

Testimony: Jon P. Bloch 2/28/11, 8:30 PM, Room 2-C.

Good evening and thank you. First, I'd like to ask who here is a student? (Upon seeing the many hands raised.) Isn't it amazing that so many students are still here? I'd like to ask the students: How many of you want higher tuition, more crowded classes, fewer parking places, and more broken equipment? None; I thought so.

Last week, Senator Bye visited SCSU. I asked her what she saw as the purpose of higher education, and the first thing she mentioned was critical thinking skills. I was very pleased to hear this, because critical thinking is very much what we train our students to do. In fact, this evening, we have heard student after student engage in critical thinking in stating their objections to budget cuts. Besides demonstrating that they are engaged citizens (as someone has already pointed out), they have demonstrated that we have trained them to be critical thinkers. This is why what they had to say was so compelling.

At the same, I respectfully submit that the proposed budget cuts to CSU—among other things—do not demonstrate critical thinking. These proposed cuts do not signal that a multiplicity of perspectives were considered to produce a creative new synthesis. These proposed cuts simply suggest the taking out of scissors, and there is nothing new or creative in that. As another speaker pointed out, the merging of the state universities with the community colleges in Minnesota has not resulted in any savings. I would also ask why we are looking for an example to follow from a state that has a different demographic, different economic base, different tax base, and different way of funding higher education. This is just one example of the lack of critical thinking in these proposed cuts.

Earlier this evening, Trustee Doyle very articulately stated how these proposed cuts show faulty logic and reasoning, and make assumptions that are not true. I am sorry, though, that Rep. Miner is not here now, because earlier he asked Trustee Doyle if, given the urgency of addressing our 3.5 billion deficit, the CSU BOT could produce an alternate plan, or words to that effect. In AAUP we talk a great deal about shared governance. CSU faculty have Ph.D's and are extremely well qualified to offer data, research and input on how to best address the budget in terms of higher education. I hope that we can all work together to find a better solution than the cuts that have been offered. Thank you.