pressure of huge funding cuts and increased demand. Thousands of courses have been slashed and enrollment has been shrunk by more 500,000 students in recent years.

Most of the schools' 2.4-million students are unprepared for college-level work: 85% need remedial English, 73% need remedial math and only about a third of remedial students transfer to a four-year school or graduate with a community college associate's degree.

Education leaders praised the governor's efforts to follow through on his commitment to voters to restore education funding through the passage of Proposition 30, the school tax initiative —- even while expressing misgivings about aspects of the plan. The budget includes nearly $200 million in additional funding for the colleges.

"It's wonderful to have an environment where we're going to have some provocative conversations about policy," said community colleges Chancellor Brice Harris. "We're not going to shy away and [we] actually look forward to the discussion."

State officials said the plan is meant to build on changes proposed last year by a statewide task force charged with improving the colleges. Measures approved by the Legislature and Board of Governors establish registration priorities, including preventing students from repeating courses to improve their grades and allowing students who participate in orientation and academic assessment programs and have 100 units or less to enroll in classes first. Students also would have to maintain satisfactory grades to continue to qualify for fee waivers.

Brown goes further toward moving students through the system. He is seeking to limit the number of credits students can accumulate. Beginning next fall, he suggests a cap on state-subsidized classes at 90 units, requiring students who exceed that to pay the full cost of instruction, about $190 per semester unit versus $46 per unit. In the 2009-10 academic year, nearly 120,000 students had earned 90 units or more.

Students said they are particularly concerned that the unit cap is punitive for those who have a double major, who may be returning to college to train for a new job or who want to explore their interests before deciding on a field of study.

"We're going to work very hard to get rid of this," said Rich Copenhagen, a College of Alameda student who is president of the Student Senate for California Community Colleges. "The governor does seem to be interested in pushing through a lot of policy in this budget. He's in a position to say I got you more money, now you need to make your system better."

Perhaps one of the more controversial elements of Brown's plan is to change the funding formula for community colleges to pay schools for students who complete courses. Funding is now based on the number of students enrolled at the third or fourth week of the term.

The goal, said state officials, is to provide incentives for colleges to improve.

Brown's performance-based plan would be phased in over several years, and savings would be reinvested in support services.

The task force considered and rejected a similar funding plan.

Harris and others were cautious about many of Brown's proposals. Performance-based funding might encourage colleges to cut courses that are difficult to complete and cause students to switch to less demanding classes. He argued that enrollment priorities suggested by the task force — he served on the panel as chancellor of the Los Rios Community College District — would accomplish the same goals.

The new funding formula also might be an incentive to keep students in classes they are not suited for, said Michelle Pilati, president of the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges. She cautioned that the limit on units could create a two-tiered system of those who can afford to pay and continue their education and those who can't.

"I think he's putting policies on the table we really need to look at and think about," said Pilati, who teaches psychology at Rio Hondo College in Whittier. "As with so many things, the devil is in the details."

The governor also urged UC, Cal State and community college systems to find ways to provide more online classes. The budget provides nearly $17 million to increase those classes for the two-year schools. Brown is proposing a "virtual campus" with 250 new courses available to students statewide that would be transferrable to all colleges. Currently, about 27% of students take at least one course online each year.

System-wide technology, for example, would allow Long Beach City College to expand its online offerings — only about 5% of Long Beach students now take online classes — while keeping down costs, Oakley said.

In a new approach to speeding students' time in school, the governor would allow those with knowledge of a subject to receive course credit by taking a special exam rather than attending classes. The credits would be transferrable to Cal State or UC.

The emphasis on college completion has drawbacks, said some education leaders, and tends to ignore the realities of the typical community college student: They are older and have jobs and families and many attend part time.

"It's probably closing the door and becoming a little more privileged, benefiting students who can go full time," said John S. Levin, executive director of the California Community College Collaborative at UC Riverside.

The governor is also looking to shift some programs from the lower education system to community colleges. For example, the budget provides $315.7 million to shift adult education and apprenticeship programs from K-12, with funding directed to vocational education, English as a Second Language and citizenship classes. Students would be required to pay the full cost of instruction for other adult education courses.

Harris said he expected lively negotiations with the governor and legislators.

"This is about fine-tuning what we think is a great budget," the chancellor said. "We're not going to restore all the access we lost, but it is a modest investment in our future."

El Camino College board approves $40,000 raise for President Thomas Fallo

By Rob Kuznia The Daily Breeze
Posted: 01/22/2013 08:20:49 PM PST
Updated: 01/23/2013 06:04:53 AM PST

To the chagrin of some members of the faculty and staff, the El Camino College board agreed Tuesday to terminate a search to replace President Thomas Fallo and approved a new contract that grants him a $40,000 raise.

The board's 4-1 vote, with Trustee Maureen O'Donnell opposed, came after a dozen or so speakers - including faculty, staff members and students of the Torrance-area community college - voiced their misgivings about the four-year contract, which includes three successive 5 percent annual raises. Opponents were especially upset because faculty and staff members have not been given a raise since 2008.

"Two years ago, the atmosphere here was really contentious," said Luukia Smith, president of the classified union representing employees such as clerical and maintenance workers. "We have worked really hard on our collective-bargaining process. ... I think some damage will be done (by the vote), and it will be hard to trust we are all working for the same thing."

Fallo, president of the community college since 1995, quietly announced his intention to retire at a board meeting in November. Although Fallo is 66, trustees say his announcement came as a surprise to them. The announcement left the board six months to hastily begin the process of finding a successor.

Trustees ultimately opted to offer Fallo more money to stay, under several conditions, including one calling for Fallo to give a year's notice the next time he decides to resign.

On Tuesday, board President Bill Beverly tacked on a clause to the contract that creates additional incentive for Fallo to stay for a while: Should he voluntarily resign before three years from now, he must return the entire raise to the district.

The new contract boosts Fallo's base pay from the current $277,000 to $313,000 beginning Feb. 1. It also adds a net $3,500 annually for automobile and other expenses. Further, it includes a 5 percent increase for each of the next three years.

It makes Fallo among the highest-paid community college presidents in California, but Beverly said he's worth it.

"This proposal essentially represents the going rate for a superintendent/president of 20 years - that's the going rate," Beverly said. "Am I thrilled about it? No, not really at all. But this is not an excessive salary - we're not overpaying him for what he does. He's one of the best in the state."

There seemed to be consensus even among Fallo's critics that he has led the college with a steady hand.

"President Fallo has provided strong leadership ... he ensured that our full-time faculty has held onto their jobs," said Christina Gold, president of the college's Academic Senate.

But she added that the budget crisis has forced the college to drop about 20 percent of its course sections over the past several years. Counselors have had their work year shortened. "To then offer President Fallo a generous raise would deal a crushing blow to the morale of our campus community."

Despite her no vote on the raise and contract extension, O'Donnell also praised Fallo's performance.

"Yes, Dr. Fallo has done a wonderful job, but so do you - the faculty, the classified and other staff," she said. "For five years our employees have been without a raise.

"In fairness to our students, to our employees and to the community at large, I feel that giving an incentive to Dr. Fallo - who has been well paid to do the good job that he does - is morally repugnant. I will be voting against it."

Pushing community college reform too far

LA Times

January 27, 2013

More than any other sector of public education in the state, the California Community Colleges system has been reforming itself in response to thin budgets and increased demand for classes. It's unclear why Gov. Jerry Brown is on the colleges' case to make more drastic changes when they haven't yet had a chance to fully implement the thoughtful policies they've crafted.

Starting in the fall, the colleges will assess all new students' skills, require them to attend orientation sessions like students at other institutions do, and help them devise an educational plan so that they enroll in the courses they need. The goal is to prevent students from wandering aimlessly through the college system, as they often do now, picking up random credits that don't move them toward their goal but instead increase the chances that they will drop out.

The colleges also are revamping their course-enrollment policies. Currently, new students are allowed to register for courses only after everyone else has done so. That means students who already have accrued far more credits than they need to graduate are allowed to take up space in yet more classes that they don't need while new students are lucky to find a spot in a single class. Beginning in the fall, new students with an education plan move to the front of the line while students with about 50% more credits than they need move to the back. Exceptions would be made in some cases, such as students working on double majors or adults who are back at school for retraining.

Those are good changes. But Brown wants more. He wants to charge students with excess credits the full price of their course work — about $700 per course — a punitive measure that would deter only students without financial resources. It's unnecessary. If students with more credits than they need are given low priority for enrollment, as they would be under the colleges' plan, they would only be able to attend courses that have extra space.

Worse, Brown wants the state to reimburse the colleges only for the students who successfully complete each course.

Many students in community college are the first in their family to attend college, and they make understandable mistakes along the way. They register for courses that end up being too hard or a bad fit, though it might take them a while to figure that out. And some students are simply lazy or disorganized. This isn't the fault of the colleges or the instructors. Brown's plan would give the colleges a strong incentive to dumb down course work and lower standards so that more students pass, or professors might decide to discourage students from taking challenging classes, lest they drop them later.

The Legislature, which approved the earlier community college reforms, should withhold its support from Brown's unnecessary and potentially harmful proposals.

Dan Walters: California pension funds still face huge liabilities

By Dan Walters
dwalters@sacbee.com

Published: Monday, Jan. 28, 2013

The California Public Employees' Retirement System has reported – with no small elation – that it has recouped virtually all of the $95 billion in investment losses it sustained during the global financial crisis.

A steadfast investment strategy and a generally rising stock market are responsible for the recovery, CalPERS says.

The good news comes just a few months after Gov. Jerry Brown and the Legislature enacted a pension reform plan they say will shrink the long-term liabilities of CalPERS and local pension systems.

So the public pension crisis that was a political preoccupation over the last decade is history, right?

Not quite.

CalPERS and its smaller cousins – especially the California State Teachers' Retirement System – still have multibillion-dollar unfunded liabilities, plus many billions more in retiree health care commitments that have remained unfunded.

The Legislature's budget analyst, Mac Taylor, pointed out in his overview of Brown's latest state budget that under Brown's multiyear budget plan, the state "would not have begun the process of addressing huge unfunded liabilities associated with the teachers' retirement system and state retiree health benefits," adding, "As such, the state faces daunting budget choices in a much-improved fiscal environment."

It would take all of the $6 billion-per-year tax increase approved by voters last year in Proposition 30, and then some, to deal with the unfunded liabilities that Taylor cites, plus those in CalPERS and the University of California's independent pension system. But none of the new tax money is being devoted to those debts.

There is, moreover, some reason to believe that those debts are much bigger than the official numbers would indicate.

Moody's Investors Service, which rates the creditworthiness of state and local governments, has proposed a new way of evaluating public pension liabilities that lowers the "discount rate" – in effect the assumed future earnings of pension fund investments – to the level of high-grade corporate bonds, similar to the rate private pension systems use.

It also adjusts other accounting techniques that public funds use to minimize liabilities, such as spreading investment losses over many years.

The result of such changes, Moody's says, is that the $766 billion in unfunded liabilities that U.S. pension funds claim triples to $2.2 trillion and if the firm adopts the proposed system for credit ratings, it will amp up pressure on those funds to get more money from taxpayers and/or employees.

That would imply that California, with about 12 percent of the nation's population, could have an unfunded pension debt approaching $300 billion, plus another $100 billion for retiree health care. That's big money in anyone's book.

CCSF is not too big to fail, state official warns

By: Andrea Koskey | 01/24/13 8:23 PM
SF Examiner Staff Writer

The state chancellor for California Community Colleges had a chilling message for the City College of San Francisco board of trustees Thursday: City College is not too big to fail.

Brice Harris spoke directly and candidly to the board about its accreditation and financial crisis. Harris said no other two-year college in the state is in the same situation. He also said the problems with City College are well-documented in the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team's report released in September, as well as the accreditation report released in July.

"They present a real and immediate threat to the education and financial viability of your college," he said, "as well as its very existence."

City College officials have been working since July to implement some 14 recommendations the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges gave the institution in order for it to remain accredited. Because of the violations, City College was placed on a "show cause" sanction, which means it must prove to the commission why it should remain in operation. The report is due to the commission March 15.

But the speed at which some changes — including an academic restructuring — are occurring has raised concerns and caused some resistance in the City College community.

Harris said the timeline for change is short and many difficult decisions remain ahead.

He said trusting the administration, including Interim Chancellor Thelma Scott-Skillman and Bob Agrella, a special trustee, is important to moving forward.

"It would be unfair and counterproductive to question the motives of [the chancellor] and special trustee," he said. "Time constraints do not allow for what might be considered a normal timeline for significant change. You forfeited that opportunity when it ignored concerns and fiscal challenges over the past several years."

Harris added that everyone on campus, including those groups in collective bargaining agreements, need to work together to meet the deadlines.

While there has been some resistance to change from faculty, trustee Steve Ngo assured the state chancellor that the board was unified.

"We get it and are fully behind leadership of the chancellor," Ngo said. "I'm confident she'll take us where we need to be, along with help of the special trustee."

Only in California: The Academic Senate Filibuster

Huffington Post

Robert Shireman

Posted: 01/28/2013

The Academic Senate at El Camino College, near Los Angeles, couldn't take feeling slighted any longer. Over the objections of the Senate, the community college's vice president had eliminated the study-abroad program to address budget shortfalls. He'd also cut out winter session online classes. To add insult to injury, some of the snubs had no fiscal angle: the president, asserting that the appropriate process was not followed, revoked the designated parking place for the winner of the annual Outstanding Adjunct Faculty award.

At the top of these faculty leaders' Spring 2012 list of slights was the board of trustees decision, 10 years before, to revise the college's governance handbook, Participation in Local Decision Making, in a way that they felt "disempowers the Senate." To dramatize the continued seriousness of their protest the senators adopted a Resolution of No Confidence, a term used by faculty committees when they want to send the strongest possible message. According to the senators the disagreements over the Senate's role have caused "unnecessary delays, wasted time and resources." They noted that straightforward tasks such as writing policies on the use of copyrighted materials and use of the computer network are undergoing "years of revision and consultation" before being finalized.

Here is what the faculty senators are upset about. They want it to be clear that trustees and administrators "cannot independently override a recommendation of the Senate." They insist that any time the board of trustees disagrees with the academic senate's view on any of topics including budget and planning processes, "representatives of the two bodies shall have the obligation to meet and reach mutual agreement." Reach mutual agreement. In other words, while students, staff, faculty and community members have the right to be heard, the academic senate gets veto power.

Before I started looking into this issue I would have assumed that the awkward term "collegial consultation" meant to respectfully seek input. Indeed, to be effective a campus leader must communicate with campus constituencies, especially faculty, before making major decisions. In the 112 California community colleges, regulations require trustees and administrators to "consult collegially" using a meaning not found in a dictionary. They must either follow the lead of the academic senate ("rely primarily") or give the senate a veto power ("mutual agreement"). So while the El Camino senators' decade-long insistence on "faculty primacy" may seem like an unreasonable demand, their righteousness is buttressed by the regulations: they are demanding adherence to the Byzantine procedures spelled out by the statewide Board of Governors in 1990.

The claim to legal authority doesn't end there, however. Presidents and trustees can point to a different source of the law: the statutes as enacted by the state legislature. They make makes it very clear that the governing boards and their appointees are responsible for... well, governing, as the name implies. The boards must hear from students, staff and faculty, and they may defer to administrators and to academic senates. But they defer at their discretion: no one has equal authority and no one has primacy; ultimately the buck stops with the governing boards.

It should perhaps be no surprise that the conflict between the Academic Senate's role as described in statute and regulations has created confusion. But it is worse than that. The conflict essentially creates dueling governing boards vying for power, for "primacy" in decision-making. Intended as an assurance that the academic senate would be given due respect, the regulations have served instead as an invitation for obstinacy, leading to paralysis and dysfunction at colleges across the state.

No wonder student needs are not being adequately addressed.

In early December California Competes, which I direct, filed a legal challenge with the statewide Board of Governors, seeking changes to the regulations to end the procedural gridlock at El Camino and other community colleges. Our suggested revisions would require trustees and administrators to get input from students, faculty and staff, and to explain any difference of opinion with senates on issues of curriculum and academic standards. State Chancellor Brice Harris is expected to give an initial answer by the end of January, followed by a 45-day comment period. Over the coming weeks California Competes will be posting more descriptions of the damage that the regulations have caused to students and to the state.