

# Cabrillo students face new fee hike

## Trustee says Wilson budget will drive away some students

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Gov. Pete Wilson's proposal to increase community college fees from \$13 to \$20 per unit next fall will have a predictable effect on Cabrillo College.

"We're going to see another decrease in enrollment," said Cabrillo trustee David Weiss.

The fee increase is included in Wilson's proposed \$52 billion state budget. Weiss said the fee increase would further erode the fundamental idea of a community college and put a college education out of reach for many people.

"You are talking about destroying the underpinnings of education," Weiss said.

The fee increase would be the fifth in the last three years. In the fall of 1991 fees went from \$5 per unit to \$6 per unit, with the maximum fee set \$60 per semester.

Then last spring fees went from \$6 to \$10 per unit and the tuition cap was removed.

The most dramatic increase that semester was for students who already have college degrees. Their fee went from \$6 to \$50 per unit, or \$750 per semester for a full 15-unit class load.

Students were hit with another increase this past fall when fees shot up to \$13 per unit. Fees for students with degrees, however, remained the same.

The increases have had predict-

able consequences. Last spring, enrollment at Cabrillo dropped by over 12 percent and administrators blamed the fee increases for keeping many students away. Last fall, Cabrillo again saw a decline in enrollment. Figures showed enrollment fell by a little more than nine percent.

Cabrillo was not alone in experiencing a drop in enrollment last fall. A survey conducted in the fall by state chancellor's office of community colleges revealed that enrollment declined by an average of 9 percent. The report attributed the drop primarily to the student fee increase.

From the fall of 1992 to the fall of 1993, the state's 107 community colleges lost an estimated 137,000 students, the biggest decline since a 12.3 percent drop in 1978, the report said. The report estimated that more than half of the 137,000-student enrollment decline was made up of students with bachelor's degrees.

"We just can't make any more cuts or fee increases for education," Weiss said.

He said community college lobbying efforts in Sacramento will pick up the pace to fight the proposed fee increases, Weiss said.

Wilson will send his proposed budget to the Legislature, where the usual tug-of-war is expected to drag out the budget process for several weeks.