

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

February 16, 2026 – Grand Salon

I. Call to Order

The regular meeting of the USU Board of Directors was called to order at 12:39 p.m. by Chair Sabah.

II. Roll Call

Present	Absent	Staff	Guests
Alexia Aguilar		Abigayle Brown	Armen Mohsenzadeh
Alejandro Perez		Alejandra Aparicio	Brian Pham
Cameron Gonzalez		Audrey Martinez	Mario Pizarro Rojas
Cecilia Ortiz		Condor	Dr. Marlesha Bell*
Cesar Rosales		Janessa Reyes	Mark Raspopov
Dr. Edith Winterhalter*		Jenny Aw	Katilyn Bryant
Dr. Freddie Sanchez*		Jeremy Hamlett	
Heet Patel		Joseph Illuminate	
Honey Modi		Lara Shaghoian	
Joaquin Macias		Magdalena Sanchez	
Karim Kouatly		Natalie Johnson	
Nawshin Sabah		Raine Hernandez	
Rudy Granillo		Robert Graves	
Scarlett Khadka (A.S. Liaison)		Samantha Liu	
Steven Wang		Sarina Loeb	
Vyom Pathak		Sharon S. Kinard	
		Shelley Sakoda	
		Steven Wein	
		Dr. Tari Hunter	
		Tim Rasmussen	

**TEAMS video participant*

III. Approval of Agenda

M/S/P (A. Perez / K. Kouatly) Motion to approve the agenda for February 16, 2026.

Motion passed 13-0-0.

IV. Approval of Minutes 01/26/2026

M/S/P (K. Kouatly / R. Granillo) Motion to approve the minutes for January 26, 2026.

Motion passed 13-0-0.

V. Open Forum

Chair Sabah instructed participants to fall in line at the podium, then state their names and campus affiliations. The participants had three minutes to speak.

CSUN Muslim Student Association (MSA) Representative Ameen Mohsenzadeh raised awareness about student needs for additional funding and prayer spaces, especially amid Ramadan. Although the USU has already financially supported MSA, A. Mohsenzadeh shared that the organization must raise \$12,000 to feed over 125 students during Ramadan. Additionally, students have been facing long wait times to use the USU's current prayer space. A. Mohsenzadeh read a few testimonies from other students voicing their need for more prayer spaces. MSA has also reached out to Associated Students but needs more funding. Director Macias recommended MSA reserve a room through the USU to serve as another prayer space.

CSUN Student Veteran Organization (SVO) President Kaitlyn Bryant presented on their attendance to the 2026 Student Veterans of America Conference. Members attended educational workshops covering topics, like leadership development, mental health, career readiness, financial literacy, VA benefits, inclusion of women veterans, and importance of storing historical archives. They met other veteran organizations and exchanged best practices, as well as networked with reputable industry leaders. K. Bryant thanked the Board for sponsoring this opportunity.

VI. Chair's Report

Chair Sabah started her report by welcoming the Student Board of Directors and staff of California State University (CSU), Los Angeles to the meeting. She provided updates on an eventful month. Student Board of Directors and staff members from CSU Fullerton visited and toured the USU, including The Valera NEST, Oasis Wellness Center, and Student Recreation Center. USU BOD Student Directors attended a monthly training session, in which Chair Sabah thanked Assistant Director, Programs & Leadership Audrey Martinez and Pride Center Manager Martel Okonji for their presentations. The Visibility & Engagement Ad Hoc Committee met to review the USU visibility survey for students. The committee decided to revise the survey before approval to ensure clarity on terminology and that insights are garnered on student engagement and recognition of USU services. The committee will reconvene on February 23.

Chair Sabah concluded her report by reminding everyone that the USU elections filing is open until February 27 and that she and Vice Chair Granillo are here to support.

VII. Vice Chair's Report

Vice Chair Granillo opened his report with an inspirational message about servant leadership during a time of societal unrest and division. He encouraged everyone to connect with their peers and engage in hard conversations. Vice Chair Granillo expressed his admiration of the BOD and each members' commitment, as well as thanked CSULA for attending and connecting before the meeting.

The Internal Review Committee (IRC) appreciates the Board for reviewing the USU bylaws. Board members were invited to attend the IRC meetings wherever possible. The Retirement Committee is coordinating its next meeting date at the end of March.

VIII. Executive Director's Report

Director Ortiz welcomed her alma mater California State University, Los Angeles (CSULA) to the USU. Upon starting her report, Director Ortiz mentioned that she attended a faculty retreat, where she was joined by Associate Director, Operations & Services Samantha Liu and Director, Basic Needs Maria Elizondo for a tour at The Valera NEST.

Director Ortiz reported updates in the areas of Personnel, Programs, Projects/Services, and University-Wide Service. Nancy Ramirez has joined the USU as the regular Administrative Coordinator – Facilities Maintenance. The Pride Center hosted the Luminous Legacy Ball that celebrated Black Queer history through the cultural traditions of ballroom. The Matador Involvement Center hosted Spring 2026 Meet the Greeks. The Muslim Student Association hosted an event for students to break their fast and connect with each other, as well as provided education around Ramadan. The Oasis launched a student-led lymphatic brush workshop. Among Facilities Maintenance projects, the East Conference Center roof was replaced to ensure long-term structural integrity and weather protection. Veterans Resource Center (VRC) Manager Robert Graves represented CSUN at a listening session hosted by Student Veterans of America (SVA) and University of Southern California (USC) with Congresswoman Sydney Kamlager-Dove. Associate Executive Director, Equity, Programs, & Leadership Dr. Tari Hunter partnered with Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students Dr. William Watkins to support the recent campus protests.

IX. A.S. Report

Associated Students (A.S.) Senator Khadka wished everyone a great first few weeks of class. A.S. Outdoor Adventures hosted its initial events of the semester at Palomar Mountain and Sandstone Peak with another exploration at Yosemite on February 20 to 22. A.S. Productions and Sustainability hosted Farmers Market, Thursday Thrift, Heartstring Hangout, Paint and Plant, and a film screening of *Sinners* in celebration of Black History Month. A.S. Sports Club held their first council meeting on February 11. Matador Soccer will be competing against the University of California, Riverside on February 22. A.S. Student Leadership approved A.S. Matadors in Leadership Scholarship, as well as committee chairs for external, internal, and university affairs. Elections filing is open from February 10 to 27. A.S. Student Leadership also hosted a President's Day Mixer in the Grand Salon. A.S. Senator Khadka concluded her report with a reminder of the USU's commitment to student success, thanking the student leaders in the room for their dedication.

X. Committee Reports

A. Diversity & Inclusion

Director Rosales wished everyone a happy February. The committee finalized their semester meeting times, which will be held on Thursdays from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. Former committee member Kimberly Basilio has resigned; Director Rosales wished her luck on future endeavors. They are reviewing applications but welcome any recommendations of students who want to be involved with the D&I Committee. Despite facing some challenges, the committee is making progress toward their goal.

B. Facilities & Operations

Director Perez reported on updates from the committee's meeting on January 30. Major discussion items included facilities planning and space utilization. The committee reviewed the condition of the Plaza Pool area and its potential future use, considering facility limitations, student needs, and alignment with broader USU planning efforts. Additionally, members discussed the space allocation request process, learning about how requests are reviewed, evaluated, and aligned with operational and student-use priorities. Their next meeting is scheduled for February 20 to work on the Computer Lab utilization.

C. Finance

Director Modi stated that there are no major updates from the Finance Committee. Financial operations remain consistent. The committee reviewed the Second Quarter (6&6) budget and will present findings later in the BOD meeting.

D. Personnel

Director Aguilar reported on the committee's first meeting of the semester on February 2. Held over Zoom, the committee welcomed two guests and approved an action item that will be discussed later in the BOD meeting. Members also discussed the Medical Leave Benefit Policy established by the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). The remaining Personnel Committee meetings will be held in person. Director Aguilar concluded her report by announcing their committee development activity at Matador Bowl on March 30.

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.

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

A. Faculty Representative Appointment – Dr. Marlesha Bell

M/S/P (C. Rosales / H. Patel) Motion to approve the Faculty Representative appointment of Dr. Marlesha Bell.

There is a vacancy on the USU Board of Directors for the Faculty Representative position. Recommendations are made by Chair Sabah and Associate Executive Director, Equity, Programs, & Leadership Dr. Tari Hunter. The appointment would be effective February 16, 2026, to June 8, 2026.

Chair Sabah welcomed Dr. Marlesha Bell, who was attending virtually, to introduce herself. Dr. Bell expressed her excitement to work with the Board and clarified that she plans to attend meetings in person. Director Ortiz reiterated the reason why there was a vacancy. Former Faculty Representative Dr. Mirna Sawyer acquired priorities that conflicted with her ability to attend BOD meetings, resulting in her resignation in the fall semester. Director Ortiz highlighted Dr. Bell's embodiment of a faculty member with a perspective and understanding of student leaders and identity development.

Motion passed 13-0-0.

B. Graduate Assistantships

Motion out of the Personnel Committee to approve repealing Human Resources Policy, "Payment for Graduate Assistant Tuition and Other Fees."

Initially established in 2010 with the intent of supplementing regular positions with graduate assistantships, the program has not proven to be sustainable. Graduate assistant appointments are currently provided through Classification V of the Student Assistant Classification and Wage Schedule or through employment in a temporary emergency staff appointment. There has only been one graduate assistant appointment since 2015. If removed, graduate assistant positions will be hired as Classification V.

Motion passed 13-0-0.

C. Educational Fee Reimbursement for Regular Employees

Motion out of the Personnel Committee to approve the amended Educational Fee Reimbursement Policy for Regular Employees.

Staff are recommending clarifying changes to the Educational Fee Reimbursement Policy for Regular Employees. Applications for educational fee reimbursements are solicited annually from eligible staff for the upcoming fiscal year and require Executive Director/designee approval.

In response to Director Winterhalter's inquiry, Interim Associate Director, Human Resources & Professional Development Jenny Aw stated that Tseng College graduate coursework will be reimbursed at the CSUN and Tseng College rate. Director Winterhalter recommended the line-item under Reimbursement Limits, sub-section Tseng College Graduate Coursework, "Up to the equivalent costs of 6 graduate units per semester at CSUN college," be revised to state:

"Up to the equivalent cost of 6 graduate units per semester at CSUN and Tseng College."

M/S/P (E. Winterhalter / R. Granillo) Motion to amend the Educational Fee Reimbursement Policy for Regular Employees by adding, "and Tseng," to the line-item under Reimbursement Limits, sub-section Tseng College Graduate Coursework.

Motion to amend passed 13-0-0. Director Bell joined as a voting Board member.

Motion to approve the amended document passed 14-0-0.

D. 2025-2026 Second Quarter (6&6) Budget Report

Motion out of the Finance Committee to approve the 2025-2026 Second Quarter (6&6) Budget Report.

The report summarized the financial results of the USU for the six-month period that ended on December 31, 2025. Director Pathak and Director Modi presented on the areas of Statement of Activities, Statement of Financial Position, Investment Summary, Unallocated Reserves, Designated Reserves Summary, Capital Outlay Summary, Foundation Account Balances, and Work-Study Summary.

Motion passed 14-0-0.

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

E. Revised USU Bylaws

Motion out of the Internal Review Ad Hoc Committee to approve the 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. The review of this document was initiated as part of the BOD goals, not because of an external audit.

During discussion, Director Rosales pointed out that although the Diversity & Inclusion Committee was being named to Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee, the word, "Equity," was missing in some areas of the document.

M/S/P (C. Rosales / J. Macias) Motion to amend the document by adding the word, "Equity," to become, "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee," in all sections.

Motion to amend passed 14-0-0.

Motion to approve the amended document passed 14-0-0.

XII. Discussion Items

A. 2025-2026 Mid-Year Progress Report on USU Goals and Outcomes

Director Ortiz proposed to table this item for the March BOD meeting. Directors nodded in agreement.

B. Executive Session – USU Executive Director Evaluation

M/S/P (J. Macias / R. Granillo) Motion to enter a closed Executive Session to discuss the University Student Union Executive Director Evaluation.

Motion passed 14-0-0.

Director Winterhalter left at 1:44 p.m. and returned at 1:46 p.m.

Director Sanchez joined at 1:45 p.m.

Everyone except the voting Board members left the room at 1:55 p.m. Director Bell left the meeting at 1:57 p.m.

M/S/P (K. Kouatly / R. Granillo) Motion to exit the closed Executive Session.

Motion passed 13-0-0.

Everyone was invited back into the room at 2:04 p.m. Director Sanchez left at 2:04 p.m.

XIII. Announcements

Director Wang wished everyone a happy Lunar New Year full of prosperity, health, and wealth. Associate Director, Operations & Services Samantha Liu reminded everyone of The Valera NEST ribbon cutting ceremony on February 27.

Director Rosales announced CSUN Baseball's victory in the last game.

Chair Sabah reminded everyone that USU elections filing close on February 27.

XIV. Adjournment

Chair Sabah adjourned the meeting at 2:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Cecilia Ortiz

Cecilia Ortiz,
Executive Director