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Inside Glance

OPINION: FIGHT FOR YOUR EDUCATION!

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NINE DEPARTMENTS AXED!

175 faculty dismissed in light of \$11.5 million projected budget crunch

By Melissa B. Tamberg
DAILY AZTEC NEWS WRITER

California's lingering budget crisis has dropped its ax close to home with campuswide layoffs of approximately 175 faculty members and the termination of at least eight SDSU departments, according to Michael Sietz, president of the SDSU chapter of the California Faculty Association.

Amid rampant rumors last week of departmental slashings and severe faculty and course eliminations, SDSU administrators refused to release a detailed list of casualties until today at the earliest.

However, on Thursday afternoon, Sietz confirmed the elimination of eight SDSU departments including aerospace engineering, anthropology, family studies and consumer sciences, German and Russian, health sciences, industrial technology, recreation and religious studies.

In addition, Sietz said he believes the department of natural sciences will also be closed.

The layoffs of 14 professors from the chemistry department, seven from sociology, approximately 10 from education, between one and five from business and three from French were also verified by Sietz, who said President Day's decisions must now be approved and confirmed by the CSU Chancellor's office, which will probably occur next week.

With the bleak projection of trimming 8 percent, or approximately \$11.5 million, off the academic affairs budget, SDSU President Day called for "narrow and

deep" cuts that he said would eliminate 10 to 12 university departments, more than 100 tenured faculty members, and an undetermined number of tenure-track faculty and non-teaching staff.

"Some areas will be cut deeply and in some cases all the way, while others will not be touched at all," Day told the faculty Senate last Tuesday.

Dan Whitney, chairman of anthropology, said he was informed on Wednesday that the SDSU department would be eliminated.

"I'm devastated by the fact that the impact on students hasn't been taken into consideration," Whitney said. "It's unique to not have a phasing out or prior consultation. We had no indication ever that we would be eliminated ... Eight years ago, when we were threatened by budget cuts, we were told by President Day that our department was part of the core of the university."

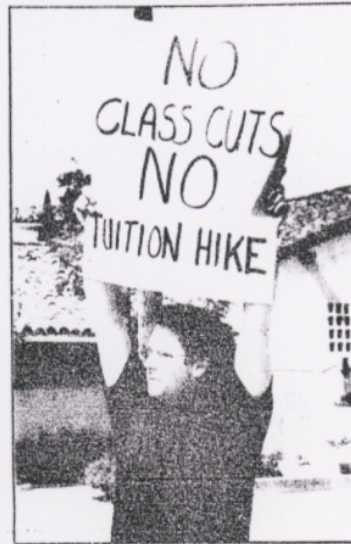
According to Whitney, the anthropology department currently serves approximately 100 undergraduate and between 30 and 50 graduate majors, all of whom will return in the fall to a nonexistent major.

"I assume that all these students will either have to pick up their classes at another university or change their majors," Whitney said.

Julian Wulbern, a 26-year veteran of the department of German and Russian and the chairman of that office for the past ten years, said he is outraged by the lack of consultation and preliminary warning surrounding the situation.

"Believe me, I had never envisioned this as the outcome of 10 years of very dedicated, hard work that was needed to build this department up," Wulbern said.

Paula Matthews, an Italian minor, said drastic cuts made to the French-Italian department carry a far-



THE DAILY AZTEC/Karen Clapp

English graduate student Steve Geishik protests in front of the Administration building Thursday. At least eight academic departments are expected to be eliminated.

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AXED: 'Narrow and deep' cuts shock and devastate faculty

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reaching message.

"They're making a statement to us that education is not important, that people aren't important," Matthews said. "It's very demoralizing. Education is for people, and this goes beyond the individual. It affects the whole community, the state and the country."

Wulbern said the budget slashing will increase state expenses in the long run, because it will take longer for students to become effective, salary-earning members of the work force who in turn, pay taxes.

"What the legislature and the governor will not face is that raising state taxes is the only way to save this university," Sietz added.

The projected cuts come on the heels of last year's 15 percent budget slashing which eliminated 660 class sections and approximately 200 teaching positions, including almost all part-time and temporary faculty members at SDSU.

According to Day, CSU Chancellor Barry Munitz has asked all the CSU campuses to now plan for an 8 percent cut, a collective estimate based on the system's guess that actual cuts will range between 5 and 15 percent.

Sietz said the decision to go "narrow and deep," rather than mirror last year's across-the-board cuts, will help preserve SDSU's ethnic and gender recruitment, and ensure that some of the university's departments remain distinguished.

However, Sietz said alternatives to the sweeping faculty cuts must continue to be explored.

"There is a gray possibility of saving some positions and departments if we can get the state to move on some sort of a Golden Handshake agreement," Sietz said.

A Golden Handshake agreement, which must be signed by Gov. Pete Wilson, would provide a more attractive pension package to retiring employees.

In his address to the faculty Senate, Day discussed a "Two-plus-two" proposal in which faculty members who retire now could receive two years of service credit, in addition to having two years added to their age, which would increase the percentage amount of their pension. This plan would require approval by both the state legislature and the governor in order to be extended.

According to Sietz, there are close to

50 SDSU faculty members over the age of 65, 104 over 62 years and another 50 are 60 years or older.

"If approximately 100 of these people could receive an enhancement to retire early, we might be able to save about 60 present faculty positions or three departments," Sietz said. "However, if the size of the potential cuts exceeds what we have already talked about, then it may mean that anyone who takes the Golden Handshake will not reduce the actual number of faculty we may be losing."

Sietz explained that the ratio of retirees and preserved positions is not one-to-one because the university is required to pay a portion into the pension plan.

Members of the faculty Senate have broached another recourse in the wake of the planned cuts.

Last Tuesday, the group approved a resolution calling for the "prior reduction of programs and faculty positions in the Department of Athletics, in the event that reductions in the budget of Academic Affairs otherwise cause the elimination of whole academic departments and the dismissal of tenure-track facul-

ty." Charles Stewart, Senate chairman, said President Day is being asked to examine possible cuts in the athletics department before issuing pink slips to any additional tenured or tenure-track faculty members.

"In two years, we've lost about one-quarter of (the faculty), or we will lose them if we get the (projected) cuts," Stewart said.

"For every faculty member (let go), three to four courses will be lost," Sietz said. "The ripple effect goes right, straight to the students."

Sietz urged students to endorse the proposed CSU 40 percent fee hike, which currently rests at the hands of state legislators.

"The CFA, in general, is not in favor of putting the burden on the students," he said. "But there is no way to maintain the system without the 40 percent fee increase."

"Unless we can unite students, faculty, teachers and administrators, we're going to see the ruin of this university. If we can act together, perhaps we can find a way to save it."