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CSU Board of Trustees Meeting January 27-29, 2025

Faculty Trustee Report Darlene Yee-Melichar

The CSU Board of Trustees meets six times a year. Meetings allow for communication among the Trustees, Chancellor, campus presidents, Academic Senate, California State Student Association and Alumni Council.

The 2025-26 Meeting Schedule of the Board began on January 27-29, 2025. It started in the morning on Monday, January 27 in Closed Session for discussion about Executive Personnel Matters [Government Code §11126(a)(1)]; Pending Litigation [Government Code §11126(e)(1)]; and Anticipated Litigation. The Board then met on Tuesday, January 28 at 7:30am - 9:10am in Closed Session for discussion about Honorary Degrees [Government Code §11126(c)(5)] and Collective Bargaining [Government Code §3596(d)]. It met the rest of the day and on Wednesday, January 29 in Open Session for public comments, information items and action items.

The Board's full agenda and background materials (203 pages) for the November 2024 meeting are available at <https://www.calstate.edu/csu-system/board-of-trustees/past-meetings/2025/Documents/Jan-27-29-2025-full-binder.pdf>. The Board meetings are broadcast live to the public; you may access the live stream videos on YouTube associated with Open Session at <https://www.calstate.edu/csu-system/board-of-trustees/past-meetings/2025/Pages/January-28-29-2025.aspx>.

For the full Board and committee meetings held in Open Session, I provide links to the specific meeting materials and videos; brief summaries using ChatGPT with technical assistance provided by [SF State Academic Technology](#) and in concurrence with my personal meeting notes; and share my brief queries or requests for feedback below for your consideration. If you have any comments, corrections, and/or questions regarding my Faculty Trustee Report, please let me know (dyee@calstate.edu). I look forward to hearing from you; **thank you**.

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January 27-29, 2025 (Full Agenda)

On January 27-29, 2025, the meeting of the CSU Board of Trustees was held at the Chancellor's Office in Long Beach.

On Monday, January 27, at 11:00 a.m., the Board convened in Closed Session to discuss Executive Personnel Matters [Government Code §11126(a)(1)]; Pending Litigation [Vakilzadeh v. CSU (Class Action)]; Weber, et al. v. CSU; Wilson v. CSU]; and Anticipated Litigation.

On Tuesday, January 28, at 7:30am - 9:20am, the Board met in Closed Session to discuss Honorary Degrees [Government Code §11126(c)(5)] and Collective Bargaining [Government Code §3596(d)]. Note: According to California Education Code § 66602 (c2), the Faculty Trustee "shall not participate on any subcommittee of the board responsible for collective bargaining negotiations." In my role as Faculty Trustee, I am not party to this latter discussion.

On Tuesday, January 28, at 9:30am - Wednesday, January 29, the Board met the rest of the meeting in Open Session for public comments, information items and action items.

401 Golden Shore
Long Beach, California
90802-4210

Tuesday, January 28, 2025

9:20 a.m. – Plenary Session (Day 1)

Read Material: [Agenda](#)

Watch Video: [Public Comments](#)

CSU Board of Trustees Chair Jack B. Clarke, Jr. welcomed attendees and emphasized the Board's dedication to fostering an environment for open dialogue and diverse perspectives. He acknowledged the importance of public participation in informing the Board's decision-making process and ensuring transparency.

The Public Comment Session highlighted significant issues raised by students, faculty, staff and community members. In the interest of giving voice to *all* comments and perspectives shared during this unusually long plenary session, I urge you to watch the two-hour video in its entirety.

Tuesday, January 28, 2025

11:30 a.m. – Board of Trustees Plenary Session (Day 1)

Read Materials: [Agenda](#) | [SOVA Presentation](#) | [Stakeholder Engagement Update](#)

Watch Video: [Plenary Session – Day 1](#)

CSU Board of Trustees (BOT) Chair Jack B. Clarke, Jr. opened the session by acknowledging the devastating wildfires in Los Angeles County, expressing condolences to those affected, including members of the CSU community. He called for a moment of silence to honor those impacted and recognized the first responders for their dedication. He noted that Chancellor Mildred García would later address CSU's role in recovery efforts. He also acknowledged the transition of leadership at CSU Long Beach, as President Jane Close Conoley announced her retirement at the end of the spring semester. The national search for her successor was announced, with an open forum at CSU Long Beach scheduled for February 19, 2025, and a final appointment expected at the July Board meeting.

Chancellor García's recent election to the board of the National Association of Higher Education System Heads was recognized as a significant opportunity for CSU to contribute to national policy discussions. Chair Clarke announced the nominations for the Committee on Committees for 2025-2026, including Vice Chair Arambula, Trustee McGrory, Trustee Adamson, and Trustee Ghilarducci, with final board approval expected at the March meeting.

The governor's proposed budget, which includes reductions in CSU funding, was addressed as a primary concern. Chair Clarke reaffirmed the Board's commitment to advocating against these cuts, aligning with the Chancellor's Office in pushing for sustained investment in CSU. He emphasized that financial stability remains a top priority, especially as the system works to support student success. He also highlighted the critical role of philanthropy in sustaining CSU's mission, citing Trustee Wenda Fong and her husband's \$125,000 endowment, which will permanently fund a \$7,000 annual scholarship for the CSU Trustees' Award for Outstanding Achievement.

The session featured two student success spotlights. The first, from Fresno State, showcased an advanced dairy processing course in which students collaborate with business students to develop new dairy products. The second, from Chico State, highlighted the story of [Cyanna Iñiguez](#), an

engineering student from a rural background who overcame significant challenges to succeed in her field.

Academic Senate CSU (ASCSU) Chair Elizabeth (Betsy) Boyd provided an update on ASCSU's activities, emphasizing concerns over faculty governance and the budget outlook. She noted that recent leadership decisions at Sonoma State had raised issues regarding shared governance and faculty participation in decision-making processes. ASCSU has been actively advocating for increased transparency and collaboration between campus leaders and faculty. A legislative update was presented, detailing ASCSU's tracking of key bills affecting CSU, particularly those concerning student financial aid and faculty compensation. Additionally, the ASCSU Executive Committee is preparing a constitutional amendment to add three dedicated lecturer seats to the Senate, a measure aimed at improving representation.

California State Student Association (CSSA) President Iese Esera spoke about CSSA's continued efforts to advocate for student priorities in light of the budget challenges. He expressed solidarity with students affected by the wildfires and raised concerns over recent executive actions at the federal level impacting undocumented students. CSSA has prioritized outreach efforts to ensure students have access to resources and support during these uncertain times. He provided an overview of CSSA's recent plenary session at San Francisco State, where discussions focused on student housing affordability, textbook costs, and student mental health. He reiterated CSSA's strong stance against the governor's proposed budget cuts, arguing that such reductions would have long-term consequences for students and the broader CSU community. CSSA also took positions in favor of two pending legislative proposals that address cost-of-attendance calculations and affordable student housing.

President Esera also addressed recent controversies at Sonoma State, criticizing the campus leadership for failing to engage students in major decision-making processes. He called on the Board and campus administrators to uphold shared governance and transparency, stressing that students must be involved in decisions that directly affect them.

CSU Alumni Council President John Poli spoke about ongoing alumni engagement initiatives, highlighting successful mentorship programs that have helped connect alumni with current students. He noted that CSU's alumni network continues to play a vital role in public service and civic engagement. He referenced the recent election of [Jose Solache](#), a CSU Dominguez Hills graduate, to the California State Assembly, as an example of the lasting impact CSU has on leadership and community service.

Chancellor Mildred García provided an update on systemwide initiatives, reflecting on the continued progress of Graduation Initiative 2025. While noting improvements in four-year graduation rates, she acknowledged the need for additional efforts to close persistent equity gaps. She announced that Cal Poly San Luis Obispo has reached eligibility as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI), marking a significant milestone for the university. She also outlined CSU's new partnership with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which will expand career opportunities for students pursuing healthcare professions. Addressing concerns about the state budget, she reaffirmed the Chancellor's Office's commitment to advocating for full CSU funding and mitigating potential negative impacts on students and faculty.

Chancellor García continued the session by addressing the ongoing wildfires in Los Angeles County, commending CSU campuses across the system for stepping up to support affected students, faculty, and staff. She emphasized CSU's role as a vital resource during crises and reiterated the university system's commitment to aiding recovery efforts.

She then turned to the governor's proposed budget for the 2025-26 fiscal year, which includes a 7.95% cut to CSU's state funding, amounting to a reduction of \$375 million. This cut translates to a 5% decrease in operating budgets across the system, including a \$16.5 million reduction for the Chancellor's Office. She expressed deep disappointment in the proposal, stressing that the CSU is not an expense but an investment in the state's economic and social future. The governor has reiterated his commitment to the multi-year compact agreement made in 2022, but his proposal defers funding increases until 2027-28 while still requiring CSU to expand undergraduate enrollment by 3,500 students despite the budget cut.

Chancellor García warned that the scale of the proposed reduction would have stark consequences, including potential layoffs, delayed graduation timelines, and broader negative impacts on the state's workforce. She underscored that one in ten California employees holds a CSU degree and that the system produces over 125,000 graduates annually in critical fields such as education, healthcare, business, and engineering. She urged trustees and stakeholders to advocate against the cuts and to push for the restoration of compact funding.

Despite these financial challenges, Chancellor García affirmed that CSU would not abandon its mission. She highlighted ongoing initiatives that demonstrate the system's resilience, innovation, and commitment to student success. Among these efforts is CSU's emerging artificial intelligence strategy, which aims to enhance student learning and faculty research while ensuring academic integrity. In collaboration with OpenAI and other major industry partners, CSU is set to provide students, faculty, and staff with access to AI tools and training at an unprecedented scale. She noted that no other university system, nationally or internationally, is undertaking such a comprehensive AI initiative.

Chancellor García also introduced the newly established CSU Consortium on Climate Adaptation, spearheaded by Cal Poly Humboldt President Tom Jackson. This initiative will position CSU as a national leader in undergraduate research and applied learning related to climate change. The consortium will foster partnerships between CSU campuses, local communities, and state agencies to develop practical solutions for climate resilience and sustainability.

Chancellor García provided an update on CSU's capital funding efforts, which have become increasingly urgent given the governor's budget proposal. Tomorrow's presentation to the Board will include a deep dive into alternative funding sources for academic projects, infrastructure renewal, and campus modernization efforts. She also revisited CSU's direct admission pilot program, launched last fall in partnership with the Riverside County Office of Education and California's Cradle-to-Career Data System. This program automatically admits eligible high school students from Riverside County to 10 participating CSU campuses without requiring them to initiate an application. As a result of the program, first-time freshman applications from Riverside County have increased by 21%, representing an additional 2,732 students.

Before concluding, Chancellor García congratulated several CSU campuses and leaders for recent achievements. San José State University was recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as

one of three top-performing bachelor's degree-granting institutions in the country for its work in improving graduation rates and closing equity gaps. Cal State San Marcos President Ellen Neufeldt was named the recipient of the 2025 NASPA President's Award for her commitment to student success and engagement. She also thanked Trustee Fong and her husband Daniel Fetterly for their generous gift, which will permanently endow a CSU Trustees' Award for Outstanding Achievement scholarship.

Following Chancellor García's report, **Dr. Alison Kadlec** from SOVA provided an update on CSU's systemwide strategic planning process. She outlined the transition from Phase One, which focused on gathering stakeholder input, to Phase Two, which involves refining strategic themes and priorities. The planning team has engaged over 2,000 stakeholders through town halls, listening sessions, and online submissions. Key themes emerging from the process include learner experiences, financial stability, learning innovations, systemwide collaboration, and CSU's identity and reputation.

Dr. Kadlec emphasized that CSU's identity as a system lacks a clear and unified national reputation. While individual campuses have strong local brands, the system as a whole has struggled to project a compelling narrative. She noted that CSU has a unique opportunity to position itself as a national leader in accessible, high-quality education.

California State Student Association (CSSA) **President Iese Esera**, a member of the strategic planning steering committee, spoke about the need to elevate CSU's reputation. He reflected on his personal experience choosing between elite institutions such as Dartmouth and Northwestern before ultimately deciding to attend San Francisco State University (SF State). While SF State offered superior academic opportunities and an inclusive environment, he acknowledged that the prestige associated with elite institutions still weighed on his decision. He argued that CSU must lean into its strengths—academic excellence, equity, and affordability—while actively shaping public perception of its value.

Dr. Kadlec concluded by reaffirming that the strategic planning process remains iterative and responsive to feedback. She encouraged trustees and stakeholders to continue engaging with the process and helping to define CSU's long-term vision.

Chair Clarke thanked Chancellor García, Dr. Kadlec, and President Esera for their presentations and praised the ongoing strategic planning efforts. Given the time constraints, he suggested that board members submit any follow-up questions in writing for discussion at a future meeting. The session adjourned for lunch at 1:00 p.m., with plans to reconvene at 1:40 p.m.

Tuesday, January 28, 2025

1:30 p.m. – Committee on Organization and Rules

Read Material: [Agenda](#)

Watch Video: [Committee on Organization and Rules](#)

The Committee on Organization and Rules, chaired by Trustee Firstenberg, convened to address the items on the consent agenda. The committee considered the approval of the minutes from the November 21, 2024, meeting and the proposed Board of Trustees' meeting dates for 2026. AVC and Chief of Staff Michelle Kiss presented the proposed meeting schedule, which was

structured to avoid conflicts with systemwide commencement ceremonies in May and the University of California Regents' meeting in November, ensuring coordination with federal holidays and national elections.

No trustees requested to remove any items from the consent agenda for separate discussion. With no objections, the committee unanimously approved the consent agenda, concluding its business efficiently. Trustee Firstenberg thanked the committee members for their diligence before adjourning the session.

Tuesday, January 28, 2025

1:35 p.m. – Committee on Audit

Read Material: [Agenda](#)

Watch Video: [Committee on Audit](#)

The Committee on Audit was called to order by Chair Kimbell. Before proceeding with the agenda, Chair Clarke acknowledged Trustee Kimbell's service as she prepares to step down from the Board next month. He expressed gratitude for her nearly 11 years of dedication, describing her as a steady and invaluable presence on the Board. He noted that a formal recognition of her contributions would take place at a future meeting but wanted to take a moment to commend her efforts. The acknowledgment was met with applause from those in attendance.

With that, Trustee Kimbell officially convened the committee and moved directly to the consent agenda. She asked if any committee member wished to remove an item for separate discussion. Hearing no objections, the consent agenda, which included the approval of the minutes from the November 21, 2024, meeting and a status report on Audit and Advisory Services activities, was approved without discussion.

With no further business, Trustee Kimbell adjourned the meeting, and Chair Clarke thanked her for her leadership.

Tuesday, January 28, 2025

1:40 p.m. – Joint Committee on Educational Policy and Finance

Read Materials: [Agenda](#) | [AI Strategy Handout](#)

Watch Video: [Joint Committee on Educational Policy and Finance](#)

The Joint Committee on Educational Policy and Finance convened under the leadership of Vice Chair Arambula, who called the meeting to order and proceeded with the consent agenda. The minutes from the November 2024 meeting were approved without objection. The only item on the discussion agenda was an informational presentation on the CSU Artificial Intelligence (AI) Strategy, an initiative designed to position CSU as a leader in AI integration across academics, workforce preparation, and institutional operations.

EVC and Chief Financial Officer Steve Relyea introduced the presentation, outlining the systemwide AI strategy that aims to equip students, faculty, and staff with cutting-edge tools while fostering partnerships with industry leaders and the state government. He emphasized the

importance of leveraging CSU's scale to ensure equitable access to AI resources, incentivizing innovation, and aligning AI education with workforce demands.

DVC and Chief Academic Officer Nathan Evans provided an overview of the CSU Generative AI Committee, which was established in early 2024 and met regularly to develop the foundation for CSU's AI initiatives. The committee's findings and recommendations were incorporated into the proposed strategy. CIO Ed Clark then gave an overview of AI's rapid technological advancements, comparing the current AI landscape to the early days of the internet. He noted that while the market is constantly evolving, CSU must focus on long-term strategic outcomes rather than reacting to short-term industry trends.

CIO Clark outlined three core elements of the AI strategy: the AI Workforce Acceleration Board, the AI Commons Hub, and AI Educational Innovations. The AI Workforce Acceleration Board will bring together representatives from CSU, the state government, and industry leaders such as Microsoft, Adobe, AWS, Google, Meta, OpenAI, and Nvidia to identify AI workforce needs and develop targeted training initiatives. This board will also organize AI challenges for CSU students, providing opportunities for hands-on learning and career development.

The AI Commons Hub will serve as a systemwide platform providing equitable access to AI tools, training, and development resources for all CSU students, faculty, and staff. CIO Clark announced that CSU has finalized agreements that will allow members of the CSU community to access AI-powered tools free of charge, ensuring that every student—regardless of their campus or major—has the opportunity to develop AI-related skills. He emphasized that the hub will also host AI models and scripts developed by CSU institutions and provide a collaborative space for faculty to integrate AI into their research and curriculum.

The AI Educational Innovations initiative will support faculty in adopting AI technology in teaching and research. This effort includes faculty training, professional development, and incentives for instructors who create innovative AI-driven learning experiences. CIO Clark acknowledged concerns about academic integrity and privacy, assuring trustees that CSU is committed to developing AI policies that align with ethical guidelines and protect student data.

Two external partners, [Amy Tong](#), Secretary of the Government Operations Agency, and [Stewart Knox](#), Secretary of the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency, joined the discussion to highlight how CSU's AI strategy aligns with the state's workforce priorities. Secretary Tong provided an overview of Governor Newsom's 2023 AI executive order, which set the framework for AI adoption across California's public sector. She described several state-led AI pilot projects focused on transportation, public safety, and language accessibility, emphasizing the importance of developing an AI-ready workforce. Secretary Knox reinforced the state's commitment to workforce training and praised CSU for taking a proactive role in preparing students for AI-driven industries. He stressed that CSU's approach—centering AI literacy as a workforce development issue rather than just a technological shift—would ensure that California remains competitive in the AI economy.

Trustees responded enthusiastically to the presentation, recognizing the initiative as a bold step toward ensuring CSU's leadership in AI education. Trustee Firstenberg described the strategy as an example of CSU's ability to innovate at a systemwide level, calling it one of the most exciting developments she had seen in her time on the Board.

Trustee Kimbell raised concerns about potential resistance from labor unions, asking whether CSU had engaged faculty and staff to address concerns about job displacement. EVC Relyea and DVC Evans assured her that faculty and employee representatives were involved in the Generative AI Committee and would continue to play a role in shaping AI policies.

Trustee Yee-Melichar asked about the timeline for implementation and how CSU would measure success. EVC Relyea responded that major elements of the strategy, including AI tool access and the AI Commons Hub, were already being rolled out and that measurable outcomes, such as student engagement, workforce placement, and faculty participation, would be tracked over time.

Trustee Lopez emphasized the importance of using CSU's data to influence AI development, arguing that higher education models often prioritize elite institutions over more representative systems like CSU. She encouraged administrators to leverage CSU's diverse student body to inform ethical AI practices.

Trustee Rodriguez questioned why alumni were not included in the AI Commons Hub, suggesting that recent graduates would benefit from continued access to AI training. DVC Evans acknowledged this as an area for potential expansion but noted that the immediate priority was ensuring equitable access for current students, faculty, and staff.

Vice Chair Arambula concluded the meeting by thanking the presenters and external partners for their contributions. He highlighted the significance of the AI strategy in preparing CSU graduates for the evolving workforce and reiterated that trustees would continue monitoring its progress. The meeting adjourned on schedule.

Tuesday, January 28, 2025

2:30 p.m. – Committee on Institutional Advancement

Read Materials: [Agenda](#) | [Donor Support Handout](#)

Watch Video: [Committee on Institutional Advancement](#)

The Committee on Institutional Advancement convened under the leadership of Vice Chair Firstenberg. The meeting began with the approval of the minutes from the November 2024 session, which passed without objection. The committee then considered two action items: the naming of a new facility at San Diego State University and the approval of the 2023-24 CSU Report on Donor Support.

VC for External Relations and Communications Greg Saks, along with San Diego State University President Adela de la Torre, presented a request to name the Duran Sciences Building at SDSU in recognition of a \$20 million gift from philanthropist Jessica Sarowitz. President de la Torre described Sarowitz's long-standing support for SDSU and her commitment to equity in education. Jessica Sarowitz, a Latinx woman and the daughter of immigrants, made the donation in honor of her parents, Anda and Ellie Duran. The new facility will serve as a cornerstone of SDSU's STEM Forward Initiative, providing cutting-edge laboratories, research space, and collaborative environments for students, faculty, and industry partners.

Trustees unanimously approved the naming request. Chancellor García, along with other Board members, expressed deep appreciation for Jessica Sarowitz's generosity, recognizing her broader philanthropic efforts in racial and gender equity, multicultural arts, and social impact funding. As Jessica Sarowitz was unable to attend the meeting in person, Megan McKenna, director of private giving at 4S Bay Partners, spoke on her behalf, emphasizing the donor's commitment to supporting diverse student populations and expanding opportunities in STEM education.

The committee then turned to the 2023-24 CSU Report on Donor Support, an annual report required by the California Education Code. VC Saks, along with AVC for Systemwide Advancement Melissa Watkins and CSU San Marcos President Ellen Neufeldt, outlined the CSU's record-breaking year in fundraising. The CSU secured \$626 million in gift commitments and \$448 million in gift receipts, an 8% increase from the previous fiscal year. AVC Watkins highlighted that 99% of these contributions were donor-restricted, reflecting the targeted interests of benefactors. She noted that only \$4.7 million was classified as unrestricted funding, reinforcing the trend that donors prefer to direct their gifts toward specific programs, scholarships, or infrastructure projects.

CSU's philanthropic success was compared to national trends, showing that while higher education donations increased by only 1.8% nationwide, CSU's year-over-year growth far outpaced that figure. The CSU's systemwide endowment value also reached an all-time high of \$2.8 billion, a 47% increase over the past five years, with \$87 million in new contributions added in 2023-24. The report noted that CSU fundraising efforts continue to outperform peer institutions, including the State University of New York (SUNY) system.

To illustrate the transformative impact of donor contributions, President Neufeldt presented CSU San Marcos's Scholars in Wellness and Innovation Fast Track (SWIFT) Health Programs, a workforce development initiative designed to address the growing shortage of mental and behavioral health professionals in California. The program allows high school students to earn college credits through dual enrollment, accelerating their path toward a degree. It also offers paid summer internships and certification opportunities, ensuring that graduates enter the workforce with practical experience.

President Neufeldt credited the success of the program to two historic philanthropic gifts: a \$10 million grant from Price Philanthropies and a \$10 million unrestricted matching gift from Daniel and Phyllis Epstein. These contributions represent the largest donations in CSU San Marcos's history and have significantly enhanced the university's ability to train healthcare professionals.

SWIFT participant Karina Dominguez, a high school senior, addressed the Board to share how the program has shaped her academic journey. She described overcoming personal challenges, being inspired by her sister—a CSU graduate—and developing a passion for healthcare. She credited SWIFT with providing her the confidence and support to pursue a career as a hematologist. Trustees praised Karina Dominguez's story as a testament to the power of philanthropy in creating opportunities for students.

Trustee discussions centered on the long-term sustainability of fundraising efforts and the disparities in donor contributions across campuses. Trustee Fong emphasized the need for continued investment in advancement staff to support fundraising growth, while Vice Chair Arambula pointed out that philanthropic dollars are often concentrated at campuses with wealthier alumni bases. He also stressed that philanthropy cannot replace state funding, a

sentiment echoed by VC Saks, who explained that donor contributions are primarily designated for specific initiatives and cannot be redirected toward general campus operations.

Trustee McGrory highlighted the importance of building strong advancement teams and university foundations, citing San Diego State's success in securing major gifts after making a strategic investment in development staffing. He suggested that CSU set an ambitious goal of raising \$1 billion annually in private support. The committee unanimously approved the 2023-24 CSU Report on Donor Support, authorizing its submission to the California Joint Legislative Budget Committee and the Department of Finance.

Chair Firstenberg concluded the session by commending CSU's growing culture of philanthropy and the collective efforts of university leaders in fostering donor engagement. The meeting adjourned on schedule.

Tuesday, January 28, 2025

4:00 p.m. – Joint Committee on Institutional Advancement and Educational Policy

Read Materials: [Agenda](#)

Watch Video: [Joint Committee on Institutional Advancement and Educational Policy](#)

The Joint Committee on Institutional Advancement and Educational Policy convened under the leadership of Vice Chair Arambula, who called the meeting to order. The first item on the agenda was the approval of the minutes from the January 2024 meeting, which was approved without objection.

The primary focus of the session was the [2025 Wang Family Excellence Awards](#), an annual recognition of CSU faculty and staff for their exemplary service, teaching, scholarship, and contributions to student success. Chair Clarke introduced the award presentation, describing the history and impact of the awards, which were established by Trustee Emeritus Stanley T. Wang in 1998 with a \$1 million gift to honor faculty and staff excellence. He noted that the program was later endowed in perpetuity with a \$2.5 million contribution from Trustee Wang and his family in 2017, bringing their total support to \$3.8 million. Chair Clarke emphasized that the awards highlight the extraordinary talent and dedication of CSU's faculty and staff, reinforcing the system's commitment to excellence.

Chancellor García presented the 2025 award recipients, recognizing four faculty members and one staff member for their outstanding achievements. Each honoree received a \$20,000 award, acknowledging their contributions to the CSU community.

The Outstanding Faculty Scholarship Award was presented to Dr. Gisela Bichler of Cal State San Bernardino, a professor of Criminal Justice and co-founder of the Center for Criminal Justice Research. Dr. Bichler was recognized for her leadership in crime analysis, situational crime prevention, and social network analysis. Her research has been cited nearly 2,000 times, and she has given over 100 presentations worldwide. She has secured over \$4.5 million in external funding, including grants from the National Science Foundation and the U.S. Department of Justice. In her remarks, she emphasized the importance of multidisciplinary collaboration in crime prevention research and thanked her colleagues, students, and research partners for their support.

The Outstanding Faculty Service Award went to Dr. Rashida M. Crutchfield of Cal State Long Beach, a professor in the School of Social Work and a national leader in basic needs research. Dr. Crutchfield has played a pivotal role in CSU's basic needs movement, advocating for policies and programs that support food and housing security for students. She helped establish the CSU Basic Needs Research Consortium, which has guided policy changes across the system. She also founded the Center for Equitable Higher Education, which amplifies student voices in shaping basic needs initiatives. In her remarks, she highlighted the ongoing challenges students face and called on CSU leaders to remain committed to ensuring students have access to essential resources.

The Outstanding Faculty Teaching Award was presented to Dr. Nanda Ganesan of Cal State Los Angeles, a professor in the Department of Information Systems. Dr. Ganesan has modernized CSU's information systems curriculum, introducing new specializations in cybersecurity, data analytics, and software development. He led the creation of the Master's in Information Systems program and established two computer labs to enhance student learning. His course redesign efforts have been recognized with Quality Matters certification, a distinction awarded for excellence in online education. In his acceptance speech, Dr. Ganesan expressed his gratitude for CSU's commitment to innovation and faculty support, urging trustees to continue investing in AI and emerging technologies to keep students competitive in the workforce.

The Outstanding Faculty Innovator in Student Success Award was awarded to Dr. Kimberly Stillmaker of Fresno State, an associate professor of Civil Engineering. Dr. Stillmaker directs the Lyles College of Engineering's Foundations for Success program, which focuses on improving retention rates for first-year and sophomore engineering students, particularly those from underrepresented backgrounds. She developed a new first-year engineering course, implemented block scheduling, and created a pre-engineering major to provide students with a clear roadmap to graduation. These efforts have led to a dramatic increase in retention rates. In her remarks, she highlighted the negative impact of state budget cuts on course offerings, warning that reductions in available classes were creating barriers to student success. She urged the Board of Trustees and the Chancellor's Office to push back against the governor's proposed budget cuts.

The Outstanding Staff Performance Award was presented to Dr. Freddie Sánchez of Cal State Northridge, the Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs for Equity and Inclusion. Dr. Sánchez has led numerous initiatives to expand support for historically underserved students, including the Pride Center, Veterans Resource Center, and Undocumented Students Center. He co-led the research study that shaped CSU's identity-based resource centers, ensuring student voices guided the development of new services. He has also been instrumental in CSUN's successful application for the Seal of Excelencia, a designation recognizing institutions committed to Latino student success. In his acceptance speech, Dr. Sánchez reflected on his own experience as a first-generation college student, emphasizing that his work is deeply personal. He credited his mentors, colleagues, and students for inspiring him to create a more inclusive and supportive campus environment.

Trustees expressed their admiration for the awardees and the broader faculty and staff community. Trustee Firstenberg described the recipients as representing the best of the CSU, emphasizing that their dedication to student success and academic excellence elevates the system as a whole. Trustee Gilbert-Lurie acknowledged that selecting only five honorees was a challenge, as the quality of nominees across the system was extraordinary. Trustee Adamson

commended the faculty for their efforts to modernize curriculum and integrate emerging technologies, encouraging further investment in AI education.

Chancellor García closed the session by congratulating the honorees and recognizing Trustee Emeritus Stanley T. Wang and his family for their enduring commitment to CSU faculty and staff. She emphasized that the excellence of CSU's educators and administrators is central to the university's mission and thanked all nominees for their contributions to student success. With no further business, Vice Chair Arambula adjourned the meeting.

Wednesday, January 29, 2025

8:30 a.m. – Committee on Educational Policy

Read Materials: [Agenda](#) | [Amendment to ASCSU Constitution](#) | [Year of Engagement](#) | [Research, Scholarship & Creative Activity](#)

Watch Video: [Committee on Educational Policy](#)

The Committee on Educational Policy, chaired by Vice Chair Arambula, convened to discuss several key initiatives, beginning with a proposed amendment to the Constitution of the Academic Senate of the California State University (ASCSU), followed by an update on the CSU's Year of Engagement and a discussion on Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity (RSCA) across the system.

The first item on the agenda, introduced by DVC Nathan Evans, proposed amending the ASCSU Constitution to add three designated lecturer faculty positions. Dr. Elizabeth Boyd, Chair of the ASCSU, and Vice Chair Adam Swenson joined DVC Evans in presenting the proposed amendment, which aims to improve faculty governance inclusivity. Chair Boyd emphasized that lecturer faculty make up the majority of CSU's teaching workforce and have a critical role in student success, particularly in lower-division courses and general education programs. The amendment, ratified by CSU faculty across campuses, establishes an election process in which each campus annually selects a lecturer faculty member to participate in a systemwide lecturer electorate, which then elects three lecturers to serve as ASCSU senators.

Trustees Kimbell and Fong inquired about potential budgetary implications of adding these positions, prompting DVC Evans to clarify that the lecturer faculty roles would be funded through the existing ASCSU budget without an increase in systemwide expenditures. Trustee Gilbert-Lurie expressed appreciation for the amendment's emphasis on faculty diversity, noting that lecturers are often more racially diverse than tenure-line faculty and their inclusion would enhance representation within ASCSU discussions. Trustee Yee-Melichar stressed the importance of empirical data and data collection on faculty demographics and expressed hope that this amendment would help address disparities in faculty governance participation. Following trustee discussion, the proposed amendment will return as an action item pending final review.

The second major discussion focused on the CSU's Year of Engagement initiative, a systemwide effort to redefine student success and develop a framework that will shape future student support programs, institutional policies, and outcome tracking. DVC Dilcie Perez, presenting remotely, outlined the progress made since the November meeting, highlighting five lessons learned from stakeholder engagement:

1. Redefining student success beyond graduation to include career readiness and post-degree opportunities.
2. Leveraging the CSU's size to act as a collective in tackling challenges.
3. Prioritizing teaching and learning as a key driver of student success rather than focusing exclusively on structural interventions.
4. Improving the use of data to inform decision-making and address student barriers in real time.
5. Increasing accessibility to student support services, as data showed that while many students are aware of available resources, they are not actively using them.

The presentation included findings from a survey of more than one million students, faculty, staff, and alumni, which revealed that financial concerns, course availability, and administrative barriers remain top challenges for students. Notably, 39% of students reported considering reducing their course loads due to financial pressures, while only 35% believed their university had successfully reduced administrative hurdles. Trustees engaged in a discussion about how the CSU could address affordability concerns, with Trustee Kimbell questioning whether financial aid awareness efforts were effectively reaching students. Trustee Rodriguez emphasized the cultural barriers surrounding mental health support and advocated for culturally responsive outreach strategies to improve student utilization of services.

Trustee Lopez underscored the need for a comprehensive metrics system to track the CSU's progress in student success outcomes, suggesting that the CSU define a set of core indicators that both campuses and the Board could use to monitor improvements. Trustee Faigin concurred, stating that qualitative and quantitative data should be combined to provide a more holistic view of student challenges and institutional effectiveness.

The discussion then turned to Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity (RSCA) at the CSU, led by AVC for Research Ganesh Raman. AVC Raman reported that CSU's externally funded research expenditures reached \$812 million in 2022-23, a \$104 million increase from the previous year, with 63% of funding coming from federal sources. He noted that seven CSU campuses have maintained their Carnegie R2 research classifications, highlighting the system's growing impact in producing high-quality research with real-world applications.

The session featured a presentation by Heather Middleton, a junior at Cal State San Bernardino, who described how her participation in cybersecurity research led to securing a prestigious internship at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. She emphasized that hands-on research opportunities had provided her with mentorship and career development that traditional coursework alone could not. CSUSB President Tomás Morales then elaborated on CSUSB's role as a national leader in cybersecurity education, detailing partnerships with federal agencies, the expansion of cybersecurity programs, and workforce training initiatives that directly support California's digital infrastructure and security needs.

Trustees praised the presentation, with Trustee Steinhauser emphasizing that workforce-aligned research programs should be expanded across CSU campuses to prepare students for emerging fields like AI, sustainability, and cybersecurity. Trustee Fong questioned whether the recent changes in federal funding priorities might impact CSU's ability to secure research grants,

prompting AVC Raman to acknowledge that while certain funding streams are at risk, CSU remains well-positioned to compete for grants in STEM, climate adaptation, and healthcare research.

Chancellor García concluded the meeting by reiterating that student success, faculty development, and research excellence must be integrated into the CSU's broader strategic vision, emphasizing that the initiatives discussed in the meeting directly support the university system's mission to serve California's diverse student population. With no further questions, Vice Chair Arambula adjourned the meeting.

Wednesday, January 29, 2025

10:25 a.m. – Committee on Finance

Read Materials: [Agenda](#) | [2025-2026 Operating Budget Handout](#)

Watch Video: [Committee on Finance](#)

The Committee on Finance, chaired by Trustee Lopez, convened to discuss the 2025-26 Operating Budget Update, a critical issue given the Governor's proposed budget cuts and deferral of previously committed funding. Trustee Lopez began the discussion by acknowledging the severity of the financial situation and emphasizing the need for a unified response from the CSU community. She stated that while the Governor has expressed a long-term commitment to the CSU through the compact agreement, the current budget proposal defers that commitment, leaving the university system with a precarious financial outlook. She stressed that the proposed ongoing 7.95% reduction in state funding, totaling \$375 million, would have devastating consequences, particularly as CSU is already grappling with rising fixed costs, unfunded mandates, and a decline in available reserves.

EVC and CFO Relyea and AVC for Budget Planning and Advocacy Ryan Storm provided an overview of the Governor's budget proposal and the projected multi-year state budget deficits. AVC Storm explained that while state revenues had slightly improved, the budget still relies heavily on rainy-day reserves and faces operational deficits through at least 2028-29. He warned that the state's ability to restore funding in the future is uncertain, particularly given additional pressures from wildfires and potential federal policy changes affecting California's financial stability.

AVC Storm outlined that the Governor's budget proposal includes deferring \$252 million in compact funding until at least 2027-28 and imposing a \$375 million ongoing budget cut beginning in 2025-26. He stressed that the state's current structural deficit raises serious doubts about whether the deferred payments will ever materialize, putting CSU's long-term sustainability at risk.

The financial challenges facing CSU were further exacerbated by rising fixed costs, which have outpaced revenue growth. AVC Storm explained that employee healthcare costs alone have increased by \$129 million over two years, with another \$60 million in increases expected next year. Other rising expenses include utilities, insurance premiums, and deferred maintenance costs, all of which have forced campuses to make difficult trade-offs.

AVC Storm also detailed the impact of ongoing budget reductions on CSU's course offerings and workforce. Since Fall 2023, seven universities have eliminated a total of 1,430 course sections, reducing access to critical classes and increasing time-to-degree for students. Additionally, 136

degree programs have been suspended or discontinued systemwide, while 823 employee positions were eliminated between Fall 2023 and Fall 2024. He warned that further cuts would only deepen these challenges, reducing student access to essential services and increasing faculty workload.

The discussion then turned to the campus-level impact of the budget shortfall, with three university presidents—Lynn Mahoney (San Francisco State), Emily Cutrer (Sonoma State), and Vanya Quiñones (CSU Monterey Bay)—providing firsthand accounts of how their institutions are already struggling under the financial strain.

President Mahoney of San Francisco State detailed the severe budget reductions her campus has implemented over the past three years, including:

- A 7% reduction in full-time equivalent (FTE) positions in 2023-24
- A 19% decrease in course sections since 2022, leading to enrollment bottlenecks
- Elimination of a vice presidential cabinet position
- Postponement of critical capital and maintenance projects
- A faculty-driven Institutional Review Committee evaluating further program cuts

President Mahoney explained that despite these efforts, San Francisco State still faces a \$45 million budget deficit next year. She highlighted the significant loss of lecturer faculty positions, many of whom had been with the university for decades, and noted the emotional toll on students who have lost valued professors and mentors.

Interim President Emily Cutrer of Sonoma State provided a stark example of how declining enrollment and budget constraints have already forced painful decisions. She noted that Sonoma State's enrollment has dropped by 38% since 2015, leaving the university in a financially unsustainable position. To address a projected \$24 million deficit for 2025-26, the university has:

- Eliminated 23 degree programs, including Philosophy, Economics, and Women and Gender Studies
- Displaced 302 students, requiring them to either transfer or change majors
- Cut 27 tenured and tenure-track faculty positions
- Laid off 19 full-time lecturers and an estimated 60 part-time lecturers
- Eliminated NCAA Division II athletics, affecting 235 student-athletes and 36 coaching staff

Interim President Cutrer acknowledged the deep emotional impact of these decisions, particularly for faculty and students who have invested years into these programs. However, she emphasized that without additional state funding, Sonoma State simply could not sustain these programs and services.

President Vanya Quiñones of CSU Monterey Bay echoed similar concerns, explaining that her institution had already cut \$23 million from its budget over two years, representing a 16% reduction in state allocation. The additional 8% cut would require even deeper reductions, amounting to nearly 25% of the university's budget in just three years. Quiñones detailed the real-world consequences of these cuts, including:

- A decline in student retention rates, reversing progress on Graduation Initiative 2025 goals
- Elimination of student employment positions, disproportionately impacting transfer students who rely on campus jobs for financial stability

- Severe understaffing in student support services, leading to increased response times and reduced availability of counseling, advising, and career services

President Quiñones warned that continued budget reductions would threaten CSU Monterey Bay's ability to fulfill its mission and serve its student population effectively. She emphasized that state investment in higher education is critical to ensuring student success and workforce development.

Following these presentations, Trustee McGrory expressed frustration over the Governor's failure to uphold his financial commitments to CSU, arguing that deferring the compact funding while imposing budget cuts sends mixed signals about the state's priorities. He emphasized that CSU cannot continue increasing enrollment and meeting workforce development goals while simultaneously absorbing deep financial reductions.

Trustee Gilbert-Lurie underscored the equity implications of the budget cuts, pointing out that CSU students already receive less per-student funding than UC students. She argued that reducing CSU's budget disproportionately impacts first-generation and low-income students, directly contradicting the state's broader equity and economic mobility goals.

Trustee Faigin warned that eliminating course sections and faculty positions would lead to longer graduation times and increased financial burdens on students. He stressed that CSU had worked hard to reduce bottleneck courses, and these cuts would undo years of progress in improving student outcomes.

The Committee on Finance continued deliberations on the 2025-26 Operating Budget Update, focusing on the immediate and long-term consequences of the proposed state budget cuts and the deferral of compact funding. Trustee Lopez emphasized that while the Board had anticipated financial challenges, the severity of the proposed \$375 million reduction, combined with the delay of \$252 million in compact funding, represented a significant threat to CSU's financial sustainability.

AVC for Budget Planning & Advocacy Storm detailed how the CSU has consistently improved student outcomes despite financial constraints, increasing graduation rates and maintaining its role as the nation's top-ranked university system for social mobility. He reiterated that CSU produces 127,000 career-ready graduates annually, with 80% remaining in California's workforce. Storm questioned whether the state was prepared to undermine this progress, noting that the proposed cuts would hinder CSU's ability to provide affordable and accessible education.

EVC and CFO Steve Relyea outlined the CSU's advocacy strategy, which included continued engagement with legislative leaders, the upcoming CSU Advocacy Day on March 19, and direct appeals to restore funding during state budget negotiations in May and June. He emphasized that the CSU was not merely seeking to protect its budget but advocating for the long-term economic stability of California.

Chair Clarke acknowledged the urgency of the discussion and urged trustees to remain focused on the broader financial picture rather than campus-specific concerns. He reiterated that shared governance and transparency would remain a priority for future meetings but that this discussion should center on securing financial stability for the entire system.

Trustee McGrory expressed frustration over Sacramento's failure to uphold its financial commitments to CSU, arguing that the state's expectations were fundamentally incompatible with the financial resources provided. He pointed to the extensive damage already experienced across the system, including the elimination of 1,430 course sections, 136 academic programs, and thousands of staff and faculty positions. He warned that additional reductions would require drastic restructuring rather than gradual cost-cutting measures. He criticized the state's decision to defer compact funding, arguing that it was fiscally irresponsible to rely on uncertain promises of future funding while absorbing immediate budget cuts.

Trustee Gilbert-Lurie underscored the equity implications of the proposed reductions, emphasizing that CSU students already receive less per-student funding than their UC counterparts. She argued that continuing to cut CSU's budget disproportionately affected first-generation and low-income students, contradicting the state's broader commitment to equity and economic mobility.

Trustee Faigin raised concerns about the resurgence of bottleneck courses, warning that significant reductions in course offerings would result in delayed graduations and increased financial burdens on students. He pointed out that CSU had spent years eliminating bottleneck courses, only to see that progress reversed due to insufficient state funding.

Trustee Yee-Melichar acknowledged the difficulty of the discussion but stressed that the CSU must remain proactive in finding solutions. She stated that the \$375 million reduction in state general fund appropriations, combined with the deferral of compact funding, presented a direct challenge to CSU's financial sustainability and ability to fulfill its mission. She warned that the budget cuts would hinder efforts to support student success, employee compensation, infrastructure investments, and critical mandates such as Title IX and NAGPRA compliance. While she recognized the efforts made by campuses to improve resource allocation and efficiency, she noted that these measures alone could not offset the reductions. The loss of employees without reassignment, she said, was particularly troubling. She called on CSU leaders to outline specific advocacy efforts to mitigate the proposed budget reductions and restore the deferred compact funding.

VC for External Relations and Communications Saks responded by detailing CSU's multi-pronged advocacy strategy. He emphasized that the system had already engaged in 67 meetings with legislative and gubernatorial leaders and planned to maintain this level of outreach in the coming months. VC Saks outlined key advocacy initiatives, including CSU Advocacy Day in March, Trustee Advocacy Day in April, and multiple budget hearings where Chancellor García and other CSU leaders would make their case directly to lawmakers. He stressed that CSU's efforts would not be limited to legislative engagement but would also include coordinated public outreach campaigns to mobilize faculty, students, alumni, and business leaders in support of restoring CSU funding.

Trustee Rodriguez highlighted the importance of ensuring that students are active participants in the advocacy process. She suggested expanding direct outreach efforts to educate students on how the budget cuts would affect their education and future career opportunities. She argued that mobilizing student voices would be one of the most effective ways to influence legislators.

Chancellor García reaffirmed CSU's commitment to fighting for full funding restoration. She warned that if the proposed reductions were enacted, they would fundamentally alter CSU's

ability to serve its students and contribute to California's workforce. She called on all stakeholders—trustees, faculty, staff, and students—to actively engage in advocacy efforts, emphasizing that this was a fight for the future of higher education in California.

Trustee Lopez thanked committee members for their participation and adjourned the session, concluding one of the most urgent discussions on CSU's financial future in recent years.

Wednesday, January 29, 2025

11:30 a.m. – Joint Committee on Finance and Campus Planning, Buildings and Grounds

Read Materials: [Agenda](#) | [SDSU Life Sciences Building Handout](#)

Watch Video: [Joint Committee on Finance and Campus Planning, Buildings and Grounds](#)

Trustee Lopez convened the meeting of the Joint Committee on Finance and Campus Planning, Buildings, and Grounds. She announced that the first item on the agenda, an information item on funding for the CSU Capital Program, would be postponed to the March meeting, stating that the discussion was important and would be given proper consideration at a later time.

The committee then proceeded to the San Diego State University Life Sciences Building schematic design and financing approval. Trustee Lopez noted that the project had already been discussed in the Committee on Institutional Advancement, where it was officially named the Durant Science Building. She also referenced that public comments had been received regarding the project.

Trustee Lopez stated that all relevant materials had been provided in advance and that, in the interest of time, the committee would move directly to a vote unless there were any urgent concerns. No objections were raised. A motion to approve the item was made and seconded. A roll call vote was conducted, and the motion passed unanimously. Following the vote, Chair Clarke thanked the trustees for their participation. Trustee Lopez confirmed that there was no further business before the committee, and the meeting was adjourned.

Wednesday, January 29, 2025

12:25 p.m. – Committee on Campus Planning, Buildings, and Grounds

Read Material: [Agenda](#)

Watch Video: [Committee on Campus Planning, Buildings and Grounds](#)

Trustee Ghilarducci convened the meeting of the Committee on Campus Planning, Buildings, and Grounds, calling the session to order. The committee moved immediately to consider the consent agenda, which included the approval of the minutes from the previous meeting and the schematic design approval for the California State University, Chico Human Identification Laboratory Building.

Trustee Ghilarducci asked whether any committee members wished to remove an item from the consent agenda for separate discussion. Hearing none, the motion to approve was made and seconded, with trustees expressing approval. Trustee Ghilarducci commented that all relevant information had been provided in the meeting materials, and previous discussions had already covered the details of the agenda items. With no further comments or questions, the committee proceeded to a roll call vote.

The motion to approve the consent agenda was passed unanimously, with trustees affirming their support. Chair Clarke thanked the committee for their efficiency, and Trustee Ghilarducci confirmed that the meeting's business had concluded. The Board then recessed for lunch, with plans to reconvene later in the afternoon.

Wednesday, January 29, 2025

1:15 p.m. – Committee on Governmental Relations

Read Materials: [Agenda](#) | [NAGPRA Update Handout](#) | [Legislative Principles Handout](#) | [Federal Agenda Handout](#)

Watch Video: [Committee on Governmental Relations](#)

Trustee Rodriguez convened the Committee on Governmental Relations and called the meeting to order. She began by introducing the consent agenda, which consisted of the approval of the minutes from the November 2024 meeting. No objections were raised, and the minutes were approved.

The committee proceeded to the first discussion item, an update on NAGPRA and CalNAGPRA compliance, presented by VC Saks, Executive Director of Tribal Relations Samantha Cypret, and CSU San Bernardino Provost Rafik Mohamed. ED Cypret opened by providing an update on the newly established Office of Tribal Relations, highlighting ongoing efforts to hire staff, strengthen systemwide coordination, and implement compliance measures required by AB 389 and the state audit. She acknowledged the contributions of several individuals who helped facilitate the transition and thanked the Board for its support.

ED Cypret reported that all 23 CSU campuses have now hired full-time NAGPRA coordinators, fulfilling a key audit recommendation. She outlined the steps taken to develop a systemwide NAGPRA policy, noting that a working draft had been circulated to the Native American Heritage Commission and California tribes for input. Since then, the Chancellor's Office has conducted multiple government-to-government consultations with tribal nations and hosted six outreach sessions. A revised draft of the policy was presented to the Native American Heritage Commission on January 17, with additional feedback opportunities available before the policy's final adoption in July 2025.

ED Cypret highlighted that significant progress has been made in repatriation efforts, with five CSU campuses—Chico State, Sacramento State, San Francisco State, Sonoma State, and CSU Los Angeles—leading in the return of ancestral remains and cultural items. She noted that inventory reviews had revealed a total of 2,245 ancestral remains and over 1.9 million cultural items across CSU campuses, a significant increase from previous estimates due to more thorough searches.

Provost Mohamed emphasized CSU's role in strengthening relationships with tribal nations and outlined the outreach efforts made during California Native American Day at the State Capitol and Native American Heritage Month celebrations at multiple campuses. He stressed that campus-level engagement was essential to ensuring full compliance with NAGPRA and CalNAGPRA requirements.

During the discussion, Trustee Yee-Melichar inquired about CSU's plans to fill the remaining vacancies on campus NAGPRA committees. ED Cypret responded that CSU was working closely

with campus presidents and the Native American Heritage Commission to prioritize outreach efforts, and template letters had been provided to assist in recruitment. Trustee Gilbert-Lurie raised concerns about the large number of cultural items yet to be repatriated, asking how the CSU plans to manage such a high volume. ED Cypret explained that standardizing inventory reporting and classification across campuses would help streamline the process and improve accuracy.

Trustee Fong asked whether some tribal nations had the capacity to store and care for repatriated items. Provost Mohamed noted that some tribes lacked resources to house cultural materials, and CSU was working to ensure respectful temporary storage and ongoing consultation with tribal partners. Trustee Faigin followed up on public comments made the previous day by individuals from Sacramento State, who claimed that CSU had misinterpreted NAGPRA definitions and policies. VC Saks confirmed that CSU staff would be following up with the speakers to address their concerns and ensure clarity in CSU's approach.

The next agenda item was the State Legislative Principles for 2025 and 2026, presented by VC Saks and AVC Nathan Dietrich. AVC Dietrich explained that the legislative principles serve as a framework for CSU's advocacy efforts in Sacramento, guiding the system's engagement with lawmakers on key issues such as higher education funding, workforce development, and infrastructure investment.

The seven core principles of CSU's state legislative advocacy include:

- Ensuring the CSU retains oversight of its internal governance
- Preserving the integrity of collective bargaining
- Advocating for stable and adequate funding for student success, faculty compensation, and campus operations
- Seeking representation for CSU on key policy boards and commissions
- Remaining neutral on general public policy matters that do not specifically target CSU

AVC Dietrich emphasized that the primary legislative priority this year is preventing the proposed \$375 million budget cut and restoring deferred compact funding. He also noted that CSU would be actively engaged in discussions surrounding the Governor's proposal for a new statewide higher education coordinating body, as well as legislative efforts to expand AI-related workforce programs, teacher preparation, and healthcare training initiatives.

During the discussion, Trustee Gilbert-Lurie suggested adding an overarching principle focused on ensuring that CSU's fundamental needs are met before considering broader legislative proposals. VC Saks acknowledged the suggestion, noting that while the Board could consider adding such language in the future, the Chancellor's Office was already prioritizing this approach in advocacy efforts. A motion was made and seconded to approve the State Legislative Principles for 2025 and 2026, and the item was approved following a roll call vote.

The final item was the Federal Agenda for 2025 and 2026, presented by VC Saks and AVC Jeff Cullen. AVC Cullen, who recently joined CSU after serving in a similar role at the State University of New York (SUNY), provided an overview of CSU's federal policy priorities for the next two years.

The CSU's federal agenda includes priorities such as:

- Expanding Pell Grants and federal financial aid

- Strengthening funding for minority-serving institutions, including Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) and Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs)
- Advocating for federal support for workforce development, particularly in AI, healthcare, and teacher training
- Defending Title IX protections and funding for student mental health and campus safety initiatives

AVC Cullen outlined the challenging political landscape in Washington, D.C., with a new presidential administration and Congress controlled by narrow Republican majorities. He emphasized that federal funding for higher education could face cuts, and CSU must actively advocate for its interests in areas such as financial aid, research funding, and student support services.

During the discussion, Trustee Vargas expressed concern that CSU does not have enough visibility in Washington, D.C., particularly in higher education policy discussions. AVC Cullen acknowledged the challenge and emphasized plans to expand CSU's presence and leverage relationships with congressional leaders, industry partners, and alumni in key positions. A motion was made and seconded to approve the Federal Agenda for 2025 and 2026, and the item was approved following a roll call vote. With no further discussion, Trustee Rodriguez adjourned the meeting.

Wednesday, January 29, 2025

2:50 p.m. – Committee on University and Faculty Personnel

Read Materials: [Agenda](#) | [Civil Rights Update Handout](#)

Watch Video: [Committee on University and Faculty Personnel](#)

Trustee Fong convened the Committee on University and Faculty Personnel and called the meeting to order. The committee began with the approval of the consent agenda, which included the minutes from the November 2024 meeting. There were no objections, and the consent agenda was approved.

The committee then moved to the discussion item, an update on civil rights programs and services, presented by Interim Vice Chancellor for Human Resources Albert Liddicoat, Associate Vice Chancellor for Civil Rights Programming and Services Hayley Schwartzkopf, and Cal Poly Pomona President Soraya Coley.

IVC Liddicoat introduced the report by outlining the committee's ongoing commitment to ensuring that CSU's civil rights processes are fair, effective, and aligned with state and federal regulations. He noted that this update would cover three key areas: civil rights program reviews, implementation of California State Audit recommendations, and results from the annual report survey on civil rights cases across CSU campuses.

AVC Schwartzkopf emphasized that CSU's civil rights vision is to create a campus environment where all community members feel safe, supported, and empowered. She reiterated CSU's commitment to transparency, accountability, and ongoing improvement in civil rights programming. She reported that in fall 2024, five CSU campuses underwent civil rights program reviews: Chico State, Cal Maritime, CSU Bakersfield, Cal Poly Pomona, and Cal State Long Beach.

These reviews included self-assessment surveys, case file evaluations, training material reviews, and site visits. The goal was to assess how effectively campus civil rights offices are implementing Title IX and Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (DHR) policies.

Cal Poly Pomona President Soraya Coley was invited to share insights from her campus's civil rights program review. She described how Cal Poly Pomona had invested in staffing, resources, and executive-level oversight to strengthen Title IX and DHR programs. She highlighted several best practices, including dedicated prevention education specialists, increased collaboration with student affairs and campus police, and new training programs designed to foster a culture of care and respect.

President Coley reported that Cal Poly Pomona had conducted 38 Title IX and DHR training sessions in 2023, and through increased investment, that number grew to 67 in 2024, a 76% increase in one year. She also shared how the university had taken steps to lower barriers to reporting discrimination and harassment, ensuring that students and employees could easily access support services and information.

AVC Schwartzkopf acknowledged that while significant progress had been made, some areas for continued improvement had been identified. These included expanding mandatory training requirements, enhancing the role of support advisors for students and employees, and improving the efficiency of investigations. She noted that long case resolution times remained a challenge, and CSU was working to streamline internal processes to improve response times.

Following this, AVC Schwartzkopf provided an update on CSU's compliance with California State Audit recommendations regarding civil rights policies. She reported that three major recommendations were due for completion in January 2025, and all had been successfully implemented. These included:

1. Updating the Nondiscrimination Policy to require regular, written status updates for all parties involved in Title IX and DHR cases.
2. Issuing systemwide guidance on handling "Other Conduct of Concern" cases, which involve misconduct that does not fall under traditional Title IX or DHR policies but still impacts campus climate.
3. Updating CSU's Prevention Policy to incorporate best practices for outreach, training, and awareness campaigns.

AVC Schwartzkopf confirmed that CSU was on track to complete 15 of the 16 total recommendations from the state audit by the end of 2025. The final recommendation, the implementation of a unified case management system across all CSU campuses, was expected to be completed by July 2026. She noted that CSU had signed a contract for the new system the previous week, marking a major milestone in the system's effort to improve record-keeping and standardization.

The discussion then turned to the results of the annual report survey, which collected data from all CSU campuses on reports of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation during the 2023-24 academic year. The data showed that CSU received 4,530 reports of conduct that could fall under the Nondiscrimination Policy. Of these:

- 725 resulted in formal complaints.
- 433 moved forward to investigations.

- Over 2,400 cases were referred to other campus departments.

AVC Schwartzkopf explained that a high number of reports is not necessarily a negative indicator, as it can reflect a strong campus culture of reporting and trust in CSU's processes. She noted that 32% of all reports related to protected status were based on race or ethnicity, while 31% of sexual misconduct cases involved hostile environment sexual harassment.

Trustee Firstenberg expressed appreciation for the data-driven approach and noted that having baseline data would allow CSU to track trends and measure progress over time. Trustee Yee-Melichar asked how CSU was ensuring adequate staffing and resources for civil rights offices given budget constraints. AVC Schwartzkopf acknowledged that campus resource limitations were a challenge, but CSU remained committed to ensuring that staffing remained a priority despite fiscal challenges.

Vice Chair Arambula emphasized that aggregating systemwide data could sometimes obscure campus-specific challenges, and he encouraged CSU to identify and address disparities among different campuses. He also pointed out that ongoing budget cuts could jeopardize CSU's ability to fully implement civil rights initiatives.

Chair Clarke echoed these concerns, stating that funding was essential to maintaining CSU's commitment to Title IX and nondiscrimination policies. He reaffirmed the Board's support for CSU's civil rights initiatives and thanked AVC Schwartzkopf and campus leadership for their dedication to this work.

As the discussion concluded, Trustee Fong acknowledged the tremendous progress made in the past year under AVC Schwartzkopf's leadership and wished her well in her next professional role. Chancellor García also recognized AVC Schwartzkopf's contributions, particularly her role in advancing CSU's civil rights programs and successfully navigating the legislative and audit processes. With no further comments, Trustee Fong adjourned the meeting.

Wednesday, January 29, 2025

3:50 p.m. – Board of Trustees Plenary Session (Day 2)

Read Materials: [Agenda](#)

Watch Video: [Plenary Session – Day 2](#)

Chair Clarke called the meeting of the California State University Board of Trustees to order. The roll call was conducted, and confirmed the presence of a quorum. The Board then moved to the consent agenda, which included all items requiring full Board approval. Chair Clarke asked if any trustees wished to remove an item from the consent agenda for separate discussion. Hearing none, he noted that one trustee had requested that the federal objectives item be revisited at a future meeting. A motion to approve the consent agenda was made and seconded. The roll call vote was conducted, and the motion passed unanimously.

Before adjourning, Chair Clarke expressed gratitude to the trustees for their efforts throughout the three-day meeting and extended appreciation to those watching the proceedings. He acknowledged the challenges facing the CSU system but reaffirmed confidence in the Board's ability to navigate them.


The Board will reconvene for the CSU Board of Trustees Spring 2025 Retreat on February 24-25, 2025. Chair Clarke noted that the official meeting notice would be issued at least 10 days in advance, in accordance with standard procedures. With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

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Faculty Trustee Request for Consultation and Feedback

Based on what I have shared with you in my earlier *Faculty Trustee Reports* and above in this report (links to the specific meeting materials and videos; brief summaries using ChatGPT with technical assistance provided by [SF State Academic Technology](#) and in concurrence with my personal meeting notes), I seek and value your continued feedback on items which the BoT has considered or will be considering:

- 1) I have been appointed to four [Board of Trustees Standing Committees](#); these include Audit; Educational Policy; Finance; and Governmental Relations.
Do you, your ASCSU standing committee and/or your campus senate have any concerns/items that you would like to bring to my attention at this time? I would especially like to hear about your campus feedback on the Board of Trustees meeting items related to these four standing committee assignments.
- 2) The ASCSU has weighed in on legislative bills through prior resolutions including:
 - [2024 State Legislative Advocacy Positions of the Academic Senate of the California State University](#)
 - [2024 Federal Legislative Advocacy Positions of the Academic Senate of the California State University](#)*Do you, your ASCSU standing committee and/or your campus senate have any specific legislative bills that are of concern and/or of interest to you at this time?*
- 3) Last year, trustees heard that campuses are implementing several cost reduction strategies (see below slide). On your campus, which of these cost reduction strategies are you already implementing? Which of these cost reduction strategies are you considering/discussing for implementation? Are there other cost reduction strategies (not on the below slide) that your campus might explore? And, can you think of any inter-departmental and/or cross-campus cost reduction strategies that we might explore together as a system?

The California State University

Budget Planning & Actions

Universities are implementing several cost reduction strategies:

- Consolidate programs
- Defer capital/maintenance projects
- Reduce hiring and elimination of positions
- Increase class size
- Reduce courses to reflect student demand
- Reduce part-time faculty/lecturers
- Reduce service levels provided by staff
- Reduce travel
- Restructure departments
- Restrict non-essential purchases

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- 4) Can you think of some experiences that may help us to enhance “communication, consultation and collaboration” at our campuses and within the system? Do you have any suggestions on how to plan these experiences so that the CSU Board of Trustees might better interface with the Academic Senate CSU, CSU Chancellor’s Office, California State Student Association, CSU Alumni Council, CSU Council of Campus Senate Chairs, Campus Presidents/Provosts/Vice Presidents, etc.?
- 5) The next regular meeting of the CSU Board of Trustees will be on 3/23-26/2025. The ASCSU is not meeting the week immediately before this Board meeting, and the Board agenda and materials are not yet available. Consequently, I would like to take this opportunity to seek your thoughts on some topics that have come my way during numerous trustee campus visits:
- California Master Plan on Higher Education
 - California Master Plan on Career Education
 - California Cradle-to-Career Data System
 - Career Passport
 - Credit for Prior Learning (CPL)
 - Dual Enrollment
 - Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM)
 - Differential Tuition Rates
 - Year of engagement – reimaging student success
 - Three-Year Degrees
 - Graduate Programs
 - Blended Programs (4+1)
 - Year-Round Operation (YRO)
 - Faculty As A Resource
 - Work-based learning

I look forward to hearing (and learning) from you and your campus constituents. Please email me (dyee@calstate.edu) or let me know if you wish to meet through a phone call or Zoom session.

Thank you for your consideration, leadership and commitment to higher education and the CSU. I hope you are staying strong and resilient during an unusually challenging spring 2025 semester.