

**UNIVERSITY STUDENT UNION  
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**January 26, 2026 – Grand Salon**

**I. Call to Order**

The regular meeting of the USU Board of Directors was called to order at 12:37 p.m. by Chair Sabah.

**II. Roll Call**

<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Guests</b>
Alexia Aguilar	Honey Modi	Alejandra Aparicio	Armen Mohsenzadeh
Alejandro Perez	Dr. Edith Winterhalter	Alondra Loza-Navarro	Autumn Gafforio
Cameron Gonzalez		Audrey Martinez	Rakan Debah
Cecilia Ortiz		Jenny Aw	
Cesar Rosales		Jeremy Hamlett	
Dr. Freddie Sanchez		Joseph Illuminate*	
Heet Patel		Lara Shaghoian	
Joaquin Macias*		Lesley Arambula	
Karim Kouatly		Natalie Johnson	
Nawshin Sabah		Raine Hernandez*	
Rudy Granillo*		Robert Graves	
Scarlett Khadka (A.S. Liaison)		Ryan Hairapetian	
Steven Wang		Sharon S. Kinard	
Vyom Pathak		Shelley Sakoda	
		Steven Wein	
		Dr. Tari Hunter	
		Tim Rasmussen	

*\*TEAMS video participant*

**III. Approval of Agenda**

M/S/P (K. Kouatly / A. Perez) Motion to approve the agenda for January 26, 2026.

***Motion passed 12-0-0.***

**IV. Approval of Minutes 12/01/2025**

M/S/P (K. Kouatly / V. Pathak) Motion to approve the minutes for December 1, 2025.

***Motion passed 12-0-0.***

**V. Open Forum**

Chair Sabah provided a brief update on the recruitment for the BOD Faculty Representative, expressing positive sentiment toward an interview with Assistant Professor Dr. Marlesha Bell of the Department of Psychology. The Board can expect to meet Dr. Bell for consideration of the role in the next BOD meeting.

## **VI. Chair's Report**

Chair Sabah shared the BOD Mid-Year Report, highlighting personnel updates, goals, accomplishments, and areas of concern.

Board of Directors Goals:

- Goal 1: Enhance the Board of Directors' internal governance framework to ensure strong, transparent, and effective operations.
- Goal 2: BOD will enhance visibility, access, and belonging by expanding awareness of USU spaces and services and positioning the USU as a central, inclusive hub that benefits all students.

Former Faculty Representative Dr. Mirna Sawyer stepped down in the fall semester. The BOD and Chair accomplished many milestones, including creating the Visibility and Engagement Ad Hoc Committee, approving student appointments to the Audit Committee, attending Association of College Unions International (ACUI) Region I and Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) Conferences, and fostering collaboration with Associated Students (A.S.). Chair Sabah mentioned concern over BOD participation in tabling opportunities and communication efforts. Chair Sabah closed her report with gratitude for the Board of Directors and showed optimism for the semester ahead.

## **VII. Vice Chair's Report**

Vice Chair Granillo shared the Retirement and Internal Review Ad Hoc Committee Mid-Year Reports, highlighting personnel updates, goals, accomplishments, and future plans.

He started by reading the Retirement Committee Mid-Year Report:

- Goal 1: Research and propose re-employment policy for USU retirees.
- Goal 2: Provide a training opportunity to educate interested employees about the benefits of the 401A Employer-Paid Supplemental Savings Plan and 403(B) plans in addition to familiarize them with The Standard's website.

Former Associate Director, Human Resources and Professional Development Kristen Pichler retired in December 2025. Interim Associate Director, Human Resources and Professional Development Jenny Aw has transitioned into the role as HR Representative. The committee reviewed Voluntary Employer Beneficiary Association (VEBA) updates and the Reemployment of USU Retirees Policy. Vice Chair Granillo concluded the Retirement Committee Mid-Year Report with excitement toward working with J. Aw.

Vice Chair Granillo shifted to the Internal Review Ad Hoc Committee Mid-Year Report:

- Goal: Enhance the Board of Directors' internal governance framework to ensure strong, transparent, and effective operations.

Committee accomplishments include reviewing the USU bylaws and committee codes and welcoming new committee members, Amelia Zapata and Farimah Chalabi. As the committee finalizes the USU bylaws and committee codes, they plan to begin evaluating the Scholarship Policy and any other necessary documents. Vice Chair Granillo concluded his report by thanking former Vice Chair Marilyn Orantes for laying out the foundation of the committee's work.

## **VIII. Executive Director's Report**

Director Ortiz highlighted updates in the areas of Personnel, Professional Activities, Programs, Projects/Services, and Staff/Student Development. The USU onboarded several new employees in the areas of Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion (EDI), Veterans Resource Center (VRC), Human Resources, and Student Recreation Center (SRC). EDI Supervisor Alondra Loza-Navarro and

VRC Operations Supervisor Lesley Arambula approached the podium to introduce themselves to the Board.

Human Resources hosted SUMMIT, resulting in 280 student assistant employees and Board of Directors. The Pride Center hosted TRANScend on December 17, totaling 17 participants. The Oasis Wellness Center received 1,313 appointments for services, such as nap pods, massage chairs, relaxation chairs, healing tones, and red-light therapy. Director Ortiz emphasized the Wellness Center to encourage students to use its services this semester.

The Valera NEST opened to the public on January 20. The new facility will provide Matadors access to basic needs resources, underscoring the normalization of students seeking these services. Director Ortiz shared stats on opening day: Almost 1,000 visits, nearly 200 in-person questions, and one basic needs appointment. The second day doubled in foot traffic.

Director Ortiz recognized Associate Director of Administration and Communications Sharon S. Kinard for her second installment of CliftonStrengths training to the Accounting and Finance team. Several staff members attended the Auxiliary Organizations Association (AOA) Conference in Oakland. Assistant Director, Resource Centers Sarina Loeb was accepted to the 2026 CSUN Engage cohort. Manager, Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion (EDI) Natalie Johnson attended the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) Civic Learning and Social Change Conference in Long Beach. Several staff and student assistants attended the Creating Change Conference in Washington, D.C.

The USU was covered in the CSUN Daily Sundial with features about the Games Room billiards tournament and the Pride Center's event for Transgender Day of Remembrance.

Director Ortiz concluded her report by sharing that she completed her term as President of the CSU Auxiliary Organizations Associations (AOA) and will serve as Past President on the AOA Executive Committee through next January.

## **IX. A.S. Report**

Chair Sabah introduced Associated Students (A.S.) Senator for College of Science and Math Scarlett Khadka as the new A.S. liaison for this semester's BOD meetings. A.S. Senator Khadka expressed excitement toward continuing the A.S. partnership with the Board of Directors.

In the fall semester, Outdoor Adventures welcomed 80 new students at Camp Matador, hosted backpacking training in Sequoia National Park, and organized trips to places like Venice Beach, Yosemite, and the Black Canyon of Colorado River. Productions hosted a sold-out Big Lecture with Victoria Justice and Big Show with Galantis. Sustainability redistributed donated clothing and launched a student vendor program through Thursday Thrifts. The Refill and Repair Program generated 800 containers reused and over 75 garments repaired. Sports Club hosted Sportsween and Sportsgiving, as well as made several achievements within Women's Volleyball, Ice Hockey, Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, Men's Basketball, and Swim.

External Affairs, Internal Affairs, and University Affairs reviewed 28 referrals and advanced key initiatives, regarding AI, undocumented student support, internal codes and compensation, and accessibility improvements. Ticket Office sold 22,100 tickets for 115 on-campus events, among other offerings. They reclaimed top seller status for Universal Studios Halloween Horror Nights, sold 2,400 tickets for the return of Big Show to the fall semester, and distributed 3,700 Matador Nights tickets in collaboration with the USU.

On behalf of A.S. Vice President Geminiano Aragon, A.S. Senator Khadka expressed heartfelt gratitude to everyone who helped make the past semester memorable. She closed her report with a special mention of the USU and its shared commitment toward student engagement.

## **X. Committee Reports**

### **A. Diversity & Inclusion**

Director Rosales shared the committee's Mid-Year Report, including goals, accomplishments, and future plans.

- Goal: By the end of Spring 2026, collect and analyze student input related to accessibility and belonging within USU spaces to identify key themes and areas for improvement. Findings and recommendations will be presented to the USU Board of Directors by May 2026 to inform future policy and planning discussions.

The committee approved the 2025-2026 committee goal, appointed Committee Member Avean Kallgren as the BOD representative of the USU Internal DEI Work Team, and created student surveys on accessibility challenges in USU spaces and events.

The committee plans to host a committee development activity, distribute the accessibility survey to students, collect data through tabling opportunities and focus groups, and synthesize the information for the Year End Report. Director Rosales concluded his report by wishing everyone a good start to the spring semester.

### **B. Facilities & Operations**

Director Patel shared the committee's Mid-Year Report, highlighting personnel updates, progress on their goals, accomplishments, future plans, and areas of concern.

- Goal 1: Review and update the USU Computer Lab utilization. (In progress)
- Goal 2: Review and advise on opportunities to enhance the comfort and vibrancy of USU spaces. (in progress)
- Goal 3: USU Wayfinding Project (In progress)

Committee accomplishments include successful onboarding, comprehensive facility knowledge, strategic site assessments, project oversight, and consistent engagement. The committee reviewed specific operational needs and student usage patterns at The Valera NEST, predicted ideas for the USU Master Plan, and visited the Plaza Pool post-decommissioning to assess potential utilization.

The committee plans to create a recommendation for the Plaza Pool area, Computer Lab, and wayfinding strategy. Director Patel shared that due to Committee Member Rafae Habib's graduation in December 2025, he hopes to ensure full participation from the committee that is now four members.

Director Patel concluded his report highlighting the committee's progress from learning about USU operations to investigating site-specific challenges. He noted that the meeting regarding the Plaza Pool was especially insightful, signaling facility growth.

### **C. Finance**

Director Pathak shared the committee's Mid-Year Report, highlighting personnel updates, goals, and future plans.

- Goal 1: Continue updating the Long-Term Financial Plan for the USU Gateway Project for presentation to the BOD and campus administration. (In progress)
- Goal 2: Identify and prioritize finance policies and procedures in need of revision to align with updated campus, CSU systemwide, and USU operational policies. (In progress)

The committee conducted orientation, approved the 2025-2026 committee goals, reviewed and approved the capitalization of the ADA-compliant door for the Veterans Resource Center (VRC), recommended an increase in the fixed asset capitalization threshold, and reviewed and approved the First Quarter (3&9) Budget Report.

Future plans include continuing the review of the Long-Term Financial Plan and finance policies, including Hospitality, Travel, Credit Card, and Fixed Asset. Additionally, the committee will monitor Repairs and Maintenance expenditures, reserves balances, and budget variances, as well as quarterly budget reports.

Director Pathak concluded his report by sharing his appreciation of the strong collaboration with student leaders, staff, and campus partners on behalf of the committee.

#### **D. Personnel**

Director Kouatly shared the committee's Mid-Year Report, highlighting personnel updates, goals, accomplishments, future plans and concerns.

- Goal 1: Proposed policy update – Educational Fee Reimbursement Policy
- Goal 2: Proposed policy update – Proposed updates to Student Assistant Graduate Assistants – Classification IV
- Goal 3: Review and consider updates to the Relocation and Expense Reimbursement Policy (goal continuation from 2024-2025).
- Goal 4: Review and consider updates to the Student Assistant Classification & Wage Schedule (pending City of Los Angeles minimum wage increase).

Committee Members Angela Karapetyan resigned, and Mahi Kachhadiya joined as of January 2026. The committee passed several action items and is preparing to present them to the Board for their consideration in the February BOD meeting. They plan to finalize their team development activity, Spring 2026 goals, and goals to recommend for next year's committee.

With the recent retirement of former Associate Director, Human Resources and Professional Development Kristen Pichler, the committee is transitioning Interim Associate Director, Human Resources and Professional Development Jenny Aw as the new Executive Secretary.

Director Ortiz left at 1:22 p.m. and returned at 1:25 p.m.

#### **E. Retirement**

Vice Chair Granillo provided committee updates during the Vice Chair Report. Chair Sabah referred the Board to the packet for further review of the report.

A.S. Senator Khadka left at 1:30 p.m.

#### **F. Internal Review**

Vice Chair Granillo provided committee updates during the Vice Chair Report. Chair Sabah referred the Board to the packet for further review of the report.

### **XI. Action Items**

There were no action items for this meeting.

### **XII. Discussion Items**

#### **A. Revised USU Bylaws**

The Internal Review Ad Hoc Committee conducted a comprehensive review and revision of the USU bylaws. This document, which has not been updated since 2019, was assessed to ensure relevance and alignment with current governance practices and organizational priorities. A redlined version of the current bylaws and proposed version were provided.

Vice Chair Granillo asked the Board to review these documents and send any feedback before the BOD meeting in February. Associate Executive Director, Equity, Programs, and Leadership Dr. Tari Hunter requested that the Board send their feedback now, so the Internal Review Ad Hoc Committee can vote on the new revisions before the BOD meeting in February.

#### **A. USU JEDIA Assessment**

Associate Executive Director, Equity, Programs, and Leadership Dr. Tari Hunter presented the Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Accessibility (JEDIA) Assessment, which was designed to understand the USU's culture around JEDIA through feedback from staff, student employees, and the BOD. The assessment supports the development of a shared culture rooted in JEDIA values. The first phase was administered during SUMMIT in August 2025 and the second phase during SUMMIT in January 2026. The Board was given another opportunity to complete the survey during this discussion.

#### **XIII. Announcements**

Chair Sabah asked for a couple of volunteers to stay back after the meeting to record an Instagram Recap Reel.

Board of Directors Leadership and Administrative Coordinator Janessa Reyes announced upcoming BOD Elections Info Sessions:

- January 27 from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. in the Ventura Room
- January 28 from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the Ventura Room

J. Reyes reported five attendees in the info session held on December 4 via Zoom. Elections filing will be open from February 10 to 27. Additionally, the USU Scholarship Review Committees need volunteers from the Board of Directors. Associate Executive Director, Equity, Programs, and Leadership Dr. Tari Hunter, Vice Chair Granillo, and Director Wang provided context to these scholarships and urged Student Representatives to participate. J. Reyes shared the review timeline and noted Directors Kouatly, Rosales, and Patel as volunteers.

Director Sanchez announced that CSUN has been designated Black-Serving Institution (BSI) and highlighted the Afrikan Black Coalition (ABC) Conference held during Martin Luther King Jr. Day weekend at CSUN, thanking the USU for its sponsorship and coordination. Additionally, as part of CSUN's commitment to the Seal of Excelencia, additional scholarship funding was granted to further support students under AB540.

Director Ortiz shared that guests of CSU Stanislaus visited the USU to learn about the Board of Directors leadership development and training, as well as tour the facility. She thanked Chair Sabah and Vice Chair Granillo for their participation.

Director Patel announced that Facilities and Operations attended off-site tours to view furniture options for the USU Gateway Project on December 17.

#### **XIV. Adjournment**

Chair Sabah adjourned the meeting at 1:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Cecilia Ortiz,  
Executive Director