

**SPEAKER FABIAN NUÑEZ**  
**46TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT**  
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## **Speaker Demands CSU Trustees Explain Bumping Fee Hike Vote to Post-Election Date**

**SACRAMENTO** – Assembly Speaker Fabian Núñez (D-Los Angeles) today sent a letter to the California State University Board of Trustees demanding to know why a crucial meeting and vote to raise students' fees was moved from late October until after the gubernatorial election in November.

Below is the text of the letter:

Dear Trustee Achtenberg,

I am writing to determine the reasons behind the California State University (CSU) Board of Trustees' recent decision to cancel the October 26, 2006 Board of Trustees meeting.

According to long-standing practice, the Board was to have voted at that meeting on the CSU budget proposal for the coming academic year, as well as to have decided whether to raise student fees again by as much as ten percent.

Specifically, I would like to know why the Board of Trustees cancelled this long-planned meeting until after the November gubernatorial election, and the circumstances through which this decision was made.

For at least eight years, which is as far back as the publicly posted minutes of the CSU Board of Trustees extend, the Trustees' practice has been to hold a meeting to make decisions on its budget proposal in late October in order to present the CSU budget to the State Department of Finance by November 1. It does not appear that ever in this time period has the meeting been canceled or the decision on the budget proposal been postponed to await the results of an election.

As part of that budget proposal, the Trustees make decisions at the same time on student fees, presumably to establish how much of the budget will be carried by students and their families, and how much should be requested from the state general fund.

For example, on October 27, 2005, the Trustees voted to increase student fees by 8% in a 13 to 1 vote. Similarly, in 2004, the Trustees met on October 28 to

vote to approve a student fee increase. At those meetings, the Trustees also adopted their CSU budget proposal that went to the Department of Finance in preparation for the governor's presentation of his state budget proposal the following January of each year.

According to various published documents, including the CSU's own web site, the Trustees had for a very long time been scheduled to meet on October 26, 2006 to review the budget for 2007-08. Following the Board's own Rules of Procedure, the Trustees set this meeting date in May, 2005.

Yet, at the recent September meeting of the Trustees, during a presentation giving preliminary information on the 2007-08 CSU budget proposal, the presenter, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Budget Development Patrick Lenz, alluded to the cancellation of the October meeting and indicated that a thorough presentation of the proposal would be offered in November. However, he did not state when or how the decision to cancel the October meeting had been made. His presentation included what he termed a "buy-out" of a student fee increase that would be included in the next budget.

Given the fact that any increase in student fees is likely to generate concern among parents and students in the weeks prior to the election, coupled with the fact that in recent years the Trustees have voted on the CSU budget at the scheduled late-October Trustees meeting, I would like to know why the discussion of the proposed budget was moved from the canceled meeting scheduled for just before the election and postponed to a meeting shortly after the election. What is it that caused the Trustees to change a long scheduled meeting and the historic practices of the Trustees?

The people of California deserve to have all the issues put in front of them in advance of an election. A significant increase in student fees at the CSU is certainly an issue of public policy that ought to be put before voters in advance of the election.

It would be highly disturbing to discover that the Trustees, a number of whom are appointees of the current administration, or CSU executives allowed election politics to impact the timing of action on the proposed CSU budget.

Therefore, I specifically ask for an immediate response to the following questions:

- (1) Where was this decision made — in closed session or in an open session?
- (2) Upon whose recommendation was this decision based? Who put forward (and who seconded) the motion stipulating this decision?

(3) Why are the Trustees not following its historic procedures this year? What possible difference would it make in the CSU budget planning process between adopting the budget at the previously scheduled October meeting and waiting until the November meeting, which is scheduled shortly after the election?

(4) Have any CSU executives raised the issue that the budget decision and vote on the raising of student fees be delayed until after the election? For example, did any high-ranking CSU official at the August 30, 2006 CSU System Budget Advisory Committee meeting state that the budget discussion be postponed until after the election?

In light of the fact that the one and only debate in this gubernatorial campaign is taking place at the CSU campus in Sacramento, I would like answers to these very simple questions in advance of that event.

Sincerely,

Assembly Speaker Fabian Núñez

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