

# UNLV | LEGISLATIVE AND FINANCIAL PRIORITIES

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**ADD BACK \$80 MILLION**—The Governor’s proposed budget includes cuts of \$162.5 million per year for higher education. Nevada’s universities and colleges need at least \$80 million per year added back into the budget in order to maintain basic services for students. If the \$80 million is returned to the Nevada System of Higher Education, approximately \$25.3 million will be allocated to UNLV.

Currently proposed cuts would limit the number of students we serve, decimate faculty ranks, cripple our ability to retain and recruit academic talent, and reduce income from student fees and faculty-generated grants and contracts. UNLV students are already paying more for their education. Tuition and fees have risen dramatically in the last four years -- up almost 54 percent for undergraduates and 63 percent for graduate students. Tuition will likely be increased again in the next two years to fill part of the budget deficit. Other possible funding for higher education could include an extension of the taxes that are due to sunset at the end of the current biennium or other revenue sources.

**FUNDING FORMULA REFORM** — The Legislature needs to modernize the higher education funding formula for the long-term health of the university. In addition to the February 2010 legislative Letter of Intent, other adjustments need to be considered to eventually recover millions of dollars lost due to past funding formula inequities. We are proposing that an official interim legislative committee finalize proposed changes so they can be presented to the 2013 Legislature. UNLV needs to keep the dollars it generates through student fees here on campus.

Allowing the university to retain its tuition and fees – especially differential tuition for high cost programs and the significantly higher tuition and fees from nonresident students – can generate income for the university and act as an incentive to recruit high-achieving out-of-state and international students to Nevada. However, there is a limit to how much we can increase tuition for these students, who generate significant economic activity for the state. Since the most recent increase of out-of-state tuition, we are already seeing a decline in enrollment from this group of students.

**EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING** — At UNLV we understand the importance of shared sacrifice. The university has already lost more than 540 employees. Those remaining have taken on many additional responsibilities for less pay and reduced benefits. It is increasingly difficult for us to retain valuable faculty and staff who are already spread too thin. When the university needs to fill key vacancies, the erosion of health and other benefits places UNLV in a poor competitive position.

It is vitally important that we preserve the well being of our employees already hit hard by the budget crisis and pay cuts. Proposed changes to the current Public Employees Benefit Plan eviscerate already diminished health benefits, increase premiums, and raise deductibles to unacceptably high levels. The extremely high costs hit employees at the lower end of the state wage scale especially hard. Funding an adequate health insurance plan for the employees of the Nevada System of Higher Education is imperative.

Roughly two-thirds of UNLV employees are not a part of Nevada’s public retirement system (PERS). Contrary to public perception, most UNLV faculty and professional staff members are instead part of a defined contribution retirement program similar to the 401(k) programs offered by many corporations.

**GOVERNOR GUINN MILLENNIUM SCHOLARSHIP** — The Nevada System of Higher Education wants to work with the Legislature to help secure the financial future for the Governor Guinn Millennium Scholarship program. Over the past 10 years, this program has provided access to higher education for 60,000 students who might not otherwise be able to achieve their dream of going to college. It is imperative that this program continue so that the percentage of Nevada students attending college will increase.