

# EDITORIAL: Chancellor White must end CSU's 'student success fees'

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By The Fresno Bee Editorial Board

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Timothy P. White had a fairly uneventful first year settling in as the chancellor of the California State University system. He began his new job in late 2012, not long after the passage of Proposition 30, the governor's tax hike measure that promised to stop a 5% tuition increase.

Since then, no strikes, no scandals, no embarrassing incidents.

It's a good track record after some years of turmoil, one that indicates the CSU Board of Trustees was wise to choose the former chancellor of the University of California, Riverside, as successor to Charles B. Reed. To maintain that, White should be wary of "student success" fees, which are starting to crop up across the 23-campus system.

Nine campuses have instituted this fee: East Bay, San Jose, San Luis Obispo and six others in Southern California, one of which White approved last year. Now officials at CSU campuses in Fresno, Fullerton, Dominguez Hills and San Diego are looking at adopting their own student success fees, ranging from \$200 to \$500.

The practice should be stopped before it spreads to all campuses.

The reason these fees are dangerous is that they are an end run around tuition hikes, which must get approval from the board of trustees. This fee only needs White's OK.

Student success fees started spreading in 2011 at the height of deep state budget cuts and the student backlash at the constant tuition hikes. In the past decade, CSU tuition has more than doubled and stands at \$5,472 a year. Simultaneously, the state started cutting higher-ed spending by \$1 billion. Now that the economy is better, Gov. Jerry Brown and legislators are reversing that trend.

Student fees are nothing new and typically cover some type of service. There are mandatory fees, for health services and student activities, and optional fees such as for parking permits. But student success fees aren't tied to a specific service. Instead, the money goes to fund academics and operations, which should be supported by taxes and tuition.

It is possible that the four current student success fee proposals won't get to White's desk. The proposed fees must go through a multistep process. Even then, the chancellor can send the proposals back to the universities for more student input.

The best outcome is that these new fee proposals die before then — like the \$250 student success fee Sonoma State officials dropped earlier this year after students protested.

Nickel-and-diming students is unfair, and counterproductive to the system's financial future.

The Legislature and White need to step up for students before sticking them for more.

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