

Dear Chancellor Moreno,

On behalf of the College of San Mateo Academic Senate, we are writing to convey our deep concerns regarding the district's handling of College of San Mateo's budget crisis and to request more information about your response to our district's serious deficiencies in meeting the requirements of the 50% law.

As you know, CSM's budget shortfall has led to drastic cuts in instruction—60% reduction in summer classes and a rumored 15% cut in instruction to classes in the fall. These cuts cause serious harm to students and to the health of our academic programs, and they have created a climate of fear, mistrust, and low morale as faculty do not feel we are fully informed of the nature or rationale for the cuts until after decisions have been made.

While we might respond to the budget shortfall affecting CSM in other ways, such as raising funds or tapping into the district reserves, our response seems to be entirely grounded in cutting spending—particularly on instruction. This is troubling at a time when we are also pursuing extremely costly projects, such as student housing, bringing back our Coastside campus, and making free college permanent. While most faculty strongly support the goals of these programs, many feel the district is prioritizing them at the cost of instruction, and that the district's goals prioritize completion and transfer but do little to ensure we are encouraging academic excellence. Students can complete and transfer by having an AI agent complete all of their online work without learning anything

We have also asked for information from our local college leadership as many of these are local decisions, but discussion in our Senate meetings and a recent informal survey of CSM faculty reveal that many faculty feel the district *has the resources to support CSM and bears some of the responsibility for the decisions and lack of oversight that have led us to this crisis*, but that the district response—both to these challenges and to the state Chancellor's office [report on the 50% law](#)—tend to place the responsibility elsewhere and avoid taking the strong actions that are needed.

[Your letter in response to the 50% law](#) is particularly troubling in this regard. The State Chancellor's [report](#) shows that our district is one of only three in Northern California that has failed to meet the law's requirements, and that we have failed for far longer, and at much higher rates, than any other college: while College of Marin and Napa Community College have a cumulative deficiency of seven and nine million dollars respectively, our district is deficient by *over 106 million dollars*. While it may be true that “compliance mandates, expanded student support services, and a strong focus on equity, diversity,” along with the costs of technology, have led to changes in spending priorities, this is equally true of all 116 California community

colleges and does nothing to answer the question of why our district alone has failed so egregiously.

It is particularly troubling that the letter includes statements about further cutting instruction, that we are “no longer able” to add new instructional positions and that we are encouraging early retirement incentives.

The loss of faculty confidence in the decision-making process is particularly troubling given [Senate’s role in the 10+1](#) and [Board policy 2.05](#) that senate will “consult collegially with the administration of the college and district” and that the Board will rely “*primarily on faculty expertise*” on academic and professional matters including “processes for instructional planning and budget development.” Suffice it to say, many faculty do not feel our current relationship is grounded in collegial consultation and transparency.

We hope to improve our relationship and, to that end, would like to invite you to attend a future senate meeting to address the following questions: