

**UNIVERSITY STUDENT UNION  
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
APRIL 7, 2025 – GRAND SALON**

**I. Call to Order**

The regular meeting of the USU Board of Directors was called to order at 12:34 p.m. by Chair Lopez.

**II. Roll Call**

<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Guests</b>
Rudy Granillo	Cesar Rosales	Alejandra Aparicio	John Pangan (Student Assistant)
Nidharsh Kempegowda	Dr. Freddie Sanchez	Audrey Martinez	
Iman Khan (A.S. Liaison)		Cesar Jimenez	
Daniel Lopez		Jeremy Hamlett	
Joaquin Macias*		Joshua Fleisher	
Devaansh Mann		Natalie Johnson	
Marilyn Orantes		Raine Hernandez	
Cecilia Ortiz		Ryan Hairapetian	
Heet Patel		Samantha Liu	
Vyom Pathak		Sharon Kinard	
Nawshin Sabah		Shelley Sakoda	
Dr. Mirna Sawyer*		Steven Wein	
Steven Wang		Dr. Tari Hunter	
Dr. Editha Winterhalter			

\* TEAMS video participant

**III. Approval of Agenda**

M/S/P (N. Sabah / R. Granillo) Motion to approve the agenda for April 7, 2025.

***Motion passed 11-0-0.***

Director Macias joined the meeting at 12:40 p.m.

**IV. Approval of Minutes 03/10/2025**

M/S/P (R. Granillo / N. Kempegowda) Motion to approve the minutes for March 10, 2025.

M/S/P (C. Ortiz / R. Granillo) Motion to amend the minutes for March 10, 2025 with the given revisions for the Discussion Item A. Executive Director's Evaluation Process.

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

## **V. Open Forum**

Several staff and students took to the podium to share their gratitude and experience following their attendance at the ACUI Annual Conference held in New York from March 15-19.

Resource Center Supervisor Raine Hernandez shared their deep appreciation for the USU's investment in their personal and professional development. It was a once in a lifetime experience and R. Hernandez looks forward to sharing their own LGBTQIA+ research at ACUI conferences in the future.

Director Pathak took a moment to also thank the Board of Directors and staff members, including Executive Director Cecilia Ortiz, former Executive Director Debra L. Hammond, Administration & Assessment Manager Shelley Sakoda, and Assistant Director, Programs & Leadership Audrey Martinez, for their support and assistance in allowing him the opportunity to attend the ACUI Annual Conference in New York. He shared his very rich and wonderful experience at the conference, highlighting key events including educational sessions that allowed him to learn more about the application of Clifton Strengths and transferrable skills, the importance of personal branding, and the importance of authenticity and values in our personal and professional lives. Further, he thoroughly enjoyed Dr. Terrel Strayhorn, emphasizing that belonging is more than a buzz word, but the epitome of our role as Student Unions and providing a place for students to thrive. He closed by thanking the room once again and looked forward to other opportunities in the future.

Marketing Student Assistant Cesar Jimenez thanked the Board, USU staff, and Marketing supervisors for their support of his attendance. He learned many lessons in attending the educational sessions and valued the conversations and time he got to spend with his fellow students and student affairs professionals who took the time to be in community and conversation with him in New York.

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

Chair Lopez provided brief updates on BOD elections, his wonderful experience at the ACUI Annual Conference, and the upcoming BOD Alumni Panel. There are a total of eight candidates and voting will take place from April 8 to April 10. He encouraged students to vote and spread the word. Key takeaways from the Association of College Unions International (ACUI) Annual Conference were connections, the future of AI in Student Affairs, and the future of the student union. Chair Lopez also shared that the BOD Alumni Panel is taking place on April 14 and more information would follow.

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

Vice Chair Orantes reported on her takeaways of connection, innovation, and workshops at the ACUI Annual Conference. Vice Chair Orantes connected with individuals who offered guidance, after hearing about her career aspirations. She found the workshop, "Neurodivergent Leadership: Embracing Diverse Minds in Higher Education," to be innovative in its approach to offer unique student experiences. Another workshop, "Empowering Women: To Doctorate or Not, Navigating the Doctoral Journey Decision," inspired Vice Chair Orantes by showcasing women that have endured similar challenges as her, overcame numerous obstacles, and achieved their degrees. This workshop also highlighted how post-graduation journeys are not linear. Vice Chair Orantes ended her report by thanking everyone who makes the USU feel like a welcoming, safe space and encouraging students to use the Oasis Wellness Center for self-care, the Student Recreational Center (SRC) for energy, and the Resource Centers for individualized support.

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

Director Ortiz highlighted the following items from her report:

Several USU staff presented at the ACUI Annual Conference in New York. Associate Executive Director, Equity, Programs & Leadership Dr. Tari Hunter and CSU Los Angeles University Student Union Executive Director Dr. Megan Bell presented, "Empowering Women: To Doctorate or Not, Navigating the Doctoral Journey Decision," on March 19. Additionally, Dr. Tari Hunter was honored at the conference as the recipient of the Daniel M. Maxwell Dissertation of the Year award for her dissertation, "Empowering Transitions: A Phenomenological Study of Black Transfer Students from Community Colleges to California State Universities." Assessment Coordinator Alejandra Aparicio and Marketing Coordinator Malahat Zhobin presented, "Data-Driven Glow-Up: Transforming Student Wellness Through Assessment and Marketing," on March 17. Marketing Manager Steven Wein, Graphic Designer James Matzen, and Marketing Coordinator Malahat Zhobin presented, "From Input to Impact: Student Voices at the Heart of a Multimillion- Dollar Renovation Project," on March 19.

Director Ortiz highlighted our on-going sponsorships and programs. The DREAM Center continues to provide CARECEN Legal Appointments which include hour-long immigration legal services for our students, staff, faculty, alumni, and immediate family members. A total of 23 appointments were provided as of April 7. The USU's Matador Fun Fest event held on March 28 provided a fun and entertaining afternoon for CSUN students and their families. Music, food, and interactive activities created a fun and enjoyable event for all attendees. She also mentioned the various engagement and services provided by the Oasis Wellness Center through resource tabling, presentations, and tours. Other updates and highlights can be found in the Executive Director's report in the agenda packet.

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

Associated Students (A.S.) Vice President Khan provided several updates from Associated Students and the Cal State Student Association (CSSA): CSSA focused on Advocacy Day in the month of March and A.S. Vice President Khan participated in a total of 10 meetings, including one with California Assembly Member Pillar Schiavo and Assembly Woman Michelle Rodriguez. Serving as the System Wide Affairs Vice Chair for undocumented students, Khan shared that the resolution has been made public on the CSSA website. The next CSSA meeting in May will focus on Trans Rights and Trans Athlete participation. Lastly, Khan shared that the Associated Students search for the next Executive Director is in progress and hoped to have the position filled by May.

#### **X. Committee Reports**

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

Director Granillo updated the Board on some revisions to their committee goals. They have eliminated Goal #2, which aimed to collect and analyze data within International and Parent Scholars to assess their awareness and opinions about Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (J.E.D.I.) initiatives in the USU. Additionally, the committee plans to revise Goal #1, which focused on collaboration with the DREAM Center in supporting undocumented students. The new language for Goal #1 states: "In collaboration with the USU DREAM Center and other campus entities, the committee will identify at least two best practices to support undocumented student success, focusing on increasing visibility of 'Know Your Rights' resources and exploring fund allocation for fellowships. Findings and recommendations will be compiled into a report and presented to the Board of Directors for consideration by May 30, 2025." Other committee updates included an upcoming team development activity on April 13 and the welcoming of their newest member, Amelia Zapata, who previously served as an Internal Review Committee member.

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

Director Mann shared that the committee does not have any new updates, since their meeting in March was canceled, due to Spring Break. Their next committee meeting is scheduled for April 25 from 2:30 – 4:00 p.m., where they will meet with the USU Marketing and Maintenance departments to continue working toward their committee goals.

### **C. Finance**

Director Pathak began his report by expressing gratitude toward committee members and executive team members, as well as the Board for supporting the 6&6 Budget. Director Pathak recognized Executive Secretary Joe Illuminati as their Committee Spotlight for his work and always ensuring smooth operations. The committee plans to enhance financial literacy and smart investment strategies within their committee. Upcoming meeting topics will cover allocation proposals for Capital Outlay, Major Purchases, Repairs & Replacement, and Designated Reserves. Director Pathak thanked the USU for the opportunity to attend the ACUI Annual Conference, which provided him with new ideas and leadership insight.

A.S. Vice President Khan left at 1:16 p.m. and returned at 1:21 p.m. Director Mann left at 1:20 p.m. and returned at 1:23 p.m.

### **D. Personnel**

Director Sabah shared that the committee met on March 26 and met quorum. During the meeting, she confirmed everyone's attendance for the remaining meetings of the semester, which will be held on April 9, April 23, and May 7. The committee discussed a new recommended policy that would extend benefit eligibility for long-term staff who exhaust FMLA and CFRA benefits under the law. The policy is expected to be an action item at their next meeting. Other committee goals include:

- Approval of an updated relocation policy (April 2025)
- Approval of the new position of Intramural and Day Camp Supervisor (April 2025)

Director Sabah took a moment to thank the Board of Directors, Administration & Assessment Manager Shelley Sakoda, and Assistant Director, Programs & Leadership Audrey Martinez for the opportunity to attend the ACUI Annual Conference. She had a great time and gave a shout out to Associate Executive Director, Equity, Programs, and Leadership Dr. Tari Hunter for her recognition at ACUI. She ended her report by thanking Executive Secretary Kristen Pichler for her support and guidance.

Director Macias left at 1:28 p.m. and returned at 1:31 p.m.

### **E. Retirement**

Vice Chair Orantes did not have any updates from the committee. They are continuing to work on their committee goals, as well as plan the Spring 2025 Retirement Plan Committee meeting. The next meeting will take place in late April.

### **F. Internal Review**

Vice Chair Orantes announced that the committee finalized drafts for the Expectations & Responsibilities for Student and Non-Student Directors forms to be reviewed by the Board today. Next steps include finalizing an Expectations & Responsibilities for Committee Members form and reviewing Bylaws and Scholarship policies. Vice Chair Orantes thanked the support of the committee members, Executive Secretary Dr. Tari Hunter, BOD Leadership and Administrative Coordinator Janessa Reyes, Assistant Director, Programs & Leadership Audrey Martinez for their work and support of the committee.

## **XI. Action Items**

### **A. Updated Expectations & Responsibilities for Student Directors Form**

Motion out of the Internal Review Committee to recommend the approval of the Updated Expectations & Responsibilities for Student Directors Form.

In alignment with Board of Directors Goal #3, the Internal Review Committee conducted a comprehensive review and revision of the Expectations & Responsibilities form for Student

Directors. The form, which had not been updated since 2015, was assessed to ensure its continued relevance and alignment with current governance practices and organizational priorities. A redlined document and a final document were presented.

During discussion it was recommended that the language for line-item number 3, "Have no more than four (4) Board-related absences from June to June (commencing the first working day subsequent to University Commencement and ending the day of University Commencement)," be revised to state:

"Have no more than four (4) BOARD, BOARD-RELATED AND/OR COMMITTEE-RELATED absences from June to June (commencing the first working day subsequent to University Commencement and ending the day of University Commencement)."

The Board of directors agreed, and the changes were put into motion for amendment.

M/S/P (C. Ortiz / H. Patel) Motion to amend the Updated Expectations & Responsibilities for Student Directors Form with the recommended revised language for line-item number 3.

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

## **B. Updated Expectations & Responsibilities for Non-Student Directors Form**

Motion out of the Internal Review Committee to recommend the approval of the Updated Expectations & Responsibilities for Non-Student Directors Form.

In alignment with Board of Directors Goal #3, the Internal Review Committee conducted a comprehensive review and revision of the Expectations & Responsibilities form for Non-Student Directors. The form, which had not been updated since 2015, was assessed to ensure its continued relevance and alignment with current governance practices and organizational priorities. A redlined document and a final document were presented.

In discussion, the Board adopted the same recommendation for the Updated Expectations & responsibilities for Student Directors form for the Non-Student Directors form regarding language for line-item number 3 to state:

"Have no more than four (4) BOARD, BOARD-RELATED AND/OR COMMITTEE-RELATED absences per year."

M/S/P (C. Ortiz / S. Wang) Motion to amend the Updated Expectations & Responsibilities for Non-Student Directors Form with the recommended revised language for line-item number 3.

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

## **XII. Discussion Items**

### **A. Year-End Celebration Awards Voting**

Training and Development Coordinator Christine Aroutounians facilitated the voting process 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 The following two awards were 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.

Each committee shared their nominees with the group. The Board voted via secret ballot during the meeting. Award winners will be announced at Year-End Celebration.

**XIII. Announcements**

Assistant Director, Programs & Leadership Audrey Martinez shared the following announcements:

- Elections will be taking place April 8 – 10. Currently enrolled students will receive a unique link via email to cast their votes online. Ballot will close at 6 p.m. on April 10. The elections reveal will take place in-person on Thursday, April 10 in the Grand Salon at 6:30 p.m. and livestream via the USU and A.S. Instagram social media pages.
- A big thank you to Director Granillo for volunteering to present at the Matador Student Experience Panel at Admitted Matadors Day held on Saturday, April 5. Director Granillo provided a presentation that showcased the different programs, services, and leadership opportunities available through the University Student Union.
- Thank you to Associate Director, Human Resources and Professional Development Kristen Pichler for providing the Board of Directors a training and workshop surrounding resume building and salary negotiation on March 24.
- The Board of Directors is invited to join the annual Night Market event on Friday, April 18 (7 – 11 p.m.) for delicious food, fun, and entertainment.

**XIV. Adjournment**

Chair Lopez adjourned the meeting at 1:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,



Cecilia Ortiz,  
Executive Director