October 4, 2012

Help Sam, Help California: View the video.

Leadership ponders Prop. 30 ramifications at Sacramento State forum

Academic and business leaders from throughout California gathered Wednesday, Oct. 3, at Sacramento State to explore the impact that Prop. 30 would have on higher education, as well as the economy of the region and state, should voters fail to approve the measure Nov. 6.

More than 125 citizens attended the three-hour forum, “Implications of Prop. 30 for California Public Education and the Capital Region,” at Sacramento State’s Alumni Center, co-hosted by the University and LEED (Linking Education and Economic Development).

Gov. Brown’s initiative would increase state revenue for K-12 schools and community colleges, in part, by temporarily raising income-tax rates for individuals earning more than $250,000 annually. If Prop. 30 passes, the measure will prevent a “trigger cut” of $250 million to the California State University – already struggling with slashed state funding over the past five years – and would allow for a 9% rollback of tuition fees.

If the measure fails, however, the $250 million trigger will be pulled, bringing budget cuts to the CSU since 2007-08 to $1.2 billion – or nearly 40 percent.

“I have always felt that public universities in California have far-reaching constituencies – from the students who learn in our classrooms, to the companies that hire our graduates. Institutions of higher education are an essential part of the fabric of our communities,” said Sacramento State President Alexander Gonzalez. “They provide jobs and opportunities, innovation and economic growth, and they nurture the hopes and dreams of future generations.”

Ten years ago, California spent $1.89 on CSU, UC and community colleges for every general fund dollar that went to prison funding, said keynote speaker Hans Johnson, a demographer with the Public Policy Institute of California. Today, for every $1 spent on corrections, just $0.82 goes to schools.
“California has shifted its priorities in terms of how we spend money … with higher education being seen as one of those areas that’s most expendable,” Johnson said. “California colleges have cut staff, cut courses, reduced services and increased tuition and fees, and they’ve engaged in enrollment management techniques that have served to limit enrollment.”

Steep tuitions, difficulty getting desired courses and enrollment controls have caused some would-be students to either defer college or not go at all. Most disturbing, Johnson said, is a substantial increase in out-of-state enrollment.

“This is a big problem in California,” Johnson said, “because people are less likely to move back if they leave for college. We are in a situation that’s new for California, where we are exporting our best graduates to other states. … The students are lost to us, in many cases, during their productive years, when their earning income is at its highest. This is not good public policy.”

Sacramento State, for its part, plays a large role in the economics of the capital region. Alumni are more than 200,000 strong and each year they generate an estimated $7 billion impact on California’s economy.

Sacramento State produces an annual economic impact of nearly $1 billion to the local economy. The University generates more than 7,300 jobs and about $36 million in tax revenue.

Wednesday’s forum opened with a welcome from Alexander Gonzalez, Sacramento State president, and James Beckwith, Five Star Bank president and CEO. Hans Johnson of the Public Policy Institute of California provided the keynote address. Michele Siqueiros, executive director of The Campaign for College Opportunity made a presentation titled “Public Higher Education: A Bipartisan Imperative.” There were also two panel discussions; topics and panelists were as follows:

“Statewide Effects on Public Higher Education”
- Kevin Riggs, senior vice president, Randle Communications (Moderator)
- Jon Sharpe, interim chancellor, Los Rios Community College District
- Alexander Gonzalez, president, Sacramento State
- Linda Katehi, chancellor, UC Davis
- Pedro Ramirez, vice president of Legislative Affairs, California State Student Association

“Economic Impacts on the Capital Region”
- Marcey Brightwell, senior vice president, Grayling (Moderator)
- Nancy Aaberg, superintendent, Yuba City Unified School District
- Kishore Rao, Strategic Technology and Product Planning, Intel
- Allen W. Warren, founder, New Faze Development
- Jim Williams, AIA, principal, Williams + Paddon
Sanjay Varshney, dean of Sacramento State’s College of Business Administration, provided closing remarks.

For media assistance, contact Sacramento State’s Office of Public Affairs at (916) 278-6156.

– Dixie Reid
dixie.reid@csus.edu

Sacramento State is making a difference in California’s Capital Region and beyond. We offer a life-changing opportunity for our 28,000 students, preparing them to be leaders in their professions and communities. Our professors are known for their dedication to great teaching. And our location in the capital of the nation’s most populous state allows students to pursue unique internships and research.

###

31-F12-DR