



Ilaria Pesco

To: Jianjun Wang



Tue 2/25/2025 1

Hi Dr. Wang—

Hope that this email finds you well. Thanks so much for a wonderful article you wrote in the **Bakersfield Californian**. I appreciate so much that you shared what you did as we navigate these terrible budget cuts.

Preserve CSUB's Future with Adequate Funding

As I sit in my office, surrounded by photos of students who have transformed their lives through education, research awards that pushed the boundaries of knowledge, and mementos from community projects that changed lives, I feel both immense pride about the past and deep concern for the future of California State University, Bakersfield (CSUB).

CSUB is more than a university—it's a cornerstone of opportunity, critical thinking, and upward mobility. Since 1993, I've watched this institution grow and evolve. My three daughters are proud CSUB alumni, and I, as a professor and community advocate, am alarmed by the drastic funding cuts threatening the university mission. Over 200 class sessions have already been cut this academic year, with more reductions looming in the fall—all due to shrinking state investment in higher education!

Education isn't an assembly line. Unlike K-12 schools, universities are centers of research, mentorship, and innovation. CSUB doesn't merely prepare students to pass tests; it cultivates leaders, thinkers, and problem-solvers. Professors here don't just teach; they mentor, conduct groundbreaking research, and contribute to the community. Reducing our faculty's role to classroom hours alone guts the intellectual vitality that defines CSUB and weakens its role as Kern County's only public university.

In essence, the true impact of CSUB isn't measured in class sizes or credit hours. It resides in first-generation college students discovering their passions, research improving lives, and community partnerships strengthening our region. Budget pressures must not push us toward a superficial number-driven approach that diminishes the transformative quality of higher education. A stripped-down CSUB—where innovation is stifled, research is sidelined, and students miss out on

the mentorship that fuels their future success—will become a university in name only.

At its core, CSUB is its people—dedicated faculty, determined students, and a supportive campus community. Professors work late nights grading, spend weekends mentoring, and dedicate years to research that benefits society. Reducing their worth through arbitrary teaching quotas insults their commitment and is a disservice to a university that has served this community for over 55 years. These cuts don't just harm faculty morale—they rob students of the education they deserve, derail life-changing research, and weaken the institution that has propelled many up the socioeconomic ladder.

In summary, this is about more than budgets—it's about values. Do we believe in higher education's power to change lives? Do we value an institution that has uplifted our community for decades? If so, we must act.

I urge my fellow faculty, students, and community members to raise their voices—in Bakersfield and Sacramento. CSUB is not just a budget line. It's a beacon of opportunity, a force for change, and a home for all who believe in education's power. As Kern County grows, CSUB must receive the funding it needs to continue transforming lives for our children and grandchildren in many years ahead.

JJ Wang

Professor, CSUB

Proud Parent of CSUB Alumni

Devoted Member of the Bakersfield Community