

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

July 28, 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 Sabah.

II. Roll Call

Present	Absent	Staff	Guests
Alejandro Perez	Dr. Mirna Sawyer	Alejandra Aparicio	Alexandria Goldsmith
Alexia Aguilar		Ani Davtyan	Diana Ly
Alvaro Geminiano Aragon* (A.S. Liaison)		Audrey Martinez	
Cameron Gonzalez		Dr. Tari Hunter	
Cecilia Ortiz		Janessa Reyes	
Cesar Rosales		Jeremy Hamlett	
Dr. Edith Winterhalter*		Jolee Innocent	
Dr. Freddie Sanchez		Joseph Illuminate	
Heet Patel		Lara Shaghoian	
Honey Modi		Natalie Johnson	
Joaquin Macias		Raine Hernandez	
Karim Kouatly		Ruth Vasquez	
Nawshin Sabah		Samantha Liu	
Rudy Granillo		Shelley Sakoda	
Steven Wang		Steven Wein	
Vyom Pathak		Tim Rasmussen	

**TEAMS video participant*

III. Approval of Agenda

M/S/P (K. Kouatly / C. Rosales) Motion to approve the agenda for July 28, 2025.

Motion passed 14-0-0.

IV. Approval of Minutes 06/02/2025

M/S/P (R. Granillo / V. Pathak) Motion to approve the minutes for June 2, 2025.

Motion passed 14-0-0.

V. Approval of Minutes 06/09/2025

M/S/P (C. Rosales / A. Perez) Motion to approve the minutes for June 9, 2025.

Motion passed 13-0-1.

VI. Action Items

A. Audit Committee Student Appointment – Diana Ly

M/S/P (C. Rosales / R. Granillo) Motion to approve Audit Committee Student Appointment – Diana Ly.

Diana Ly was interviewed by Chair Sabah and Vice Chair Granillo. Chair Sabah shared that they had a good discussion, stating that they highly recommend D. Ly for this appointment. Chair Sabah invited D. Ly to the podium to provide a brief statement about themselves.

D. Ly shared their experience in professional organizations related to the role and interest in audit, as an accounting student.

Motion passed 14-0-0.

B. Committee Chair and Co-Chair Appointments

M/S/P (K. Kouatly / A. Aguilar) Motion to approve the Committee Chair and Co-Chair appointments.

The 2025-2026 appointments are:

Diversity & Inclusion:

- Chair: Cesar Rosales
- Co-Chair: Cameron Gonzales

Facilities & Operations:

- Chair: Heet Patel
- Co-Chair: Alejandro Perez

Finance:

- Chair: Vyom Pathak
- Co-Chair: Honey Modi

Personnel:

- Chair: Karim Kouatly
- Co-Chair: Alexia Aguilar

Retirement:

- Chair: Vice Chair Granillo

Director Sanchez stated that he was excited to see the new pairings and looks forward to their reports.

Motion passed 14-0-0.

VII. Open Forum

There were no participants for Open Forum.

VIII. Chair's Report

Chair Sabah started her report by referencing BOD Summer Retreat and thanked the team for their efforts in organizing. She expressed her excitement for the year ahead and encouraged relationship-building between Committee Chairs, Co-Chairs, and Executive Secretaries. Chair Sabah expressed her gratitude for holding her position and reminded the Board of her and Vice Chair Granillo's support.

IX. Vice Chair's Report

Vice Chair Granillo began his report by sharing how deeply honored he was to serve in his position. He welcomed the new Directors to their assigned committee positions. As part of the interview committee for the Board of Directors Leadership & Administrative Coordinator position, Vice Chair Granillo reported that interviews concluded. Additionally, the Internal Review Ad Hoc Committee met twice since the BOD Transition Ceremony and plan to present proposed revisions to the USU bylaws in the next BOD meeting. Vice Chair Granillo thanked the previous Board of Directors for setting them up for another successful year and reminded Directors to let him know if they are interested in serving as the Student Representative for the USU Gateway Project or Retirement Committees.

X. Executive Director's Report

Director Ortiz provided updates on Personnel, Professional Activities, Projects, and University-Wide Service. She welcomed Strategic Marketing & Communications Supervisors Ani Davtyan and Lara Shaghoian and Collaborations & Special Projects Supervisor Raine Hernandez to their new positions and invited each of them to the podium to introduce themselves. Veterans Resource Center (VRC) Manager Robert Graves delivered a keynote for the Global Business Incubator, emphasizing resilience, purpose, and veteran-driven entrepreneurship. Wellness Center Manager Condor was appointed for the Collective Higher Education (CoHE) for the International Spa Association (ISPA). The USU co-sponsored Black Matador Excellence Experience, a celebration introducing new Black Matadors to CSUN peers, Black campus leaders, and resources. The Student Recreation Center (SRC) temporarily converted the first-floor women's restroom into an additional gender inclusive restroom for the summer and hosted CSUN Summer Celebration on behalf of President Beck. Director Ortiz concluded her report with an update on campus townhall meetings about the university's enforcement response.

XI. A.S. Report

Associated Students (A.S.) Vice President Geminiano Aragon's report provided updates on the A.S. statement for undocumented student support, A.S. scholarship review and selection, and meetings with Department of Police Services (DPS) regarding immigration enforcement resources. A.S. appointed and approved the Executive Assistant, Chair of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion, Chair of Legislative Affairs, and Chair of Elections. Additionally, they met with various campus entities, such as the Pride Center, Deans and Associate Deans of academic departments, and EOP, to discuss policies, updates, and goals. A.S. Vice President Geminiano Aragon stated that although EOP was safe from federal budget cuts, TRIO is facing challenges with budget and operations. He also shared information on the new CSUN appointments to California State Student Association (CSSA) committees and internal developments, such as the audit completion and the onboarding of new Executive Director Vicki Allen. He is actively preparing for Welcome Week, CSUnity, and further collaborations with the USU Board of Directors. A.S. Vice President Geminiano Aragon ended his report with congratulating the Committee Chairs and Co-Chairs on their new appointments.

Chair Sabah expressed her excitement to collaborate with A.S.

XII. Committee Reports

Committee Chairs were encouraged to provide brief statements or updates.

A. Diversity & Inclusion

Director Rosales shared his thoughts on BOD Summer Retreat and being appointed Chair of the Diversity & Inclusion Committee. He also provided some insight on the California Student Aid Commission regarding the DREAM Center fellowship program funding proposal.

B. Facilities & Operations

Director Patel stated that he enjoyed learning about everyone at BOD Summer Retreat. He is excited to work with Executive Secretary Samantha Liu, Assistant Executive Secretary Jeremy Hamlett, and his Co-Chair, Director Perez.

C. Finance

Director Pathak thanked the BOD for choosing him to Chair the Finance Committee again and welcomed his Co-Chair, Director Modi. He looks forward to working with the committee on reviewing department spending, funds, and reports. Director Pathak plans to begin interviewing for committee members soon.

D. Personnel

Director Kouatly expressed his gratitude for the BOD Summer Retreat and his and Director Aguilar's appointments to the Personnel Committee. He reported that they met and discussed meeting times, ideas for goals, and icebreakers for committee members.

E. Retirement

Vice Chair Granillo reiterated that he will send an email to the BOD Student Directors soliciting interest in becoming a Student Representative for the Retirement Committee.

F. Internal Review

Vice Chair Granillo reported that the committee is almost done revising the USU bylaws for Board consideration.

XIII. Discussion Items

A. USU Gateway Project

Feasibility planning for the USU Gateway, a revised project scope from the 2019 referendum, began in June 2025 and will continue through the 2025–2026 fiscal year in preparation for the design-build process. Ongoing discussions with the USU Board of Directors through this process will ensure that student input remains central to the process, while also supporting transparent communication, aligning with organizational priorities, and preserving the original goals and themes established in the 2019 student referendum.

As a continuation of their presentation at BOD Summer Retreat, Brailsford & Dunlavey Consultant Alex Goldsmith facilitated a discussion requesting student input on dining options, indoor seating, and outdoor spaces. Several Student Directors expressed their thoughts on areas of campus that seem to attract and deter students. Some highlights of highly utilized areas include tech integration, comfortable seating, natural elements, and proximity to dining options. Director Rosales and Vice Chair Granillo discussed the need for food options that are closer to market prices, easy to prepare, and quick to obtain, such as a kiosk with hot items and healthy options. Director Patel brought up the ambience of RE Cafe, an off-campus coffee shop, that provides a sense of privacy and warm lighting.

Associate Director, Operations & Services Samantha Liu led the Board into a role-playing activity to help them practice explaining the USU Gateway Project to students. Following the activity, she asked for student representation interest in serving on the USU Gateway Committee. A website with more information on the USU Gateway is forthcoming.

A.S. Vice President Geminiano Aragon left at 1:36 p.m. and returned at 2:00 p.m.
Director Ortiz left at 1:45 p.m. and returned at 1:48 p.m.

B. NASPA Results

Since 2015, the USU has implemented an annual assessment using a customized version of the NASPA Student Unions and Programming Survey to evaluate the impact of student employment on the development of transferable skills. This assessment has helped measure growth in key areas such as customer service, time management, leadership, and teamwork among student assistant employees. The findings have supported the USU's strategic goal to provide learning-based student work experiences that prepare students for post-college success. The 2024–2025 cycle marked the final administration of the NASPA tool, as the USU transitions to the NACE Career Competency Assessment beginning in 2025–2026.

Administration & Assessment Manager Shelley Sakoda and Assessment Coordinator Alejandra Aparicio provided a presentation on the USU student employment program with results from the NASPA survey. They highlighted the major increase in response rates between 2021 to 2025, due to their collaboration with Human Resources and administering the survey during USU Summit. S. Sakoda will consult with Associate Director, Administration and Communications Sharon Kinard regarding whether NACE will be able to acquire comparison data on other institutions.

C. 2025-2026 Goals Brainstorm

Executive Director Cecilia Ortiz and Associate Executive Director, Equity, Programs, & Leadership Dr. Tari Hunter facilitated a continuation of the 25-26 BOD goals brainstorm from BOD Summer Retreat, focusing on three overall themes: 1) Visibility, Access, & Belonging 2) Collaboration & Community Engagement 3) Leadership Development & Strategic Growth. To refine these goal areas, several Directors voiced their thoughts on which themes were most prevalent and engaged in further discussion about key areas that need improvement. Director Ortiz concluded the discussion by providing insight on next steps.

Director Winterhalter left at 2:25 p.m.

XIV. Announcements

Vice Chair Granillo announced that he will send an email soliciting interest to serve as a Student Representative in the Retirement Committee and USU Gateway Committee.

Director Ortiz said that she enjoyed getting to know almost everyone during BOD Summer Retreat. She will set up touch points to connect with everyone.

Director Sanchez urged everyone to enjoy the rest of the summer, as it will be a very busy Fall semester.

Director Wang displayed AI-generated animations of the participant artwork created during a teambuilding activity at BOD Summer Retreat.

XV. Adjournment

Chair Sabah adjourned the meeting at 2:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'C' followed by a horizontal line and a small flourish.

Cecilia Ortiz,
Executive Director