Fiscal and Governmental Affairs Committee
Academic Senate California State University
Annual Report 2012-13
Submitted by Praveen Soni, Chair

The approved minutes of the numerous meetings of the Fiscal and Governmental Affairs (FGA) Committee over the year attest to the work done and actions taken on behalf of the Academic Senate in carrying out its charge as defined in the bylaws of the Academic Senate. Instead of repeating the work and actions, which can be easily accessed in the approved minutes, this report focuses on new actions in the year and consequent recommendations. The chair recommends that other ongoing actions of the committee continue as usual.

New Actions and Recommendations

Unrestricted Net Assets – The FGA Committee met with Dr. Ben Quillian, Executive Vice Chancellor of Budget and Finance and Mr. George Ashkar from his office to obtain information and discuss the unrestricted net assets of the university and their deployment in the mission of the university. The Committee had submitted a list of eleven questions prior to the meeting, all of which were answered to the satisfaction of the committee. In addition, other questions during the meeting were also answered. The Committee would like to thank both Dr. Quillian and Mr. Ashkar for their understanding and cooperation and their willingness to discuss the report. The chair recommends that a report on both restricted and unrestricted net assets be provided to the committee annually with a meeting with EVC Quillian or designee to discuss the report and any changes.

CSU Financial Statements – The FGA Committee requested and received consolidated CSU financial statements for the last five years with the year ending June 30, 2012. In addition, Mr. George Ashkar and Mr. Sedong Jong from Budget and Finance visited the committee to explain and discuss the financial statements. As this was the first time the committee had seen the statements, there were numerous questions regarding the categories and the amounts. The discussion resulted in the committee becoming more familiar with the financial aspects of the university, and changes in revenues and expenses that have occurred in the last five years. The Committee also developed a greater understanding of the deployment of resources in achieving the mission of the CSU. The Committee would like to thank Mr. Ashkar and Mr. Jong in preparing the report, and their patience in dealing with questions. The chair recommends that CSU financial statements on a rolling five-year basis be
made available annually to the committee for understanding and discussion, and that a meeting with EVC Quillian or designee be scheduled to discuss the statements and any changes.

**Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO)** – The FGA Committee met with Ms. Judy Heiman in the LAO and exchanged ideas, views, and facts on a variety of academic and financial issues relating to higher education in general and the CSU in particular. The Committee was impressed with the willingness and enthusiasm of Ms. Heiman to engage with the committee and discuss issues in depth with the objective of a better understanding of higher education in the state. The Committee would like to thank Ms. Heiman for her openness in discussing the issues in a frank manner. The chair recommends that such contacts and discussions with the LAO continue since they are highly educational to both sides, and also be expanded to include the Department of Finance. In addition, in the annual lobbying effort of the ASCSU which is spearheaded by the FGA Committee, visits in Sacramento be made to these entities as well as to the legislators.

**Action on Legislative Bills** – As is usually the case, the FGA Committee along with the ASCSU Legislative Specialist is responsible for monitoring upcoming and pending legislation in Sacramento, which has an impact on the CSU and higher education. The FGA Committee discusses, and if necessary, drafts resolutions for consideration by the Academic Senate. However, the process of legislation is lengthy (several months) and quite fluid in that bills undergo numerous amendments prior to passage. It becomes necessary to follow the bills along and respond to any changes as they are made. With the ASCSU meeting every other month and not meeting in the summer, and the resolutions requiring two readings while the legislative bills are having hearings and undergoing changes, it is a little difficult for the ASCSU as a body to respond quickly each time a bill undergoes change.

After meeting with the legislators during ASCSU lobby day in April and recognizing that several legislative bills had/would be amended, as well as bill hearings scheduled within two weeks of the lobbying day, the FGA quickly drafted positions on bills of concern to the ASCSU, approved them at its April meeting so that the Executive Committee and the ASCSU chair could represent the ASCSU at the bill hearings. The next meeting of the ASCSU was in May and waiting until then to take action would have been too late and robbed the ASCSU of a voice at the bill hearings.

The chair recommends that in addition to the ASCSU approving resolutions at its plenary regarding its position on various legislative bills, the Executive Committee
work in concert with the FGA Committee, and if necessary due to time constraints, with the FGA chair and the ASCSU Legislative Specialist to provide reactions to bills as they undergo changes in the legislative process until their final passage. The FGA Committee is also drafting Legislative Principles for approval by the ASCSU in Fall 2013, which may be utilized to take positions on legislative bills of concern in the interim. The alternative seems to be to wait until the ASCSU plenary to obtain resolutions, which would likely remove the important voice of the faculty at critical times in the legislative process.

System Budget Advisory Committee (SBAC) – The FGA Committee is the standing committee responsible for fiscal and budget matters as per its charge in the ASCSU bylaws. Thus, the FGA Committee should be responsible for such matters and involved in all reports, discussions, committees and the like pertaining to such. Therefore, the FGA Committee voted unanimously that both the chair and the vice chair of the FGA committee be members/observers/designees of the ASCSU to the System Budget Advisory Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Praveen Soni, Chair
Fiscal and Governmental Affairs Committee