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## Speak Up Now for Our Students' Futures

New Pennsylvania Governor Tom Corbett will be presenting his proposal for next year's state budget on March 8. The state is facing a projected deficit of approximately \$5 billion for 2011-2012. No one knows or will say what Governor Corbett and his staff are thinking about funding for Temple and the rest of public higher education. But nearly everyone is certain that we need to brace for a serious cut. This year's state funding is about \$178 million. Will next year show a cut of 10%, 20%, 30%, or, as speculated in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 100%?

In this time of uncertainty, we as faculty and staff need to speak up for our students, our university and our profession.

We need to do what we can to convince the Governor and the members of the General Assembly of the importance of higher education to our students and the entire Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

If you haven't already done so, sign up for TALON, Temple Advocates Legislative Outreach Network (<http://www.temple.edu/government/talon.htm>). You can quickly send your opinion on our appropriation by using the TALON website, which will help you to email your elected representatives. Communicate with the state representative and state senator who represent you where you live. Email them, call them, and visit them in their home offices. Our students have already taken the lead to contact them.

Yesterday, hundreds of students from the four state-related universities (Temple, Penn State, Pitt, and Lincoln) rallied at the State Capitol in support of state funding for our institutions and for all of higher education in the state. Please grant excused absences to those from Temple who attended.

Cuts in Temple's funding from the state will hurt our students. They will be hit by larger increases in tuition, making college less affordable and less accessible. This year's tuition hike for Pennsylvania residents was 5.9%. With a serious cut in funding, next year's will undoubtedly be bigger. Cutbacks in expenditures may also lead to reductions in staffing, which could increase class sizes, decrease course offerings, and otherwise diminish programs vital to student success.

Of course, faculty and staff, too, have personal stakes in Temple's fiscal health. But our advocacy should not be for ourselves. We should place students at the center of the concerns we express. They are the future of our state and our economy. Temple and other state-related universities have a special mission to make quality education and research available to more people.

The period between now and March 8 is our best chance to influence what goes into the Governor's budget message. As I reported yesterday at the Faculty Senate meeting, I spent Monday in Harrisburg talking with staff of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees about the our funding. You don't have to travel to Harrisburg to send your message. Please sign up for TALON now and inform your state representatives and senators of what our students need.

Thanks so much.

Collegially,  
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