

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

MARCH 10, 2025 – GRAND SALON

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

Present	Absent	Staff	Guests
Rudy Granillo	Iman Khan (A.S. Liaison)	Alejandra Aparicio	Alison Johnson*
Nidharsh Kempegowda	Dr. Edith Winterhalter	Audrey Martinez	Erica Lopez
Daniel Lopez		Cesar Jimenez	Kyle James*
Joaquin Macias		Debra Hammond	Lionel Lawrence
Devaansh Mann		Janessa Reyes	
Marilyn Orantes		Jeremy Hamlett	
Cecilia Ortiz		Joseph Illuminate	
Heet Patel		Joshua Fleisher	
Vyom Pathak		Malahat Zhobin	
Cesar Rosales		Natalie Johnson	
Nawshin Sabah		Raine Hernandez	
Dr. Freddie Sanchez*		Samantha Liu	
Dr. Mirna Sawyer		Sharon Kinard	
Steven Wang		Shelley Sakoda	
		Steven Wein	
		Tim Rasmussen	

* TEAMS video participant

I. Approval of Agenda

M/S/P (D. Mann / C. Rosales) Motion to approve the agenda for March 10, 2025.

Motion passed 12-0-0.

Director Macias joined at 12:39 p.m.

II. Approval of Minutes 02/17/2025

M/S/P (R. Granillo / N. Kempegowda) Motion to approve the minutes for February 17, 2025.

Motion passed 11-0-2.

III. Open Forum

Master of Public Administration student Erica Lopez spoke about her transfer experience, calling it a culture shock. However, E. Lopez expressed her gratitude toward the Board for supporting students. Although she is graduating this spring, she shared how good it felt to know that there were people, like the BOD, on the students' side.

IV. Chair's Report

Chair Lopez extended a warm welcome to the new Executive Director Cecilia Ortiz and facilitated roundtable introductions of the BOD. Each Director stated their name, pronouns, position on the Board, work position (non-students), major and year (students), and favorite place or program in the USU. At the end of the roundtable, Director Ortiz shared a brief introduction of her educational and professional background, along with her pronouns and favorite place at the USU. Although Director Sanchez and Director Winterhalter were not present, Chair Lopez stated their roles on campus and the Board.

Chair Lopez reported that the CSUN Giving Day x USU Collaboration on Instagram Live was a success. BOD Elections filing has closed, with a good number of candidates. California Lieutenant Governor Eleni Kounalakis visited campus on February 24 to tour The Valera NEST development and was impressed with the USU's efforts in supporting students' basic needs. Several USU staff, student assistant employees, and BOD members, including Chair Lopez and Vice Chair Orantes, will be attending the ACUI Annual Conference in New York from March 14 to March 20, and email responses may be delayed during that time.

V. Vice Chair's Report

Vice Chair Orantes thanked Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Manager Natalie Johnson for facilitating the Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (J.E.D.I.) workshop at the BOD training on February 24. She also found the Parliamentary Procedure refresher helpful. Vice Chair Orantes stated that she and Chair Lopez have been working diligently to ensure they are making progress toward their BOD goals. Due to scheduling conflicts, Vice Chair Orantes recommended the collaboration between the Student Recreation Center (SRC) and University Village Apartments (UVA) for the next Chair and Vice Chair to execute. Additionally, she encouraged Directors to volunteer to host the BOD social media campaign at the A.S. Farmers Market, as her schedule does not permit her to continue the series.

Director Macias left at 1:20 p.m. and returned at 1:24 p.m. Director Lopez left at 1:24 p.m. and returned at 1:26 p.m.

VI. Executive Director's Report

Director Ortiz deferred the Executive Director's Report to Outgoing Executive Director Debra Hammond, as it was her second week in the role. D. Hammond expressed how excited she was that Director Ortiz has started. D. Hammond reported on other personnel updates and reclassifications. Intramural Sports Lead Student Assistants Laylah Fonseca and Aliyah Pollard were selected to officiate the National Intramural and Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA) Region VI Basketball Tournament at Grand Canyon University in Phoenix, AZ from February 28 to March 2. Director Ortiz and D. Hammond attended the CSUN Staff and Administrator Convening with President Beck on March 4 that discussed recent federal directives and policies and operational implications for CSUN. D. Hammond highlighted DREAM Center Manager Irvin Rendon and Supervisor Karen Castillo for their work supporting undocumented students, including their collaboration with Interim Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs, Equity and Inclusion Dr. Freddie Sanchez on presentations regarding immigration issues and student support. Associate Executive Director of Equity, Programs, and Leadership Dr. Tari Hunter was recognized at the Black Excellence Night during the CSUN Women's basketball game. Pride Center Manager Martel Okonji received the Advocacy and Student Success Champion Award from the Black House at the Black History Month Closing Ceremony.

Director Macias left at 1:29 p.m.

VII. A.S. Report

Associated Students (A.S.) Vice President Khan was absent for this meeting. No report was provided.

VIII. Committee Reports

A. Diversity & Inclusion

Director Granillo started his report with the committee meeting schedule, stating that the March 18 meeting was pushed to March 25, due to Spring Break. Director Granillo and Rosales have met with A.S. and other campus communities to evaluate the needs of undocumented students. Due to scheduling conflicts, they were unable to meet with the DREAM Center but are committed to rescheduling. Director Granillo hopes to support any initiatives that the next D&I Chair plans to take.

B. Facilities & Operations

Director Mann reported on the committee's second meeting held on February 21. The committee passed an action item allowing the SRC to close for nine additional days during fiscal year 2025-2026. Director Kempegowda provided a brief informational presentation about BOD Elections and encouraged committee members to run. The committee, also, debriefed their development activity at Dave & Buster's. Due to Spring Break, the committee canceled their meeting on March 21 and will be reconvening on April 25. Director Mann closed his report by expressing gratitude toward Executive Secretary Samantha Liu and Assistant Executive Secretary Jeremy Hamlett.

C. Finance

Director Pathak provided updates related to budget and committee development. Associate Director of Accounting and Finance Joe Illuminate conducted a presentation on the 2024-2025 Second Quarter Budget Report (6&6) in which the Finance Committee reviewed and passed. Additionally, the committee discussed all financial accounts and addressed key considerations for future financial planning. Although venue and logistical details are still in discussion, Director Pathak announced their upcoming committee development activity date on April 4.

D. Personnel

Director Sabah reported on the Personnel Committee's first meeting of the spring semester, which was held on February 26. The committee did not meet quorum, so Director De Leon hosted one-on-one meetings with each committee member to discuss next steps, reminding them of their responsibilities and future meeting dates. Director Sabah shared that she will be scheduling interviews to add one more committee member. She closed her report by announcing Director De Leon's departure from the Board to focus on her final semester in the MBA program. Director De Leon has served on the Board since January 2022. Director Sabah wished her the best of luck. Director Sawyer mentioned she might have a recommendation for a committee member.

E. Retirement

Vice Chair Orantes shared updates from the Retirement Committee's meeting on February 25. They discussed the Fourth Quarter 2024 Retirement Plan, Retirement Plan Expense Report, and VEBA update. The committee is still planning the training opportunity to educate employees about the benefits of the 401(A) Employer-Paid Supplemental Savings Plan and 403(B) plans, as well as navigating The Standard's website.

Director Mann left at 1:35 p.m. and returned at 1:37 p.m.

F. Internal Review

Vice Chair Orantes has been meeting with Executive Secretary Dr. Tari Hunter and Acting BOD Leadership and Administrative Coordinator Janessa Reyes one week before scheduled meetings to prepare the agenda and documents. Committee meetings may shift to once a month, instead of bi-weekly, to efficiently review and edit documents. During the last committee meeting, Chair Lopez filled in for Vice Chair Orantes and facilitated discussion around the latest edits to the

Expectations & Responsibilities forms for Student Directors and Non-Student Directors. The committee did not meet quorum but still engaged in insightful discussion. The committee will vote on the final documents in their next committee meeting. Vice Chair Orantes anticipates bringing the final documents to the Board in the next BOD meeting.

Director Wang left at 1:46 p.m. and returned at 1:49 p.m.

IX. Action Items

A. Form 990 Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax (2023-2024) -

Time Certain 12:45 p.m.

Motion out of the Audit Committee to recommend the approval of the Form 990 Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax (2023-2024).

The IRS recommended that the Board of Directors of non-profit organizations accept the Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax Information prior to filing it with the IRS. Form 990 was prepared by CohnReznick, the USU's audit and tax preparation firm. CohnReznick's Senior Manager Alison Johnson presented Form 990 to the Board. In accordance with the Form 990 Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax procedure, compensation data on pages 8 and 35 were removed in order to protect the Board members' privacy in a public forum. The current Form 990, including the compensation information, will be available on the USU website after it has been filed with the IRS.

After the presentation concluded, Vice Chair Orantes expressed her gratitude to A. Johnson for putting the information together. A. Johnson extended her gratitude to Associate Director of Accounting and Finance Joe Illuminate and CohnReznick colleague Kyle James.

Motion passed 12-0-0.

Director Sanchez left at 12:55 p.m.

B. 2024-2025 Second Quarter Budget (6&6)

Motion out of the Finance Committee to recommend the approval of the 2024-2025 Second Quarter Budget (6&6).

Directors Pathak and Patel presented on the 2024-2025 Second Quarter Budget Report (6&6). The term "6&6" signifies that there are six months of actual data and six months of projected data.

The USU reported a surplus of \$644,254 for the second quarter ending December 31, 2024, which erased the previously projected deficit of \$304,946. While most revenue and expenditure categories were within the acceptable operating range, Total Operating Expenditures fell below the expected 45%-55% range at 37.9% due to lower spending in General Operating Expenses, Supplies & Services, and Repairs & Maintenance, which comprise 69% of total operating costs of \$3,125,764. The USU's total assets were \$10,700,636, with liquid cash of \$9,584,342, and net assets totaled \$9,690,613. The Post Employment liability for the Retirement Health Benefits Plan (RHBP) was negative, indicating that the plan was overfunded by \$88,927, with an estimated overfunding of \$360,851 by June 30, 2025.

The USU also had investment income of \$249,492, primarily from the Consolidated Investment Pool. Unallocated Reserves amounted to \$518,683, partly due to RHBP overfunding. The Capital Outlay budget totaled \$189,095. Projects like the ADA Chair for the Plaza Pool and VDI Storage Upgrade were canceled due to unforeseen issues, while the Permanent USU Large Letters project was completed, and the Fire Alarm Monitoring System is still in progress. The Foundation's cash balance stood at \$497,295, with \$151,238 in unrestricted funds and \$346,057

in restricted funds. The Work Study Program showed a balance of \$22,391 remaining for future expenditures.

Director Kempegowda inquired about page 89 by asking if the organization can reinvest Unallocated Reserve funds into student experiences, in which Associate Director of Accounting and Finance Joe Illuminate stated that it is the USU policy to transfer unallocated funds to reserves to compensate for other organizational programs and priorities, especially as another quarterly budget is underway. In response to Chair Lopez's inquiry, J. Illuminate clarified that subscriptions encompass a variety of things, such as printed materials, like magazines.

Motion passed 11-0-0.

C. Student Assistant Classification & Wage Schedule

M/S/P (N. Sabah / R. Granillo) Motion to approve the updated Student Assistant Classification and Wage Schedule, effective June 22, 2025, and to suspend merit increases for student assistant employees for FY 2025-2026.

Effective July 1, 2025, the City of Los Angeles minimum wage is increasing from \$17.28/hour to \$17.87/hour. In conjunction with this change, the Human Resources Department has updated the Student Assistant Classification and Wage Schedule, which would go in effect on June 22, 2025, the first day of the pay period covering July 1, 2025. As a result of these changes to the wage schedule, a total of \$107,000 is estimated to be included in the 2025-2026 USU Operating Budget. Although the merit increases for student assistant employees would be suspended, supervisors may request an in-range wage progression.

Motion passed 11-0-0.

D. Student Recreation Center (SRC) Days of Operation in FY 2025-2026

Motion out of the Facilities & Operations (F&O) Committee to recommend the approval of the SRC closure on nine (9) additional days during FY 2025-2026.

To increase efficiency and control costs, SRC leadership has reviewed projected operating hours for FY 2025-2026. They identified nine (9) days to close the SRC, which are near the starts of the semesters, SRC training weeks, and holidays. In the past, these days have historically had lower attendance and staffing challenges. Closing on days outside of the semesters would have less impact on membership. Additionally, these closures would result in \$25,000 labor cost savings. The recommended additional closure dates were decided among SRC professional staff, excluding student assistant employees (SAEs). These closures are on the following dates:

Saturday, August 23, 2025
Saturday, November 29, 2025
Monday, December 22, 2025
Tuesday, December 23, 2025
Friday, January 2, 2026
Saturday, January 3, 2026
Saturday, January 17, 2026
Sunday, January 18, 2026
Sunday, May 24, 2026

Closure dates would be announced through calendar and email communications. Several Directors had questions about the data, so SRC's Acting Co-Director Jeremy Hamlett and Facility Operations and Membership Services Manager Angela Gattoni approached the podium to help provide responses and clarification. Low attendance was determined by using current and past data of attendance, which showed that members have been visiting the SRC drastically less at

the beginning of semesters and near holidays and events. On a typical weekday, there are about 2,000 visitors in the SRC. According to A. Gattoni, attendance numbers used to trend higher pre-COVID, peaking around 4,000 average weekday visitors. In the past two years, attendance has only averaged about 2,000 weekday visitors and 700 weekend visitors during the semester. In response to Vice Chair Orantes' question about the number of children that visit the SRC, A. Gattoni stated that during dependent hours from Friday to Sunday, about 20-30 dependents visit for swim classes, but without swim, there are only about 10 or less dependents.

Director Sawyer inquired about the impact of saving \$25,000 in which J. Hamlett responded by stating that the impact of the closure dates would allow time for employee training and custodial maintenance. Outgoing Executive Director Debra Hammond also provided context to the cost savings, sharing that she asked all managers to assess programs and services in an effort to save funding. SRC leadership was creative in looking at closure days instead of reducing hours of operation. D. Hammond only recommended reducing programs and services if savings exceeded \$20,000. J. Hamlett highlighted that SAEs would be positively impacted, as scheduling front-line staff in December has been challenging.

Director Rosales expressed gratitude to the SRC team for considering full days of closure, instead of reducing hours. On the contrary, Directors Sawyer and Patel did not like the idea of closing the SRC and potentially displacing students on those particular days. In response, Director Mann reiterated that the closure would allow a small break for SAEs, as they already work 40-hour weeks during training seasons.

Motion passed 10-1-0.

X. Discussion Items

A. Executive Director's Evaluation Process

Outgoing Executive Director Debra Hammond explained the evaluation process for the Executive Director. Because she is outgoing, this process will commence in March 2026, and annually thereafter, for the new Executive Director. The Board Review Team consists of Interim Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs, Equity and Inclusion Dr. Freddie Sanchez, BOD Chair, and Chair of the Personnel Committee. This process evaluates the USU's reputation across campus, Executive Director's leadership and administrative skills, interactions with staff, and impact on students, gaining feedback from Board members. Simultaneously, the Executive Director conducts a self-appraisal in the same categories. Dr. Sanchez has asked to expand the process by including 360 feedback from USU staff members, as well as campus colleagues, so D. Hammond will write the revised process for Dr. Sanchez's review and approval, aiming to finish this fiscal year.

The next Executive Director evaluation timeline is as follows:

- March 2026: Executive Director evaluation process begins.
- April 2026: The Board Review Team will meet.
- May 2026: An Executive Session will be held during the BOD meeting, where the evaluation will be administered to the Executive Director.

B. Year-End Celebration Awards

Training and Development Coordinator Christine Aroutounians announced that nominations are open for the upcoming Year-End Celebration on May 2. Year-End Celebration is an annual event that is open to all USU employees, BOD members, BOD committee members, campus VIP, and others who have had significant involvement with the USU over the past year. The event celebrates individuals for their contributions and service and is followed by a reception. C. Aroutounians revealed the two awards determined by the BOD through a secret ballot vote:

- 1) Board of Directors Committee Member of the Year Award

This award recognizes a current standing committee member of the BOD who has demonstrated excellence in their role.

2) Aida C. Salazar Award

Named in honor of former USU BOD member who passed away following an automobile accident in 1986, this award recognizes a member of the CSUN community who has significantly promoted and supported the USU mission by fostering diversity, inclusion, and belonging.

Board members will have until March 28 to submit their nominations via Wufoo form. It is recommended that committee members participate in selecting their committee's nominee for the BOD Committee Member of the Year Award. The Chair and Co-Chair will select their nominee for the Aida C. Salazar Award. The Board will vote via secret ballot during the April BOD meeting. Award winners will be announced at Year-End Celebration.

XI. Announcements

Acting BOD Leadership and Administrative Coordinator Janessa Reyes announced a few updates and reminders about recruitment for the USU Scholarship Review Committee, BOD Elections, and Admitted Matadors Day. She also reminded the Board to stay back after the meeting for a group photo.

Chair Lopez reminded Directors about BOD training on March 24 from 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. Directors must complete the SMARTER Goals worksheet provided at the February BOD training prior to meeting.

XII. Adjournment

Chair Lopez adjourned the meeting at 2:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,



Cecilia Ortiz,
Executive Director