



## CALIFORNIA'S INVESTMENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION VS. INCARCERATION

One of the strongest threads in California's economic and social fabric has been the long-standing commitment to affordable, high quality postsecondary education. Since the inception of the Master Plan for Higher Education in 1960, the ability of California public universities to provide a pathway to a better life for individual citizens while sustaining and growing one of the world's most vibrant economies has been unmatched. But more recently, California state has invested less in higher education and far more in prisons. "Tough on crime" legislation over the last two decades has led to disproportionate funding for prisons. We are now faced with tough decisions about the state's current priorities and how we invest in our future.

- Currently, there are about 173,000 inmates and 56,500 employees operating under the \$10 billion annual budget for California's prisons. By contrast, over three million students and 250,000 faculty and staff members populate the state's public universities and community colleges with just \$2 billion more.<sup>2</sup>
- California prisons and public universities are both funded by the state's discretionary budget and must compete for the non-mandated portion of the state's budget. Prisons and universities have the same target constituency, young adults
- In 2007-08 the state will increase prison spending by 9%, whereas the higher education budget will only increase by 6%. Furthermore, analysts project that higher education spending will grow around 5% a year, while prison spending will grow by at least 9% annually.<sup>3</sup>

- At the University of California, Berkeley, African Americans make up 3% of the population and Latinos 11%.<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, in California prisons, African Americans make 30% of the populations and Latinos nearly 40%.<sup>5</sup>

### Education<sup>6</sup>

- Support for higher education has slipped from 17% of the state general fund budget in 1976 to 11% in 2006. The result is that students are paying a greater share of higher education costs and to pay those costs they are assuming greater debt.
- Non-fee related costs increased from \$7,355 to \$9,689 (32%) at UC and from \$6,533 to \$7,881 (21%) at CSU. The net result is that the total cost of attending California's public four-year universities is no longer the bargain it once was compared to the rest of the nation.

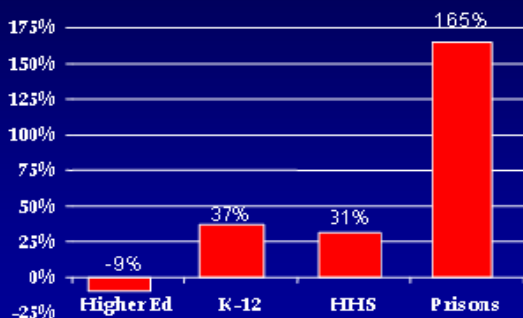
- In 2003, approximately 2.2 million students were enrolled either full-time or part-time at CCC, CSU, and UC. Since 1995, college and university enrollment grew steadily until a decline in 2003, coinciding with a 30% fee increase.
- The Governor's 2007-08 State Budget includes mandatory resident student fee increases of 10% for the CSU and 7% for UC.

### Incarceration

- In 1980, California had 12 prisons and correctional officers made approximately \$21,000 per year. By 2000, there were 33 prisons in California and correctional officers' salaries more than doubled to over \$50,000.
- The California Department of Corrections has been virtually immune from budget cuts and typically overspends its budget. From 1990 to 2002 department overspending

- California correctional officers, already the highest-paid in the nation, have been averaging pay increases of more than 10% a year. Their contract grants them better pension benefits than professors from the state university system.<sup>8</sup>
- Despite a vow from Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to cut the prison population, it has surged in recent months to more than 173,000, causing the worst overcrowding in the country. This costs taxpayers more than \$8 billion a year.<sup>9</sup>
- AB 900 will build 53,000 new prison and jail beds at an astounding cost of \$15 billion<sup>10</sup> to taxpayers, mostly for construction of new prisons, expansion of old ones and contracting with other states to incarcerate inmates who are undocumented immigrants. This is the largest single prison building project in the history of the world.<sup>11</sup> The legislative analyst projects that the population will grow by another 17,000 over the next five years.<sup>12</sup>
- In light of prison overcrowding and a health crisis inside prisons, federal judge Hon. Thelton Henderson has suggested a cap on California's prison population.
- More than 20,000 inmates are in prison because of minor parole violations, infringements that could be dealt with more efficiently through treatment or diversion programs.<sup>13</sup>
- The annual cost of incarcerating one inmate in prison is per inmate is \$34,150.<sup>14</sup> The cost per youth in California Youth Authority is \$90,000 per year. Both have a 70% recidivism rate within three years.
- With more money being devoted to prisons, the state contributes less to public universities each year. Student fees have increased dramatically to off-set the short-falls of state funding.

Growth [Decline] in General Fund Spending Per Capita on California's 4 Largest Programs, 1984-2004  
(Constant Dollars)



Source: Legislative Analyst's Office, 2004

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> *The Affordability Challenge in Public Education: Options for change.* California Postsecondary Education Commission. January, 2007.

<sup>2</sup> *When Incarceration Trumps Education: State will soon divert more funds to prison.* City on a Hill Press. 06/07/07.

<sup>3</sup> *Prison's Budget to Trump Colleges': No other big state spends as much.* San Francisco Chronicle. 05/21/07.

<sup>4</sup> *Introducing the University 2006-07.* University of California

<sup>5</sup> *Fourth Quarter 2005 Facts and Figures.* California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

<sup>6</sup> *Keeping College Affordable in California: Recommended Policy Options.* California Postsecondary Education Commission. January, 2007

<sup>7</sup> *Rampant Spending: State Prisons Hold Taxpayers Hostage.* San Diego Union-Tribune, 02/18/2004

<sup>8</sup> *California's Crisis In Prison Systems A Threat to Public.* Washington Post, 06/11/06.

<sup>9</sup> *California's Crisis In Prison Systems A Threat to Public.* Washington Post, 06/11/06.

<sup>10</sup> AB 900 will cost \$7.4 billion in construction costs using lease revenue bonds with high interest rates that will double the cost to \$15 billion.