

**UNIVERSITY STUDENT UNION  
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
JANUARY 27, 2025 – NORTHRIDGE CENTER**

**I. Call to Order**

The regular meeting of the USU Board of Directors was called to order at 12:35 p.m. by Chair Lopez.

**II. Roll Call**

<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Guests</b>
Mishell De Leon*		Alejandra Aparicio	
Rudy Granillo		Audrey Martinez	
Nawshin Sabah		Janessa Reyes	
Debra Hammond		Jeremy Hamlett	
Nidharsh Kempegowda*		Joseph Illuminate	
Iman Khan (A.S. Liaison)*		Kristen Pichler	
Daniel Lopez		Malahat Zhobin	
Joaquin Macias		Natalie Johnson	
Devaansh Mann		Ryan Hairapetian	
Marilyn Orantes		Samantha Liu	
Heet Patel		Sharon Kinard	
Vyom Pathak		Shelley Sakoda	
Dr. Freddie Sanchez		Steven Wein	
Dr. Mirna Sawyer		Tari Hunter	
Steven Wang		Vinny Mele	
Dr. Edith Winterhalter*			

\* TEAMS video participant

**III. Approval of Agenda**

M/S/P (D. Mann / R. Granillo) Motion to approve the agenda for January 27, 2025.

***Motion passed 13-0-0.***

**IV. Approval of Minutes 12/2/2024**

M/S/P (R. Granillo / N. Sabah) Motion to approve the minutes for December 2, 2024.

***Motion passed 13-0-0.***

**V. Open Forum**

**VI. Chair’s Report**

Chair Lopez reported on the Board of Directors’ Goals, Accomplishments, Future Plans, Areas of Concern, and Closing Comments from his mid-year report.

Goal 1.1: The USU BOD will provide leadership opportunities to deepen students’ understanding of leadership pathways in the USU.

The BOD conducted four training courses throughout the Fall 2024 semester. The BOD committee members were invited to attend, as an opportunity to deepen their understanding of leadership pathways and the BOD Leadership Pipeline Program.

Goal 2.1: The USU BOD will enhance student awareness and engagement.

The BOD has successfully continued to raise student awareness through social media campaign efforts and increase engagement through tabling at various events and conducting social media content that engages the student population.

Goal 3.1: The USU BOD will enhance its internal governance framework and guiding documents. The BOD has successfully created an Internal Review Ad Hoc Committee, chaired by Vice Chair Orantes to review governance framework and documents.

Board Accomplishments include:

- Passing an array of various policies, budget reports, and approvals for expansion projects and reallocations.
- Passing the reimagining of the Rise Center project into the USU Gateway Project.
- Approving the new position of the Oasis Wellness Center Supervisor.
- Approving the recommendation for the incoming Executive Director.
- Assisting the Programs Department in tabling and supporting multiple USU events.

Board Chair Accomplishments include:

- Assisting Associate Director of Operations and Services, Samantha Liu with choosing interior and exterior design options for the Valera NEST.
- Spearheading social media projects and promotional materials in collaboration with the Marketing Department.
- Creating two new Ad Hoc Committees to address the 2024-2025 BOD Goals, Visibility and Engagement and Internal Review.
- Fostering relationships with external campus organizations, such as CSUN Student Housing, CSUN EOP, and CSUN Associated Students (A.S.).
- Assisting the USU staff with the selection of recipients for the USU Transportation Assistance Program.
- Hosting California State University, Los Angeles for a site visit, along with Vice Chair Orantes and other Directors.
- Attending ACUI and HACU conferences with Vice Chair Orantes and other Directors.
- Meeting with A.S. President Karroum and Vice Chair Khan with Vice Chair Orantes to foster relationship and collaboration.

Future Plans include:

- Maintaining relationships with external campus organizations.
- Collaborating with A.S. Leadership for a project.
- Continuing to support renovation and expansion projects, along with the development of the Valera NEST.
- Continuing to promote social media engagement and outreach efforts.
- Designating a Board member to assist with A.S./BOD elections campaign.
- Designating a Board member to attend A.S. Senate meetings to report on behalf of the BOD, as needed.
- Supporting the transition of the incoming Executive Director.
- Collaborating with the Marketing Department to create a proposed year-long social media and engagement strategic plan for future Board leadership to follow.

Areas of Concern involve the following:

- The Visibility and Engagement Ad Hoc Committee has still not met.

- The Personnel Committee has been unable to develop goals or a meeting schedule.
- Board member retention, engagement, and attendance remain a concern. Chair Lopez will work with Vice Chair Orantes and the Internal Review Committee to review guidelines regarding mandatory attendance, engagement, and timeliness.
- Communication efforts among the Board, Chair, and Vice Chair still need improvement.
- The Facilities & Operations and Diversity & Inclusion Committees will need additional support, as they receive new Co-Chair placements.

Chair Lopez thanked the Board for their committee goals and looks forward to continuing to support the Directors in the spring semester. He concluded his report by wishing everyone a good semester.

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

Vice Chair Orantes reported on the Goals, Accomplishments, Future Plans, and Closing Comments from her mid-year report. In the beginning of the fiscal year, her goal was to promote services and programs to graduate students. She completed this goal on a smaller scale, making announcements and answering questions about the TAP program, Oasis Wellness Center, and Computer Lab. Vice Chair Orantes would like to gather information about other services offered to graduate students, aiming to gain insight by the end of spring. Additionally, she plans to continue to promote in other classes not involved in her graduate program.

Accomplishments include:

- "Friendsgiving," a collaboration with the University Village Apartments (UVA).  
Vice Chair Orantes stated that it is typically hard to find a date and time to program for parent scholars but was excited to see that about 70 to 80 residents attended. She chatted with residents about resources and received verbal feedback about how the USU staff were friendly and approachable. She thanked Programs Manager Gabriel Hernandez and the rest of the Programs Department for their work.
- Promotion of USU programs and services to graduate students.
- Promotion of the Board at the A.S. Farmers Market, receiving good engagement on Instagram.
- Establishment of the Internal Review Ad Hoc Committee.

Future Plans include:

- A collaboration with the Student Recreation Center (SRC) to bring a fitness class to the UVA.

Vice Chair Orantes thanked the Board for their dedication and looks forward to creating more memories and accomplishments in the spring semester.

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

Director Hammond highlighted a few items from her report, including upcoming programs, an update on the USU project and new Executive Director, and employee recognition. On January 29, the USU will host Spring Fest and Rainbow Reception. The Cultural Welcomes are scheduled for February 5, 6, 11, and 13. Director Hammond reported on her meeting earlier that morning, where she held a presentation to members of the Chancellor's Office, Capital Design and Construction, Finance and Treasury, and Risk Management about the history and status of the USU Project. Additionally, in light of CSUN communications to staff and students about potential challenges facing undocumented students, the USU will print and distribute red cards, which have information on how and what to respond if confronted by ICE. These red cards would be available at the Sol Center Information Desk, SRC, and USU Resource Centers, as well as across campus. Red cards can also be printed in different languages using a link, which Associate Executive Director of Equity, Programs, and Leadership Dr. Tari Hunter will send to the Board once Marketing has completed it. Director Sanchez is also working with the DREAM Center on other initiatives to support the undocumented community. Director Hammond encouraged everyone to

direct any students facing issues to the USU, where they will be supported as much as possible. The USU mission statement makes it very clear on the organization's commitment. Regarding an update on the new Executive Director, Cecilia Ortiz is coming from another CSU institution and will be wrapping up her affairs in preparation for her transition. She is scheduled to assume the Executive Director position on March 3. Director Hammond will remain in her position until that time; afterward, she will work part-time to on-board and transition Cecilia into the role. During this period, Director Hammond will not be in-person as much but will be working behind-the-scenes. Director Hammond ended her report by highlighting Resource Center Supervisor Raine Hernandez's achievement of the James Jay Dudley Luce Foundation's "24 Under 24" Leadership Award. This recognition celebrated Raine's efforts at CSUN in raising funds to support the Lotus Free School in India.

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

Associated Students (A.S.) Vice President Khan reported on three main items. In the recent Cal-State Student Association (CSSA) plenary meeting she attended, the Systemwide Affairs Committee passed the action item on the Affordable Housing White Paper Proposal, which highlighted student needs with affordable housing among UC, CSU, and California Community College (CCC) systems. A.S. Vice President Khan also mentioned Affordable Action Programs, including CSUN Ready. A.S. passed a resolution not in favor of CSUN Ready, as they did not believe it would serve CSUN's unique and expansive student demographics. Additionally, A.S. presented at a Board of Trustees meeting. Amidst issues related to ICE and the fires, A.S. has generally been concerned about students' well-being. However, A.S. Vice President Khan expressed gratitude to the USU, particularly the DREAM Center, with its efforts toward supporting undocumented students. She will reach out to other entities for collaborative efforts. A.S. Vice President Khan concluded her report by announcing A.S. Welcome Week. Compared to last year and the years proceeding COVID, student engagement has increased tremendously.

## **X. Committee Reports**

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

Director Granillo reported on Committee Goals, Accomplishments, Future Plans, Areas of Concern, and Closing Comments from his mid-year report.

Goal 1: In collaboration with the USU DREAM Center, the committee will research and identify at least five best practices and initiatives aimed at enhancing undocumented student success by the end of the academic year.

Director Granillo stated that he will continue to work with DREAM Center Manager Irvin Rendon and DREAM Center Supervisor Karen Castillo on how to best support ongoing affairs.

Goal 2: The committee will collect feedback and analyze data within the International and Parenting Scholar demographics within the university to assess their awareness, opinions, and suggestions regarding Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (J.E.D.I.) initiatives in the USU. Based on the findings, the committee will compile a comprehensive report with actional recommendations and present it to the Board for consideration by May 30, 2025.

Director Granillo added that considering the federal removal of DEI programs and initiatives, as well as the Presidential administration's impact on the undocumented community, the committee will try to gain insight on other data and hope that by gathering students' feedback, they can create impactful change.

Committee Accomplishments include:

- A successful team bonding event at Matador Bowl.
- The establishment and progress of their committee goals.
- The fulfillment of a student representative for the USU Internal Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Work Team with Committee Member Jane Martorana.

- A presentation to educate the committee on the CSUN undocumented community, by DREAM Center Manager Irvin Rendon and DREAM Center Supervisor Karen Castillo.

Future Plans/Areas of Concern:

Director Granillo expressed his concern over the workload that may increase, due to the recent departure of former Co-Chair Nataly Pelaez. He looks forward to seeking guidance from peers and mentors to better compose himself for the coming tasks at hand to achieve a successful semester.

Director Granillo shared his hope to stay on the Board, while pursuing his graduate degree in the fall.

Director Sanchez arrived at 1:06 p.m. A.S. Vice President Khan left at 1:09 p.m.

## **B. Facilities & Operations**

Director Mann reported on the Committee Goals, Accomplishments, Future Plans, and Closing Comments of his mid-year report.

Goal 1: Facilitate Wayfinding

By June 2025, the Facilities and Operations Committee will collaborate with the Marketing and Operations departments to enhance wayfinding within the University Student Union, utilizing feedback to guide the design and placement of new signage.

Goal 2: Collaboration with Maintenance

By May 2025, the Facilities and Operations Committee will conduct at least two collaborative meetings with the Maintenance and Operations department to gain a full understanding of the facility and identify possible upgrades for the student union.

Committee Accomplishments include:

1. Successfully establishing its meeting schedule for the entire academic year.
2. Finalizing its committee goals for the entire academic year, working progressively toward achieving them.
3. Meeting with the Marketing Department to brainstorm ideas for the first committee goal of facilitating wayfinding, conceptualizing ideas for an interactive webpage to help navigate within the USU facilities.
4. Meeting with the Maintenance Department to understand their role and tour the maintenance office and workshop.
5. Touring the roof of the East Conference Center to understand the issue regarding the leakage.

Future Plans include:

- The Facilities and Operations Committee has yet to achieve its first committee goal completely but anticipates implementing it by June 1, 2025.
- The Facilities and Operations Committee is halfway done with their second goal of holding two collaborative meetings with Maintenance. The anticipated completion date is June 1, 2025.

Director Mann closed his report by sharing the committee's commitment to advancing their goals, anticipating meaningful outcomes. He thanked committee members for their support and looks forward to more success.

## **C. Finance**

Director Pathak reported on the Committee Goals, Accomplishments, Future Plans, Areas of Concerns, and Closing comments from his mid-year report.

Goal 1: Update and finalize the long-term financial plan for the USU Renovation for presentation to the USU Board of Directors and Campus Administration.

Goal 2: Revise the Procurement Policy to incorporate J.E.D.I. to provide underrepresented small businesses with the opportunity to compete for business opportunities with the USU.

Goal 3: Update the Fixed Asset Policy.

Committee Accomplishments include:

- Re-allocating \$6,503 from the Games Room Pool Table Capital Outlay item to the Plaza Pool ADA Chair Capital Outlay item.
- Making de-allocated funds available to be used for current or future Major Repair & Replacement projects.
- Re-allocating \$13,665 from the Games Room Pool Table Capital Outlay item to the Fire Alarm Monitoring System Capital Outlay item.
- Updating the committee members on the Valera NEST Project.
- The 2024-2025 First Quarter (3&9) Budget Report.

Future Plans and Areas of Concern include:

- Approval of the 2024-2025 Second Quarter (6&6) Budget Report.
- Working on committee members, as they have not received updates from some. They may recruit committee members, if necessary.

Director Pathak closed his report by sharing appreciation for the collaborative efforts of all members. They are committed to continued fiscal responsibility and financial planning for the USU.

Chair Lopez left at 1:14 p.m. Director Winterhalter left at 1:16 p.m.

#### **D. Personnel**

Director Sabah reported on the Committee Goals, Accomplishments, Future Plans, Areas of Concerns, and Closing comments of her mid-year report.

Goals will be finalized this semester. They have a few goals in mind and are waiting to discuss them with the committee. Director Sabah shared that they were supposed to finalize the goals in December, but the committee did not meet quorum. She plans on discussing the goals in their next meeting.

Committee Accomplishments include:

- Approving the new staff position for the Oasis Wellness Center Supervisor.

Future Plans and Areas of Concern include:

- Scheduling conflicts among committee members. This semester's meeting will all be held in-person, but not everyone is on campus at the same time. Director Sabah stated that they are still in discussions with committee members about this issue. Despite this challenge, Director Sabah hopes to establish a meeting time by the end of the week.

Director Sabah closed her report by sharing that it is her last semester and thanking Executive Secretary Kristen Pichler and Director De Leon for their continued support.

#### **E. Retirement**

Vice Chair Orantes reported on the Committee Goals, Accomplishments, and Future Plans from her mid-year report.

Goal 1: Fully fund the Retirement Health Benefits Plan (RHBP) based on the financial data from the Actuarial Valuation Report dated June 30, 2024.

Goal 2: Provide a training opportunity to educate interested employees about the benefits of the 401(A) Employer-Paid Supplemental Savings Plan and 403(B) plans, as well as familiarize them with The Standard's website.

Committee Accomplishments include:

- The replacement of the Metropolitan West Total Return Fund with the Dodge & Cox Income X Fund in the 403(B) plan and 401(A) Employer-Paid Supplemental Retirement Savings Plan lineups.
- Fully funding the RHBP, accomplishing Goal 1.
- Requesting our Financial Advisor to provide a list of Environmental, Social, and Governance-related (ESG) investment funds available from The Standard for possible addition to the Investment lineup of the 403(B) and 401(A) retirement plans. The purpose is to provide plan participants funds to invest in that could be in alignment with their social values.

Future Plans include:

- Provide a training opportunity to educate interested employees about the benefits of the 401(A) Employer-Paid Supplemental Savings Plan and 403(B) plans, as well as familiarize them with The Standard's website by March 2025.

After Committee Reports concluded, Director Hammond announced that Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs for Equity and Inclusion Dr. Freddie Sanchez was set to receive the Wang Family Excellence Award at the next CSU Board of Directors meeting. This is the highest award that can be bestowed on a staff/administrator from the CSU representing all 23 campuses. The Board gave Dr. Sanchez a round of applause.

## **XI. Action Items**

### **A. Appoint Student Representatives**

M/S/P (D. Mann / H. Patel) Motion to approve Appointment of Student Representative.

There is a vacancy on the USU Board of Directors, due to Director Ricky Rosado resigning from the Board. The Chair and Vice Chair encourage the motion to approve the appointment extension for Nidharsh Kempegowda as a BOD student representative effective January 27, 2025, until the end of June 2026.

***Motion passed 13-0-1.***

### **B. East Conference Center Roof Replacement Funding**

M/S/P (D. Mann / M. Sawyer) Motion to approve the East Conference Center Roof Replacement Funding.

The issue is that the East Conference Center (ECC) Roof Repair Project has increased to 1,272,115 which leaves a shortfall of 1,085,010. The recommended motion is to approve the reallocation of the 1,085,010 from the sub pub elevator project and AS athletics renovation. The fiscal impact is zero because the amount re-allocated is equal to the amount de-allocated, meaning we are decreasing the funding for two projects and adding that amount to a different project.

The funds are no longer needed for the sub pub elevator project, and the A.S. Athletics Renovation is completed.

The ECC was built in 1994 and has been experiencing water leaks that have caused significant interior damage. The leaks are primarily caused by the failure of the roof's original waterproofing system, which has exceeded its 20-year lifespan.

The board initially approved an allocation of 187,107 in 2023-2024 to replace the roof with similar materials (Major R&R Project #54). The contractor that provided the original quote in March 2023 did not fully understand the existing conditions and repairs needed, which is why the current estimated cost is significantly higher. Additionally, the USU is working with Facilities Planning, Design and Construction (FPDC) on this major repair project.

CSUN Facilities planning, design, & construction (FPDC) assessed and identified several critical updates to the roof, including:

1. Upgraded Roofing System  
Replacement of the original gravel roof with a more durable and energy-efficient bitumen (waterproof) system, ensuring long-term performance.
2. Removal of Outdated Exhaust Duct Work  
Elimination of unused ductwork installed for past food service operations, which poses a water intrusion risk.
3. Additional Requirements  
Permits, bonds, asbestos abatement, deck repairs, and compliance with the State Fire Marshal Plan Check and Inspection.
4. 10% Owner/Project Contingency  
Allocation for unforeseen existing conditions requiring repairs.

Despite recent significant investments in renovations to the ECC's first floor (2014) and second floor (2022), the deteriorating roof has caused:

- Water damage to ceiling tiles
- Water intrusion along beams, conduits, and structures
- Water dripping into lighting fixtures and, during heavy rain, onto occupants below.

Additional justifications:

- Safety and Integrity: The roof has exceeded its 20-year lifespan, increasing the risk of leaks, emergency repairs, and disruptions during severe weather.
- Protecting Renovations: Recent second-floor renovations are a significant investment and are at risk of costly water damage, disrupting use and diminishing their value.
- Cost Efficiency: Addressing the roof now prevents more extensive and expensive future damage to interior finishes.
- Updating Design: Removing outdated exhaust systems simplifies the roof design, reduces leak risks, and improves overall performance.
- Supporting Institutional Goals: This project aligns with CSUN's mission to provide safe, high-quality facilities that enhance equity, innovation, and student success.

In response to Director Macias' question about the lifespan for the new roof, as well as the timeline of the project, Associate Director for Operations and Services Samantha Liu explained that if approved today, they will send the approval to hire a contractor to start working in February and plan to work over the summer to minimize impact to the occupants of the building. There are room reservations in the facility until May; after May, Sunny Days Camp will likely be impacted by noise. There will be no further risk or impact to Sunny Days Camp. The project will be a two-to-three-month process, aiming to finish by July with additional time in August, if necessary. Assistant Director for Facilities Maintenance Vincent Mele added that the roof's lifespan is 20 years.

In response to concern over the potential for additional funds, Samantha reiterated that by contracting in February, the price will be locked. However, there is a contingency fund of \$94,341.89 to support any price increases. Funds that are not used will be returned.



Director Mann shared that the ECC Roof Replacement Project was presented as a Discussion Item to the Facilities and Operations Committee. After several meetings following the presentation, the committee assessed and discussed all factors of the project, ultimately expressing their full support toward the ECC roof renovation.

***Motion passed 14-0-0.***

## **XII. Discussion Items**

### **A. BOD Elections – Spring 2025**

Assistant Director, Programs and Leadership Audrey Martinez discussed the upcoming A.S. and BOD Elections. Information sessions will be held on January 28 and January 29. Filing will officially open on February 11 and close on February 28. If someone misses an information session, the A.S. and USU Board of Directors websites will link back to each other. Once a student decides on running, they must attend a mandatory orientation on March 11 or March 12. There will be eligibility checks, and candidates will be notified of their eligibility status. The start of the campaign period is on March 13. Voting will occur online from April 8 to April 10, but there will be some physical locations for students to acquire information. Results will be revealed on April 10 at 6:30 p.m. in the Thousand Oaks Room and via social media livestream. This timeline will be shared with the committees.

In response to Director Hammond's inquiry about the orientation dates, Audrey clarified that the information sessions are optional, but the orientation meeting is mandatory. Director Hammond highlighted that the Board received numerous applications for its current vacancy in which interviews were being conducted in the same week as the information sessions. To avoid this overlap in the future, Director Hammond suggested allowing more time in between information sessions and potential Board interviews, as well as providing an additional information session to accommodate the applicants for a potential Board vacancy.

Chair Lopez asked for which Directors who are set to graduate in May but plan to continue to serve on the Board as a graduate student. He also reminded the Board that they are expected to recruit two peers to run and anticipates a competitive election season. If a Director's term does not end this semester, they do not need to re-run.

In response to Director Sanchez's inquiries, Audrey confirmed that, although the website is not yet live, the information sessions were being promoted at Meet the Clubs and Spring Fest. She also said another information session can be added to accommodate possible inquiries next week. The election schedule will also be shared with the Board electronically.

Chair Lopez solicited volunteers to support the USU Board of Directors Elections. Director Pathak and Director De Leon volunteered.

## **XIII. Announcements**

Director Hammond reminded the Board and committees to not wait until the end of the semester to finish their goals. She recommended spreading goals out over the course of the semester for completion.

Director Patel asked Director Mann a question about the webpage that the Facilities & Operations Committee is working on. Director Granillo also offered to support them, as he is familiar with the software.

Director Sawyer asked for information or documents on the initiatives supporting undocumented students. Director Sanchez highlighted the resources on the CSUN email, as well as a website that will be launching this week to support students, faculty, and staff. He is working with the DREAM

Center on additional initiatives, including the red cards. For resources on those impacted by the fires, he referenced the Basic Needs Office. If there is any sighting of federal agents, Director Sanchez instructed to contact Department of Police Services (DPS).

Director De Leon shared her gratitude for the USU's support of the undocumented community. Director Sanchez mentioned that there have been less students going to the DREAM Center since the semester started; some students expressed that they want to avoid being targeted. They met with some undocumented students to identify their needs. Director Sanchez encouraged everyone to step in and support as best we can. Director Hammond emphasized that these challenges do not just fall on the USU or the DREAM Center. The university is also being proactive in its resources and support. No one should feel unsafe to go to campus, and the USU stands by its mission statement.

Chair Lopez announced that there will be a special meeting on February 3 via Zoom to appoint a new student representative.

**XIV. Adjournment**

Chair Lopez adjourned the meeting at 2:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,



Debra L. Hammond,  
Executive Director