

UC chief joins skeptics over online courses

By Sharon Bernstein, Reuters

SACRAMENTO – University of California President Janet Napolitano on Monday joined a growing chorus of higher education leaders who have expressed skepticism about the use and cost-effectiveness of courses that are offered online.

Napolitano's remarks at a Sacramento luncheon came as the 10-campus system struggles to overcome a possible \$125 million budget shortfall for next year, a gap many had hoped would be repaired over time via low-cost online course offerings that would let the state educate more students while saving money.

"There's a developing consensus that online learning is a tool for the toolbox, but it's harder than it looks and if you do it right, it doesn't save all that much money," Napolitano told about 500 policy and education experts at a speaker series sponsored by the Public Policy Institute of California.

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