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To: Andre Avramchuk, Academic Senate Chair

From: Stefan Keslacy, Chair of Fiscal Policy Committee (FiPC)

Copies: Queen King, Carlos Beltran, Rhonda Roquemore

Subject: **Budget Recommendations for 2024-2025**

As we embark on the budget planning and allocation process for the 2024-2025 year, it is imperative to establish clear priorities that align with our overarching goals of maintaining the quality of our educational programs, ensuring efficient and transparent resource utilization, and supporting the needs of both faculty and students. The 2024-2025 budget priorities were developed through discussion with the Fiscal Policy Committee (FiPC) of the Academic Senate and campus leadership. After careful consideration and consultation, the following priorities have been identified:

Campus Budget Priorities:

1. **Transparency and Accountability:** Recognizing the importance of transparency in resource allocation, we are establishing a more transparent process, at both the University and college levels, where faculty can actively participate in budget deliberation and decisions. Furthermore, mechanisms should be implemented to hold the Academic Affairs and college accountable for resource utilization, providing avenues for feedback and evaluation at the end of each fiscal year.

The establishment and description of responsibilities of the **College Resource Allocation and Advisory Committee (RAAC)**, or fiscal committee, is imperative for our shared governance. Transparency and accountability in resource allocation are foundational principles in our commitment to effective fiscal management. To uphold these principles, every college should establish a robust RAAC (Resource Allocation and Advisory Committee) or fiscal committee. The charge and membership of this committee should be clearly defined in every college constitution at the latest in the calendar year 2024-2025.

The FiPC committee has been recommending more transparency at the college level for many years, and many colleges either do not have a constitution or their constitutions are outdated. For some colleges, a fiscal or RAAC committee is described but has not been used. The college committees shall serve as a vital mechanism for faculty involvement and oversight in budget decisions. A separate memo focusing on colleges' fiscal committee will be sent to the Academic Senate.

It is recommended that each college/library within the institution implement a mandatory end-of-fiscal-year meeting, facilitated by the College Dean, aimed at providing a comprehensive update on financial expenditure and budgetary status. This meeting serves as another crucial mechanism for transparency and accountability within the college's fiscal operations. The Dean, alongside relevant administrative personnel, will present a detailed overview of how allocated funds were utilized throughout the fiscal year. Moreover, this forum will enable a thorough examination of any discrepancies between budget projections and actual spending, highlighting areas of over-expenditure or underfunding.

Also, the meeting will allow stakeholders to address unmet needs resulting from budgetary constraints and explore potential solutions to mitigate such discrepancies in future fiscal planning.

At the university level, it is recommended to provide current information for the Fiscal Year. For example, the University has not published or provided information on its website regarding the 2023-2024 FY. The most recent information is for 2022-2023. It is also recommended to provide timely access to year-end reports after the close of the Fiscal Year. The committee recommends the University use interactive tools, such as OpenGov, OpenBook, that allow for increased transparency and accessibility of information. These tools are used on other CSU campuses and are helpful for understanding both university and college-level budgets.

As a public institution that is supported by taxpayer funds and student tuition, it is in the University's and the public's interest to have higher standards and practices of transparency and accountability with the university budget at all levels. Improved budget transparency facilitates shared governance and helps promote a culture of care because all members of the university community will have access to current budget information, including the distribution of resources throughout the university, which facilitates the understanding of budgetary decisions. This is particularly important in situations of resource constraints and budget reductions that negatively impact different areas of the university.

2. Faculty Salary and Support: With the recent agreement reached with our union regarding **faculty salary increases**, it is important that we prioritize allocating sufficient resources to honor these commitments. Additionally, emphasis will be placed on enhancing support for faculty in their teaching, research, scholarship, and creative activities. This includes improving transparency in the reassignment process for teaching duties, providing flexibility in IT resources for teaching, and expanding internal grant opportunities to facilitate research pursuits.

CETL has been recognized by WASC as "A national model for faculty development, with the express focus on student success and equity" (WASC Senior College and University Commission, 2019). CETL is a part of the university that has a significant impact on both faculty and students. However, this area of the university is underfunded given the scope of impact it has on the most critical work of faculty, which is teaching and serving Cal State LA students. It is recommended to provide additional funding for staff salaries to CETL to better serve faculty and facilitate student success through improved faculty support in teaching.

3. Student Support: Our commitment to student success remains unwavering. Therefore, we will continue to prioritize support for **academic advisement**, ensuring access to essential IT and information/scholarly resources, facilitating student employment opportunities, and expanding research opportunities for students. Furthermore, we suggest increasing funding for scholarships, utilizing grants to alleviate financial burdens and enable students to dedicate more time to research activities.

4. Addressing Enrollment Changes and Diversity: In response to the emerging trend of decreasing enrollment and the need to serve a diverse student population, we will prioritize initiatives aimed at addressing these challenges. This includes investing in recruitment and retention efforts targeted towards **underrepresented groups** of students and faculty, as well as implementing strategies to foster inclusivity and support diversity across all aspects of campus life. For example, it recommended the University increase the investment of funds in CSU systemwide efforts to support Black Student Success and providing more support for graduate education, which provides opportunities for underrepresented groups and first-generation students to obtain an advanced education.

5. Physical planning and Development: It is imperative that we address the critical issues of the allocation of academic resources and the upkeep of our university infrastructure, as they directly impact the quality of our educational programs. Considering recent concerns regarding the deterioration of building conditions, it has become evident that neglecting maintenance poses a significant threat to the effectiveness of our academic endeavors. Therefore, we strongly recommend the establishment of comprehensive policies and guidelines aimed at effectively allocating resources to support academic functions, while concurrently addressing the pressing issue of building maintenance.

One pressing concern involves the recent finding of asbestos in **King Hall** (other buildings should also be tested such as the Physical Education and Biology Building), posing important health hazards. It is crucial to allocate adequate funds for the thorough assessment and safe removal of asbestos-containing materials, adhering to established safety protocols and regulations. Furthermore, while prioritizing urgent tasks such as asbestos removal, it is essential to explore potential opportunities for external funding or grants to supplement the University's budget for comprehensive building renovations. Are there any known support from the CSU, donors, grants or external funding sources that could potentially support these endeavors? Moreover, the valuable input of faculty members regarding teaching facilities should be carefully considered, as they are directly engaged with students and can provide insights into creating a welcoming and conducive learning environment. Additionally, the need for maintenance and renovations in other buildings necessitates a strategic fiscal approach. This entails prioritizing projects based on urgency and impact on the University community, while also considering long-term sustainability and cost-effectiveness. Failure to act would not only jeopardize the integrity of our educational programs but also undermines our commitment to providing a conducive learning environment for our students and faculty. We owe it to our university community to prioritize these critical areas and ensure the sustained excellence of our academic pursuits.

In conclusion, these priorities reflect our unwavering commitment to excellence in education, transparent and efficient resource management, and the holistic support of our students and faculty. By adhering to these priorities, we will not only navigate the current challenges but also position ourselves for continued success and growth in the years to come.