

On the Questions of Furloughs
by Ed Purcell

Colleagues, yesterday [Thursday, June 11, 2009] I was able to obtain some additional information concerning the furlough/layoff crisis sweeping the CSU. I apologize in advance if some of this is duplicative of information obtained by Fernando, Steve, and Christine in their Wednesday meeting with Barnes.

Money -- There seems to be little real dispute about the gross numbers being circulated by everyone. There is, however, a second (perhaps more important) story behind them [the dollar figures], which we touched upon in our p.m. meeting, but which has not yet gotten much play. Of the total comp savings being sought by CSU (over \$500-million - I'm only going to generalize these large numbers), less than half can be recouped through a two-day-per-month furlough. As of yesterday, CSU was unwilling or unable to say where or how the balance of the savings would be achieved. Some vague references -- without numbers -- are made to energy savings through campus closures reflecting the furloughs and reduced student enrollments. **No such plan will apparently be forthcoming until after the deadline date set by the CO for Union response to the CO furlough plan.** (Apparently a big "off site" meeting of presidents and trustees will be held in SD the last week of June.)

The significance of this problem, I believe, is that employees will face both furloughs (if elected) and layoffs/non renewals. Long experience teaches that the way CSU handles these situations, according to its philosophy, is to parcel out unallocated cuts to campuses and then let the presidents do as they will.

Furloughs -- CSU is apparently pursuing the state furlough model and has directed some to a state web site (either Gov. Office or DPA) for a question and answer presentation covering many of the furlough details. **CSU will not consider more than 2 days per month for reasons it will not specify.** The suspicion is that more days would run afoul of either accreditation requirements or Ed Code/Gov. Code language governing minimum days of instruction for an academic year. Also, CSU will not offer assurances that no jobs will be lost if furloughs are adopted nor indicate how many jobs will be saved if furloughs are used. The term used with all Unions appears to be "trust us."

Unpaid Holidays -- Although not yet stated by the CSU, several indications point to obtaining further savings by forcing unpaid holidays. CSU is currently setting that process up for non-represented employees, and "looking to" the UC model, which includes this component. Given the above problem of inadequate savings from furloughs per se, I think we can expect that unpaid holidays will be sought as well. The bargaining tactic will be the same being used now: take it or leave it.

Reduction in Student Body -- Reed is telling the Legislature of his intention to reduce enrollment by 60,000 students (probably over a two year period). That reduction is

vaguely referenced as another cost saving measure. One might ask how that saves money and the only answer seems to be further reduction of the number of employees who were previously required to serve those students. There is a lot of rhetoric about preserving quality, but I think that quality here will be defined inductively. "Quality" will be that level of available service to students which is possible after required budgetary savings have been achieved to meet pre-existing cut levels.

CFA -- CFA will apparently use the same approach adopted by APC -- some form of membership vote to determine participation in furloughs. It will not be bound by CSU's deadline and will perhaps not even conduct a vote until it receives hard answers to the question posed above concerning the missing savings after furlough. It seems disinclined to face both furloughs and loss of employment, whether through layoff or non-renewal of its temps (CSU wants the monetary savings equivalent to 9,000 jobs out of that unit or over 3000 FTEF). CFA will also seek changes in any furlough scheme so that days without pay are also days without work. It seems that CFA would prefer extending holiday periods by bunching up furlough days or even a revised academic calendar. If CSU is not forthcoming with changes and answers, CFA may submit only the current, bare-bones CSU "plan" for a vote. Few think furloughs would be chosen in that scenario.

Rich Campuses -- Employees from some campuses remain convinced by their administrations that local budgets are sufficiently well off to avoid elimination of employees. To some degree, these may be word games. "No layoffs" does not mean "no loss of employment" in the CSU lexicon. However, if some campuses truly are in a decent position, furloughs will only mean a loss of income with no balancing benefit in regard to level of employment.

CSUEU -- Although CSUEU has circulated what appears to be extensive information about the furlough plan, I have been told that this information substantially tracks -- and does not go beyond -- the Barnes talking points. I was also told that Barnes has repeated these same talking points with CFA repeatedly without being able or willing to go beyond them.

Local Bargaining -- CSU insists that the alternative to furloughs is layoff. I take them at their word on that, even though they refuse now to fess up to the likelihood of furloughs and layoffs. We should keep in mind that layoffs are governed by our contract which we fairly bargained and which we have some experience with. There seems to be no bargaining over furloughs and we have no experience with them. It is important to keep in mind that if the need for layoff is declared, it triggers what amounts to local bargaining to find ways to save money to avoid the layoffs. That process would allow, perhaps, for local furlough decisions based on specific campus situations as well as a number of other options.

I think this sums up what I've been able to find out so far. ed