



OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

County of Sonoma

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February 4, 2025

Dr. Mildred García
Chancellor, California State University
Board of Trustees, California State University
401 Golden Shore
Long Beach, CA 90802

SUBJECT: Sonoma State University Proposed Budget Reductions

Dr. Garcia,

On behalf of the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, I write to express our deep concern and strong opposition to the proposed budget cuts, staff layoffs and program reductions at Sonoma State University. These actions will have far-reaching consequences not only for the university and its students, but also for the broader Sonoma County community, our local economy and the ability of businesses and public institutions – including county government – to recruit and retain a skilled workforce.

We also are concerned about the apparent lack of a long-term plan to sustain SSU as a community asset into the future. These cuts seem destined to exacerbate enrollment's downward spiral, with no indication of how that will be arrested and reversed. What is SSU's path forward?

As the largest public employer in the region, the County of Sonoma relies heavily on a pipeline of educated and well-trained graduates to fill critical positions in health and social services, environmental protection, public safety and other jobs requiring college education. SSU has long been a key partner in preparing students for these roles, and any reduction in academic programs, faculty or student support services will undermine our collective ability to serve the residents of Sonoma County.

Many local private-sector businesses also depend on SSU to produce a workforce that meets their evolving needs. Budget cuts that result in fewer course offerings, reduced faculty support and declining enrollment will not only diminish the quality of education but will also weaken the local talent pool. The loss of cultural and athletic offerings reduces quality of life throughout the community and makes SSU a less-likely choice for local high school students looking for a full and diverse college experience. These impacts collectively threaten economic growth and stability in our region.

SSU's economic footprint extends beyond education, according to an impact study of all CSU campuses commissioned by your office in 2021. It stated that every \$1 million spent on SSU's campus generates an additional \$625,000 in spending at local businesses, \$53,100 in state and local tax revenue, and supports



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approximately 13 jobs in Sonoma County. A weakened SSU means lost revenue, fewer jobs and diminished economic activity throughout our county.

We value our local university and urge CSU and SSU leadership to explore alternatives to these cuts that do not compromise the university's ability to serve students or negatively impact the broader community. We stand ready to collaborate with you to advocate for additional resources and explore innovative funding solutions to ensure that SSU remains a robust engine of opportunity for our region.

Sincerely,
Lynda Hopkins
Chair, Sonoma County Board of Supervisors





