



**SAN FRANCISCO  
STATE UNIVERSITY**

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
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March 14, 2016

Dear SF State Community,

Let me open by reaffirming a message that seems to have been lost since the last public meeting with students, faculty and supporters of the College of Ethnic Studies. I am committed to the long-term success of the College of Ethnic Studies. The University will be covering the budget shortfall in the College of Ethnic Studies in Academic Year 2016-2017 to allow time for a thoughtful evaluation of needs. I am asking the Academic Deans to join the Provost in an analysis of budget allocations not only to the College of Ethnic Studies but to include the other five Colleges as well. We do need to explore new processes and this is what motivated my call for college budget committees.

Since the last student/faculty led meeting there have been three puzzles my leadership team is confronting related to a coordinated point of contact, legal issues, and a process for moving forward.

First, to whom should I respond? For example, a list of demands was posted on Facebook, the Black Student Union submitted their list of demands (and we have agreed to meetings to discuss how the university can work with them to achieve positive change). Additionally, CoES faculty sent in their list of demands. The Golden Gate Xpress then published a list of demands that differs from what I received earlier. This is why we have not responded to a considerable number of requests to meet.

Second, I have asked for a legal review of the demands put forth by students and faculty to evaluate them in the context of shared governance and the regulatory environment in which the University must operate. I have only just received that analysis and the cabinet and I are reviewing this.

Third, I am considering a University Task force, composed of 15-20 members representing all campus stakeholders, charged with examining academic budget allocations. This would be in addition to the college-level budget advisory committees I have requested.

In reference to the issues raised by CoES students and faculty, please keep in mind that our collaborative and governance structures include the Academic Senate as well as labor organizations representing the faculty, staff and academic professionals. Also note that positions related to advising connect with the administrative structures in Student Affairs and Enrollment Management and the Undergraduate Education Office, while fundraising positions lie in the Advancement Office.

Collective bargaining with labor organizations within the CSU occurs on a systemwide level. Some of the demands involve working conditions directly and indirectly related to collective bargaining agreements and would be subject to collective bargaining. Not only is the challenge complex, but how to approach the challenge via representative and obligated processes is not easy.



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The issues raised are relevant and important. Potential solutions and strategies involve millions of dollars and many new and current positions. Many of the demanded positions, do not exist and some that do, may require significant revision of the position descriptions. There is the belief that as the President, I can just make this happen. I do not know of examples where the best decisions for a complex and successful university such as SF State arise from a leader acting alone. That is why I am willing to engage and commit the next year in a critically important process regarding our finances and where we want to invest them.

I do not approach such complexity in haste nor alone. Particularly when I see that a thoughtful and methodical approach to difficult challenges can maintain our commitments and engage a level of innovation and change that will enhance and strengthen SF State.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Leslie E Wong".

Les Wong  
President