

CAMPUS FEE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes

Date: 2/26/2026

Time: 1:00 PM

<https://csusb.zoom.us/j/83914864085>

Committee Members

1. Faculty Senate Chair or designee: Beth Steffel, *Co-Chair Designee*
2. Faculty Senate EPRC Rep: John Reitzel - Absent
3. University Advancement: Ginny Hattar
4. Student Affairs Rep: Mike Rister
5. Finance, Technology & Operations Rep: Maria Badulis
6. Finance, Technology & Operations, ITS Rep: Sonia Miranda - Absent
7. Academic Affairs Rep: Patrick Bungard - Absent
8. PDC Rep: Avi Rodriguez
9. ASI President or Designee: Diego Rendon, *Co-Chair*
10. ASI Undergrad: Ayanna McAlister
11. ASI Undergrad: Ashley Smith
12. ASI Undergrad: Alberto Fernandez
13. ASI Undergrad: Kimberly Rosas
14. ASI Undergrad: Jiselle Villegas
15. ASI Undergrad (PDC): Alondra Lopez
16. ASI Graduate: Joseph Morales
17. ASI Graduate: Jay Carillo

Guests

1. Andreina Dominguez, Assistant to Associate Vice President – Finance, Technology & Operations (zoom support/ minute taker)
2. Sesar Morfin – Associate Vice President, Finance & Administrative Services
3. Dr. Paz Oliverrez – Vice President for Student Affairs
4. Mary Christien Ulatan Robles – Chief of Staff & Director of Operations & Fiscal Management for Student Affairs
5. Matthew Smith – Associated Vice President for Student Affairs & Dean of Students
6. Christie Joines – Senior Associate Athletics Director
7. Vilayat Del Rossi – Interim Executive Director, SMSU

8. Savannah Hoffmann – Student Athlete
9. Jeronimo Valdepeña – Student Athlete
10. Kim Cherniss – Head Coach, Athletics Department
11. Joshua Hill – Head Coach, Athletics Department

ASI President, Diego Rendon, called the meeting to order at 1:01pm.

1) Welcome

ASI President, Diego Rendon welcomed everyone.

2) Approval of January 22, 2026 Minutes

Motion to approve the January 22, 2026, minutes by Ayanna McAlister and Jay Carrillo.

The January 22, 2026, minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

3) M/S Carrillo/McAlister: IRA Alternative Consultation – Dr. Paz Olivérez

Dr. Olivérez thanked the committee for their time and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to share more information about IRA and the proposed alternative consultation process. She mentioned that this presentation would be featured by multiple speakers covering different aspects of the topic. She handed the floor to Dr. Matthew Smith, Associated Vice President for Student Affairs & Dean of Students to begin the presentation.

Dr. Smith introduced himself and explained his role in co-chairing the IRA committee, which reviews proposals for IRA funding alongside faculty and students. He highlighted the work group currently developing an alternative consultation process, aimed at informing students about how IRA fees are allocated and gathering their input on potential fee increases.

Dr. Smith provided an overview of the instructionally related activities fee, emphasizing its purpose to fund hands-on, educational experiences connected to academic programs, which require approval from the University President. He explained that these fees are mandatory, regulated under CSU guidelines (Executive Order 1102), and are designed to support academic goals, ensure accountability, and maintain consistency across CSU campuses.

Dr. Olivérez explained that IRA funds are allocated based on California Education Code, supporting specific areas such as student employment, internships, service learning, community-based learning, learning communities, student publications, intramural sports, the Speaking Center, global learning programs like Model UN and education abroad, and hands-on experiential learning in fields like marine biology, theology, and exercise and medicine. She encouraged visiting an online link for a comprehensive list of proposals funded in 2025-2026, highlighting that many of these activities are considered high-impact practices that significantly contribute to student success both during and after college.

Dr. Oliverez emphasized that IRA fees are crucial because they support activities that enhance academic success, student services, and campus life, all vital for student retention and a rewarding college experience. She highlighted that current fees are unsustainable due to rising costs in salaries, operations, and travel, leading to funding gaps that limit opportunities like on-campus employment and internships. These gaps reduce the availability of valuable experiences for students and can cause programs to be paused or eliminated, negatively impacting student development and future career or graduate school prospects.

Dr. Oliverez explained that the original IRA fee for CSUSB was established in 1994-95 at \$146, with no increases for nearly 20 years until 2015, when an alternative consultation process incorporated the HEPI (Higher Education Price Index) to account for inflation, capped at 4%. HEPI is a national measure that helps adjust higher education costs annually to reflect inflation, and the campus adopted this to ensure the fee keeps pace with rising expenses. The need for an increase now is driven by the fact that the fee has not been adjusted in a long time, and current costs require additional funding to support student programs and services.

Ms. Ulatan Robles provided an overview of the IRA fee trends and funding data, highlighting that the institution currently sits at the system median rate. She emphasized that IRA-funded activities receive additional funding sources like general funds, ticket sales, and student fees, which help cover operational costs.

Dr. Smith highlighted that the IRA funds support various academically related activities on campus, including student-led publications like the Coyote Chronicle, travel expenses for events such as Model UN and Marine Biology, student employment across different programs, and operational costs for facilities like the Media Production Lab. He emphasized that all five colleges benefit from IRA allocations to support their activities.

Ms. Christie Joines, Senior Associate Athletics Director explained that IRA funding is crucial to their operations, supporting team travel, recruitment, outreach, staffing, and equipment. The funds also enable student employment opportunities for non-athletes, including majors in communications, journalism, and media, helping to balance staffing needs without overburdening athletes. Additionally, IRA resources help provide free home games for students, creating engagement opportunities for both athletes and non-athletes, and contributing to the overall success and inclusivity of the athletics program.

Vilayat Del Rossi, Interim Executive Director, SMSU explained that the IRA funds support two main areas: the sport clubs and intramurals, with the sport clubs currently about 10 recognized groups that engage in recreational and intercollegiate activities, and intramurals offering tournaments and leagues. An increase in the fee could allow support for 4 to 6 additional sport offerings, expand student employment, and potentially hire a graduate assistant for better oversight and leadership development. The second area, the RecWell department, would benefit from the increase to support and enhance operations, programs and services, including the Leadership Challenge Center, fitness activities, climbing wall, and retreats, ultimately aiming to boost student success, leadership, and engagement opportunities.

Ginny Hattar, Director of Special Events and Guest Services shared that IRA funding supports the employment of student event associates who assist with campus and community events such as commencements, concerts, speakers, and 5Ks, as well as office operations on both campuses. These positions help students develop valuable skills like communication, leadership, teamwork, and accountability, and are essential for supporting the campus community and partners effectively. Dr. Olivérez introduced students Savannah and Geronimo, both student-athletes, and informed that that they will be sharing how they have benefited from participating in campus programs supported by IRA funds.

Savannah Hoffmann shared her experience as a CSUSB volleyball player for five years, highlighting how the support from the athletic department, coaches, and teammates helped her balance athletics, academics, and work while maintaining a 3.9 GPA. She expressed gratitude for the opportunities her participation provided, including an internship in sports performance, which sparked her passion for a future career. She emphasized that her story exemplifies how athletics positively impact students' lives, and she deeply values the continued support for future student-athletes.

Jeronimo Valdepeña, shared that athletics provided him with a strong sense of community and support. He expressed that this connection motivated him to pursue a career as a college and strength conditioning coach, and he aspires to give back by inspiring high school athletes and showing them that a pathway to college and professional sports is possible. Emphasized the importance of athletics in shaping his life and community involvement, and he expressed deep gratitude for his experience at Cal State San Bernardino.

Dr. Olivérez emphasized that supporting the current process does not mean endorsing a fee increase but rather supporting the opportunity to gather student input through an alternative consultation. She outlined that this process involves classroom presentations, outreach events and surveys. The goal is to ensure broad, inclusive engagement, especially for underrepresented groups like Palm Desert students, and to inform decision-making by the President based on comprehensive student feedback. The next step would be to officially launch the consultation on either supporting or opposed to the process simply reflects whether participants agree to proceed with gathering input, not whether they support the fee increase itself.

Mr. Rendon opened the floor for questions.

4) Discussion - (All)

Ms. Ashley Smith expressed concerns about the ethical implications of the \$500 fee increase, emphasizing that students should have the final say, especially given the significant burden. She questioned whether students fully understand the structural deficit, its duration, and the role of HEPI adjustments, suggesting that these factors might not justify the increase. She highlighted that as a unique campus, comparisons to other campuses like San Diego or Sacramento may not be appropriate. Stated that although referendums through town halls, campaigns, and presentations can still effectively gather student input that student voices should be tied to actual decisions, rather than being merely advisory; noted that survey results alone should not determine outcomes. She acknowledged the financial pressures but reminded that students are also managing their own financial challenges.

Dr. Olivérez clarified that the current fee increase process is separate from the university's overall deficit, which has resulted in significant budget cuts over the past three years. She emphasized that student fees are not directly tied to these cuts, and the proposed increase is more about addressing inflation and costs that have accumulated over decades. She also highlighted that other campuses typically implement smaller, incremental fee increases more frequently to avoid large jumps, and she hopes CSUSB can adopt similar practices in the future to better manage costs without disproportionately impacting students; reassured that these efforts aim to ensure sustainability while being mindful of students' financial burdens.

Ms. Rosas emphasized the importance of student awareness and decision-making regarding fee allocations, sharing a personal story about the misuse of IRA funds for a Film Club lab that was initially restricted due to budget cuts despite documented grants. She expressed concerns about faculty and staff unfamiliarity with fee sources leading to mismanagement and delays, highlighting the need for better education and a system to inform students about fee use before making final decisions. Additionally, she inquired whether the current 68% fee allocation to athletics would remain unchanged if the fee increased.

Dr. Olivérez explained that the current allocation of 68% to athletics is based on a referendum from 1994-95, and any change to this formula would require a new referendum process. She noted that altering this allocation could potentially eliminate the athletics program, as it constitutes about a third of the athletics budget, a decision that involves system-level approval. She emphasized that such a change is a complex and significant process, referencing Sonoma's experience as an example, and clarified that the institution currently does not favor making such drastic adjustments.

Ms. Rosas noted that as a board member and committee participant for SMSU, her understanding is that the SMSU union fees already covers any necessary improvements for recreation and wellness facilities.

Mr. Del Rossi explained that approximately 10% of the Recreation and Wellness Department's total budget is supported by IRA fees, with the remaining 90% funded through the student union fee.

Ms. Lopez emphasized that the decision on fee allocation should remain with the students, as a referendum allows for informed choices and transparency. She expressed concern that 68% of the funds currently go to athletics, which relies heavily on student fees and could do more fundraising and philanthropic work. She suggested that reallocating percentages through a future referendum could benefit academic programs and reduce the financial burden on students. Additionally, she highlighted that athletics' presence and representation at the PDC have been lacking despite previous commitments, and she remains conflicted about changing the system, advocating for student involvement in the decision-making process.

Mr. Morales asked for clarification on the consultation timeline, confirming that it is set to begin this semester with a final decision by President Morales for implementation in Fall 2026. He expressed concern about the short timeframe, noting that only about a month remains for students, especially those off-campus or with unconventional schedules, to participate and provide input. He questioned how the outreach will be managed, whether professional staff will also be involved in presentations, and highlighted the challenge of engaging a diverse student population within the limited timeline, given that the semester is already halfway through.

Dr. Olivérez explained that a workgroup has been planning a campaign since the Fall, involving both students and staff to ensure effective outreach. Although progress has been delayed to gather input from the current group, she assured that a comprehensive plan, including marketing and graphics, is in place and ready to be executed. The campaign is scheduled for a two-month window in March and April, before finals, with classroom presentations being just one part of a broader outreach effort across various spaces to maximize student engagement.

Ms. Cherniss emphasized her 34 years of experience with the campus and highlighted the importance of IRA fees, which fund campus enhancements like student recreation, dining, and programs that attract students. She stressed that these improvements make the campus more appealing, helping retain local students and compete with other universities. She also explained that funds from IRA fees support athletics and contribute to the university's growth, such as expanding athletic conference membership and travel. Despite current fee increases, she urged students to consider the long-term benefits for the university's future and its continued status as a key institution in the Inland Empire.

M/S Lopez/Carillo: To extend the meeting by six minutes to 2:06 p.m. Passed unanimously.

Mr. Hill highlighted his personal connection to the campus, emphasizing that athletics serve as the first point of access for many students and play a vital role in campus life and community engagement. He stressed the importance of sustaining the university's future, advocating for a collaborative approach to funding and development that benefits all departments, including athletics, video arts, and music. He acknowledged the financial challenges but underscored the need for open dialogue and collective effort to ensure the long-term growth and pride of CSUSB, emphasizing that everyone should work together toward a shared vision for the institution's future.

M/S Lopez/Smith: To conduct the vote by ballot. Passed unanimously.

M/S Smith/Lopez: To extend the meeting to 2:10 p.m. Passed unanimously.

Mr. Rendon clarified that the vote was for CFAC support to move forward with an alternative consultation process to obtain feedback from students.

Due to non-members voting, the ballot was relaunched.

M/S Morales/Lopez: To extend the meeting to 2:15 p.m. Passed unanimously.

Based on the results, the motion to approve CFAC support for the IRA alternative consultation process did not pass.

Members Mike Rister and Alberto Fernandez were no longer present at the time of the vote.

Failed (3/7/1).

5) Adjournment

ASI President, Diego Rendon, adjourned the meeting at 2:13pm.