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CSU Board of Trustees Meeting September 22-25, 2024

Faculty Trustee Report Darlene Yee-Melichar

The CSU Board of Trustees meets six times a year. Meetings allow for communication among the Trustees, Chancellor, campus presidents, Academic Senate, California State Student Association and Alumni Council.

The autumn meeting of the Board occurred on September 22-25, 2024. It started on Sunday, September 22 in an all-day Closed Session for discussion about Executive Personnel Matters [Government Code §11126(a)(1)]. The Board reconvened on Monday, September 23 in an all-day Closed Session for discussion about Executive Personnel Matters [Government Code §11126(a)(1)]; Pending Litigation [Government Code §11126(e)(1)] including CSU v. SELF, Shepler v. CSU, Krug v. CSU, CFA v. CSU (PERB); and Anticipated Litigation (2 potential matters). The Board met on Tuesday, September 24 in a brief morning Closed Session for the discussion of the Committee on Collective Bargaining and then met for the rest of the day and on Wednesday, September 25 in Open Session for public comments, information items and action items.

The Board's full agenda and background materials (247 pages) for the September 2024 meeting are available at <https://www.calstate.edu/csu-system/board-of-trustees/past-meetings/2024/Documents/Sep-24-25-2024-Full-Binder.pdf>. The Board meetings are broadcast live to the public; you may access the live stream videos on YouTube associated with Open Session at <https://www.calstate.edu/csu-system/board-of-trustees/past-meetings/2024/Pages/September-22-25-2024.aspx>.

For the full Board and committee meetings held in Open Session, I provide links to the specific meeting materials and videos; brief summaries using ChatGPT with technical assistance provided by [SF State Academic Technology](#) and in concurrence with my personal meeting notes; and share my brief queries or requests for feedback below for your consideration. If you have any comments, corrections, and/or questions regarding my Faculty Trustee Report, please let me know (dyee@calstate.edu). I look forward to hearing from you; **thank you**.

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September 22-25, 2024 (Full Agenda)

On September 22, the meeting of the CSU Board of Trustees was held at the Long Beach Marriott; on September 23-25, the meeting of the CSU Board of Trustees was held at the Chancellor's Office in Long Beach.

On Sunday September 22, at 9:00am, the Board convened in Closed Session on Executive Personnel Matters. Discussion centered on candidate interviews, selection process and compensation package for the new President of California State University, Bakersfield. See Committee on University and Faculty Personnel below.

On Monday, September 23, at 12:00pm, the Board convened in Closed Session for further discussion on Executive Personnel Matters, Pending Litigation [CSU v. SELF; Shepler v. CSU; Krug v. CSU; CFA v.

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CSU (PERB)); and Anticipated Litigation (2 potential matters). Note: According to [California Education Code § 66602 \(c2\)](#), the Faculty Trustee “shall not participate on any subcommittee of the board responsible for collective bargaining negotiations.”

On Tuesday, September 24, at 8:15am, the Board convened in Closed Session for a brief discussion of the Committee on Collective Bargaining. In my role as Faculty Trustee, I am not party to this discussion. Note: According to California Education Code § 66602 (c2), the Faculty Trustee “shall not participate on any subcommittee of the Board responsible for collective bargaining negotiations.” The Board then convened in Open Session for the rest of the meeting.

Tuesday, September 24, 2024

9:00am - Plenary Session (Day 1)

[Agenda](#)

[Video \(Public Comment\)](#)

Chair Jack B. Clarke Jr. called the September 2024 CSU Board of Trustees meeting to order. The session began with roll call to confirm the trustees' presence and established a quorum for the meeting to officially proceed. Chair Clarke welcomed the Board and emphasized the CSU's dedication to freedom of speech. He underscored the importance of open discourse in higher education, particularly in addressing various issues related to the CSU system. He acknowledged the upcoming public comment session and stressed the need for respect during these discussions. He noted that topics such as support for undocumented students, the CSU budget, the integration of Cal Maritime with Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, and issues regarding the Middle East conflict were anticipated.

The public comment session featured various speakers representing different stakeholder groups, including students, faculty, staff, alumni and union representatives. Speakers included, but was not limited to Dagoberto Argueta, president of the Academic Professionals of California union, who spoke first. He shared that the union had reached a tentative agreement with the CSU for a new contract covering fiscal years 2024-2027. He praised the collaboration with CSU's bargaining team and hoped for further productive discussions on additional issues such as the interim Time, Place and Manner policy.

Olivia MUNO, a Cal Maritime alumna, advocated for maintaining Cal Maritime's oceanography program. As a graduate of this program, Cal Poly SLO and a professional working in the field, MUNO emphasized its unique position due to its proximity to San Francisco Bay, the largest estuary in the United States. MUNO also voiced concern over the proposed integration with Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, stressing that Cal Maritime's programs provided distinct opportunities for hands-on experience in oceanography.

Chris Chiego, an Assistant Professor in the International Strategy and Security department at Cal Maritime discussed the proposed integration's relevance to the state of California as well as national security, and noted that Cal Maritime students are well-equipped to handle global security challenges through hands-on learning and simulations in courses focused on maritime operations and international strategy.

Cynthia Torres, a CSU staff member for 23 years, raised concerns about the recent dismissal of Dr. Ana Ayo Bryant, the assistant director for student programming at the Chancellor's Office. Torres stressed the importance of such positions in supporting marginalized student communities, including undocumented students and foster youth, and called for clarity on who would now support these populations.

Dawn McCulley, Unit 7 Chair of the California State University Employees Union (CSUEU), criticized the handling of layoffs at CSU Monterey Bay and Cal Maritime Academy. McCulley shared stories of long-serving employees dismissed with minimal notice, creating an atmosphere of fear and distrust within the CSU community. McCulley called on the administration to treat employees with the respect they deserve and avoid such damaging practices.

Tessy Reese, a licensed vocational nurse (LVN) at San Diego State University, voiced concerns about the proposed well-being attendant policy, which involves having chaperones present during sensitive medical exams. Reese argued that expanding this policy to include athletic trainers and physical therapists without providing additional staffing resources would burden the trainers. Reese urged the CSU to address these staffing concerns in their discussions.

Several Cal Maritime faculty members, including Cal Maritime Senate Vice Chair and Professor of Mathematics, Taiyo Inoue, and Marine Transportation Department Chair, Elizabeth McNie, spoke in favor of the proposed integration. Inoue noted that a Cal Maritime/Cal Poly partnership could lead the way in driving innovation in complex global challenges such as autonomous shipping, maritime cybersecurity, and ocean sustainability. McNie supported maintaining the integrity of the Marine Transportation degree and licensing programs at Cal Maritime. Ian Wallace, director of Counseling and Psychological Services at Cal Maritime, discussed the importance of in-person counseling services for cadets who face unique stressors due to the rigorous nature of their education and training.

Many speakers, including faculty and union representatives, opposed the recently introduced Interim Time, Place, and Manner Policy, which they argued would stifle academic freedom and free speech on CSU campuses. Francis Mercer, a professor of biology at Cal Poly Pomona, condemned the policy and urged the CSU administration to reconsider its implementation. Several other speakers, including Sharon Elise, a professor of Sociology at CSU San Marcos, and Charles Toombs, CFA President, joined the chorus of opposition, emphasizing the potential chilling effect on student activism and faculty speech.

Following other speakers during the public comment session, the CSU Board of Trustees heard reports from various system leaders, which shed light on current affairs and future initiatives.

[Plenary Day 1- Continued Video \(Reports\)](#)

The CSU Board of Trustees' plenary meeting on September 24-25, 2024, was an insightful gathering that addressed critical issues across the California State University system. Chair Clarke, commenced the session by introducing new members attending their first in-person Board meeting in their official capacities, including Trustee Sam Nejabat, President Ronald Rochon of CSU Fullerton, Acting President Michael Spagna of Cal Poly Humboldt, and Interim President Emily Cutrer of Sonoma State University. Clarke acknowledged their extensive backgrounds, emphasizing how their collective experience would contribute to the CSU's ongoing academic excellence, equity, and access mission. He noted President Rochon's leadership and advocacy for education over a 30-year career and Interim President Spagna's administrative expertise, previously demonstrated at CSU Dominguez Hills and CSU Northridge.

Chair Clarke then shifted his focus to the recent grand opening of the nation's first Black Honors College at Sacramento State. He praised this initiative as a historic step toward fostering Black student success and advancing outreach, recruitment, and retention efforts. In a poignant anecdote, Chair Clarke described Black students' disparities in higher education through the metaphor of two runners—one striving to chase success and the other running from systemic fears. He hoped that the Black Honors College would provide a safe, empowering environment for students to succeed without the weight of historical and societal worries. Chair Clarke highlighted the CSU Trustees' Award for Outstanding Achievement, an annual scholarship recognizing students' academic excellence and community service. A new video series, introduced by Chair Clarke, will accompany this award and feature exemplary students, faculty, and staff at future Board meetings.

Chair Elizabeth Boyd delivered the report from the Academic Senate of the CSU (ASCSU). She began by acknowledging the work of the ASCSU during their recent plenary session and outlined several vital resolutions. Chair Boyd emphasized the ASCSU's opposition to the Interim TPM Policy, articulating concerns

about potential infringements on faculty, staff, and student rights. She called for creating a committee that includes ASCSU members, the California State Student Association (CSSA), and CSU labor unions to co-author a new TPM framework. Additionally, Chair Boyd discussed the proposed integration between Cal Maritime and Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, noting the ASCSU's support for informed exploration of the merger while ensuring that faculty positions and shared governance remain intact. She also addressed the ASCSU's work on adding lecturer faculty positions to the ASCSU Constitution, indicating that this would soon come before the Board for approval.

Chair Boyd then highlighted the ASCSU's broader priorities, including reinforcing the role of faculty in shared governance and decision-making. She thanked Chair Clarke for publicly reiterating the Board's commitment to shared governance, particularly after contentious remarks made during the previous Board meeting. Chair Boyd also underscored the ASCSU's efforts to enhance transparency, particularly in how the Senate operates, and to foster inclusivity within its membership. She concluded by recognizing the passing of CSUN professor and ASCSU Senator Boris Ricks and announced that a scholarship in his honor had been established at CSU Northridge.

President Esera presented the California State Student Association (CSSA) report, and provided the student perspective focusing on financial aid and the Interim TPM Policy. He thanked the CSU leadership for engaging students in discussions about the TPM policy, emphasizing that protecting free speech while ensuring student safety is a priority. CSSA is still gathering feedback from student leaders on the policy's rollout but is committed to advocating for student rights. President Esera also addressed the ongoing challenges related to financial aid, particularly for low-income and BIPOC students, who disproportionately bear the burden of student debt. He called on the CSU to continue pushing for reforms to the State University Grant (SUG) and Cal Grant programs to support marginalized students better.

President-Elect Adrian Harrell, representing the CSU Alumni Council, discussed alumni engagement efforts and their impact on student success. She highlighted a recent initiative at Cal Poly Pomona, where a career readiness conference connected students with alumni and industry professionals. The event included resume reviews, networking opportunities, and educational sessions tailored to students at different stages of their career journeys. President-Elect Harrell emphasized the importance of such collaborations between alumni and students and noted the positive feedback received from participants. She also provided an update on the CSU Alumni Council's continued involvement in supporting the Graduation Initiative 2025 and the CSU strategic planning process.

Chancellor Mildred García's report offered a comprehensive overview of the CSU's priorities and current challenges. She began by acknowledging the start of the 2024 academic year, which saw the largest freshman class in CSU history, with over 69,000 new students enrolled. Of these, there was a notable increase of 8,400 full-time equivalent California resident students, representing a 2% growth over the previous year. Chancellor García expressed her optimism about this milestone, crediting the Strategic Enrollment Management team, led by Deputy Vice Chancellor Nathan Evans and Assistant Vice Chancellor April Grommo, for their tireless efforts in recruitment and enrollment.

Chancellor García also announced the return of the Chancellor's Office to a hybrid work schedule, emphasizing the importance of balancing flexibility with in-person collaboration. She reported her positive experience interacting with staff during this transition and reiterated her commitment to fostering a collaborative workplace environment. Another key topic was the Interim Time, Place, and Manner (TPM) Policy, which addresses free speech and safety on CSU campuses. While García noted that much of this policy is longstanding, she emphasized that its renewed rollout ensures students know their rights and campus safety measures. Deputy Vice Chancellor Dilcie Perez will provide additional details on this interim policy later in the Board meeting.

Chancellor García also began a systemwide strategic planning process, which she identified as one of her top priorities. The plan, developed in partnership with the consulting firm SOVA, aims to position the CSU as a national leader in educating America's new majority. Alison Kadlac, SOVA's founder, and Senior Partner Marty Alvarado, presented the strategic plan, outlining a yearlong timeline involving widespread stakeholder engagement, including input from students, faculty, staff, alumni, and external partners. Alison Kadlac emphasized the importance of transparency, inclusivity, and student-centeredness in the planning process, stressing that the plan will reflect the needs and goals of CSU's diverse community.

Throughout the meeting, speakers from various sectors of the CSU emphasized shared governance, transparency, and accountability as core principles guiding the CSU's mission. They highlighted efforts to support students through financial aid reform, career readiness initiatives, and policies to foster a safe and inclusive campus environment. As the CSU moves forward with its strategic planning process, leaders reiterated their commitment to positioning the system as a national model for public higher education, focusing on educating America's new majority and promoting student success across all demographic groups.

1:00 p.m. - Committee on Collective Bargaining

[Agenda](#)

[Video](#)

The Committee on Collective Bargaining first convened at 8:15 a.m. in the Munitz Conference Room for a closed session, followed by an open session at 1:00 p.m. in the Glenn S. Dumke Auditorium. Trustee Adamson chaired the committee and initiated the meeting by asking if any committee member wanted to remove any item from the consent agenda for a separate discussion. Hearing none, a motion was made to approve the consent agenda, which was seconded, and the items were approved without any opposition or abstentions.

Essential items in the consent agenda included ratifying tentative agreements with Bargaining Unit 1 (represented by the Union of American Physicians and Dentists) and Bargaining Unit 10 (represented by the International Union of Operating Engineers). These agreements had been presented by Albert Liddicoat, Interim Vice Chancellor for Human Resources, who recommended ratification of both agreements. The Committee on Collective Bargaining approved the two agreements.

The meeting was efficient, with Trustee Adamson concluding by noting the committee's busy but smooth calendar handling. The transcript reflects the formal approval process and the procedural steps taken to ensure the ratification of these agreements, with participation from committee members.

1:10 p.m. - Committee on Finance

[Agenda](#)

[Video](#)

The Committee on Finance meeting centered around the CSU's 2025-2026 Operating Budget Request. The meeting opened with Trustee Lopez, committee chair, officially calling the meeting to order. Trustee Lopez led the initial discussion, setting the tone by addressing the critical financial challenges facing the CSU system, notably the \$397 million state funding reduction proposed by California's leadership. This reduction amounts to a 7.95% decrease in the general fund appropriation for CSU and, compounded by the deferral of the planned \$252.3 million in ongoing General Fund increases (initially part of the state's compact with CSU), paints a dire financial picture.

Trustee Lopez emphasized that these cuts would profoundly impact CSU's ability to fulfill its mission, as critical funds will be stripped from the operating budget. She noted that the system is left grappling with sustaining services, paying for unavoidable expenses, and maintaining programs crucial to student success.

To address the shortfall, the Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief Financial Officer, Steve Relyea, provided a detailed breakdown of the CSU's alternative revenue generation strategies. Among these, he highlighted the tuition rate increase, expected to generate approximately \$164 million in new revenue. The 1% resident enrollment growth was projected to cost around \$24 million. Despite these measures, the total income from tuition and enrollment increases to \$188 million, leaving CSU with a significant \$209 million shortfall. Relyea outlined the urgent need for the board to consider these financial realities while making budgetary decisions for the upcoming fiscal year.

The committee's discussion moved to unavoidable 2025-2026 fiscal year costs. These include mandatory expenses such as the State University Grant (SUG) program, which requires one-third of the new tuition revenue to support financial aid. Relyea explained that the CSU remains committed to ensuring that lower-income students continue to receive assistance, particularly in light of the tuition increase. Other unavoidable costs include rising health insurance premiums, property insurance, utility expenses, and faculty and staff compensation. Without sufficient state funding or additional revenues, these essential costs could force the CSU system to divert funds from critical areas, potentially impacting student services and faculty support.

Trustee McGrory was among the first trustees to speak during the meeting. He underscored the gravity of the situation, drawing a parallel to past financial crises and noting that the CSU system is "facing massive cuts" which could potentially "get ten times worse next year." Trustee McGrory raised concerns about the CSU's current strategy of being "too nice" in Sacramento and suggested that the CSU must become more aggressive in its advocacy. He stressed the importance of quantifying the impact of budget cuts on all 23 campuses. He proposed conducting a system-wide survey to assess how many positions have been frozen, how many courses have been cut, and how many students are affected by the reductions. Trustee McGrory also warned of the potential for staff layoffs if the budget situation does not improve, particularly in light of the new labor agreements promising 5% salary increases for CSU employees. He expressed concern that the state might not honor these agreements, which could lead to contentious renegotiations with the unions, potentially sparking unrest.

Trustee Faigin followed up by expressing his concerns about the effects of budget cuts on essential services such as advising and mental health support. He stressed that any cuts to these areas would harm students' well-being and academic success. Trustee Faigin also questioned the categorization of debt service in the budget request, asking for clarification on why debt service on academic facilities was listed as an essential expenditure rather than an unavoidable one. Given the budget constraints, he expressed concern about the financial implications of issuing new debt.

In response, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Budget Ryan Storm addressed Trustee Faigin's concerns, explaining that debt service was essential because the CSU requested state funding to cover new debt service for capital projects. AVC Storm clarified that the existing \$440 million in debt service is already accounted for in the budget and cannot be cut, but the CSU is asking for additional funds to support new projects. He explained that any new debt would be used for essential infrastructure improvements, such as facility upgrades, but the CSU would not proceed without sufficient state support.

Trustee Arambula voiced concerns about the potential long-term impacts of the budget cuts, noting that CSU has already been operating under financial constraints for years. He emphasized that the cuts already impact students and staff, even if they aren't immediately visible. He noted that freezing hiring, as several campuses have already done, directly impacts students by reducing the availability of essential services, including academic advising and counseling. Trustee Arambula urged the board to tell the CSU story more forcefully, highlighting the system's role as a critical engine of social mobility in California. He also suggested the development of a financial transparency initiative that would clearly show how the budget cuts affect CSU operations on a campus-by-campus level.

The presidents of two campuses, Ellen Neufeldt (California State University, San Marcos) and Cynthia Teniente-Matson (San Jose State University), were invited to share the direct impacts of budget cuts on their campuses. President Neufeldt described the financial challenges facing San Marcos, anticipating an 8% budget reduction next year. She explained that San Marcos is in a period of growth, with a 6% enrollment increase this year. Still, due to financial constraints, they have implemented a hiring freeze and deferred critical maintenance projects. President Neufeldt expressed deep concern over the strain on her staff and the inability to hire essential employees, such as advisors and counselors, to support the growing student population.

President Teniente-Matson of San Jose State echoed similar concerns. She explained that her campus has also implemented a hiring chill and has had to make significant cuts to both academic and non-academic divisions. Despite these challenges, San Jose State is focusing on enrollment growth strategies to increase the number of non-resident students and diversify its revenue streams. However, President Teniente-Matson warned that continued budget cuts could undermine the university's ability to provide its students with a high-quality education and support services.

Trustee Yee-Melichar thanked Presidents Neufeldt and Teniente-Matson for sharing the impacts of the budget cuts on their respective campuses. She raised critical questions about the potential for further cuts and asked how CSU plans to mitigate the impact on essential programs such as academic advising, mental health services and faculty/staff expertise (admissions, financial aid, information technology, etc.). Trustee Yee-Melichar inquired about the specific strategies CSU might implement to address the \$29 million net loss projected for the year and asked whether any programs would be specifically targeted for cuts. She also sought clarification on how CSU would balance enrollment growth with budget reductions and the CSU's contingency plan if the state's revenue forecasts do not improve.

In response, Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief Financial Officer Steve Relyea addressed Trustee Yee-Melichar's concerns, clarifying that the CSU is actively exploring all options for mitigating the budget shortfall, including reprioritizing resources from non-essential areas to protect critical student services. He emphasized that the system works closely with campus leadership to make strategic decisions about navigating the financial challenges. Still, he acknowledged that difficult decisions, including the potential for program cuts, might be inevitable. Relyea also confirmed that advocacy efforts would be ramped up in Sacramento to secure additional state funding and prevent further cuts.

Chancellor García then addressed the Board, reinforcing the CSU's critical role in California's economic and social fabric. She described the CSU as the "backbone" of California's workforce, noting that 1 in 10 California employees is a CSU graduate. García warned that the proposed budget cuts would have far-reaching consequences for students and the state's long-term economic health. She called for a unified, aggressive advocacy campaign to make state lawmakers believe continued investment in CSU is essential for California's future.

The meeting concluded with Trustee Lopez calling for a vote on the 2025-2026 Budget Request. The motion to approve the budget was seconded and passed, with all committee members voting in favor. Trustee Lopez emphasized that while the budget request reflects the CSU's priorities, it is also a call to action for all stakeholders to secure the funding necessary to maintain CSU's vital role in California's higher education system.

The Committee on Finance meeting underscored the CSU system's significant budgetary challenges due to proposed state funding cuts. Despite efforts to increase tuition and enrollment, the system remains in a precarious financial position. Trustees and campus leaders expressed deep concern over the impact of the state funding cuts on students, faculty, and staff. They called for a unified, aggressive advocacy strategy to secure additional state funding and prevent further harm to CSU's mission of providing high-quality, accessible education.

2:30 p.m. - Joint Committee on Educational Policy and Finance

Agenda

Video

The Joint Committee on Educational Policy and Finance, chaired by Trustee Arambula, convened to address two essential agenda items. The meeting opened with the approval of the July 23, 2024 minutes approved without objection. Trustee Arambula noted that while two items were on the agenda, the second item might be postponed due to time constraints, and the upcoming 2024-2025 California State University Trustees' Award for Outstanding Achievement is scheduled for later.

The first item discussed was the proposed integration of the California State University Maritime Academy (Cal Maritime) with California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo (Cal Poly SLO). A group of executives presented the item, including Steve Relyea, Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief Financial Officer; Nathan Evans, Deputy Vice Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer; Jeff Armstrong, President of Cal Poly San Luis Obispo; and Michael Dumont, Interim President of Cal Maritime.

EVC/CFO Steve Relyea reiterated the reasons for the integration, citing Cal Maritime's severe fiscal and operational challenges, including steep enrollment declines, unsustainable compensation obligations, rising operational costs, and aging infrastructure. The integration was recommended to preserve critical programs, protect the workforce needs of California's and the nation's maritime industry, and protect US economic and national security interests. He outlined that the integration would occur in two phases: administrative integration in July 2025 and academic and enrollment integration by Fall 2026.

Interim President Michael Dumont echoed the gravity of Cal Maritime's fiscal difficulties, emphasizing the institution's inability to operate sustainably without additional support. Despite these challenges, Interim President Dumont highlighted the academy's strengths, including its role as one of six degree-granting State Maritime Academies in the US, its contribution to the US Merchant Marine, and its critical role in supporting California's and the nation's maritime logistics and security infrastructure.

President Jeff Armstrong of Cal Poly emphasized that Cal Poly SLO shares complementary strengths with Cal Maritime, particularly in engineering, marine sciences, oceanography, and renewable energy sectors. President Armstrong highlighted Cal Poly's success in implementing financial aid and scholarship programs that have increased access and diversity, expressing confidence that these strategies would succeed similarly at Cal Maritime following the integration.

The committee also discussed the fiscal impact of the proposed integration. EVC/CFO Steve Relyea and DVC Nathan Evans outlined that while immediate cost savings may not be apparent due to the complexity of the integration, the consolidation would avoid an estimated \$30 million in additional costs required to maintain Cal Maritime as an independent institution. They emphasized that the primary rationale for the integration was not cost savings but the preservation and enhancement of Cal Maritime's unique programs and contributions to national security.

Further discussion touched on the shared governance structure post-integration, which would include a new Vice President and CEO of the Maritime campus reporting to the Cal Poly president and a superintendent to oversee the academic programs related to the Merchant Marine license. DVC Nathan Evans highlighted ongoing efforts to ensure the integration was ready, with workgroups and external consultants helping guide the process.

Trustees raised several questions. Trustee Kimbell raised an essential question about federal support for Cal Maritime, asking whether the academy receives sufficient funds from the government to support its vital role in national security. She questioned whether the US government should provide more financial support, mainly since Cal Maritime contributes to critical operations like military sea lift and resupplying US

bases worldwide. Interim President Dumont responded by outlining existing federal funding sources, including \$1 million annually from the US Maritime Administration and reimbursement for ship maintenance and fuel. However, he emphasized the need for more comprehensive federal support, noting that while the federal government recognizes the problem, state maritime academies across the US also face similar enrollment and funding issues.

Trustee Adamson emphasized the importance of shared governance in the integration process. He acknowledged concerns raised during public comment about needing more consultation. Trustee Adamson clarified that shared governance would play a vital role in the next phase of discussions after the November vote and assured faculty from Cal Maritime and Cal Poly SLO that there would be meaningful participation in decisions related to academic programs.

Trustee Lopez expressed concern about the long-term costs of the integration, asking if CSU could genuinely afford the projected \$30 million annually to sustain Cal Maritime without it being an undue financial burden on the system. She questioned whether the federal government should shoulder more responsibility, especially given Cal Maritime's national security contributions. EVC/CFO Relyea reiterated that the primary goal of the integration is not cost savings but preserving the vital programs unique to Cal Maritime. He pointed out that maintaining Cal Maritime as a standalone university would require even more significant ongoing financial investments, and the integration would avoid those costs.

Trustee Fong commended the leadership of Cal Maritime and Cal Poly for their transparency and detailed presentation but raised concerns about the speed of the process. She emphasized the need for clear communication with faculty and students about the transition and urged prioritizing shared governance to ensure stakeholders are fully engaged.

The second agenda item, an update on financial aid in the CSU system, was presented by DVC Nathan Evans, Noelia Gonzalez, Systemwide Director of Financial Aid Programs, and April Grommo, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Strategic Enrollment Management. The presentation focused on the challenges posed by the delayed launch of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and its impact on student aid distribution. The CSU worked closely with campuses and the California Student Aid Commission to extend deadlines and mitigate disruptions, particularly for mixed-status students. Sarah Flores, a CSU San Marcos student, shared her personal story of being unable to submit her FAFSA due to technical glitches in the new system. She described the stress of potentially losing her financial aid and the struggles of helping other students with similar issues while working in her university's financial aid office.

Trustee Lopez expressed frustration and anger over the federal delays, emphasizing the emotional toll on students like Sarah and the need for a quicker resolution. She called for increased pressure on the federal government to fix the FAFSA issues and ensure students receive the financial support they need. Trustee Fong echoed the frustration, acknowledging the efforts of the CSU financial aid teams but expressing concern over the continuing problems students face with financial aid accessibility.

In closing, Nathan Evans announced that the Chancellor's Strategic Working Group on Financial Aid would continue improving financial aid policies and ensuring that CSU students have access to adequate financial resources. The meeting concluded by acknowledging the importance of addressing financial aid challenges for current and future students.

The committee adjourned with plans to revisit unresolved discussions the following day, particularly regarding the proposed integration and its financial implications.

4:15 p.m. - Committee on Institutional Advancement

[Agenda](#)

[Video](#)

The Committee on Institutional Advancement meeting on September 24, 2024, opened with Trustee Gilbert-Lurie, Chair of the Committee, welcoming the members and calling the meeting to order. She thanked everyone for their promptness and formally opened the proceedings. The meeting began with the approval of the minutes from the July 2024 meeting, with no objections raised, and the minutes were unanimously approved. Trustee Gilbert-Lurie expressed her enthusiasm for the annual presentation of the 2024-2025 California State University (CSU) Trustees' Award for Outstanding Achievement, which is always a highlight of the year for her. She emphasized the importance of philanthropy in supporting CSU's remarkable and diverse student body, mentioning that she and Trustee Jean Picker Firstenberg had been working closely with Vice Chancellor Greg Saks to identify new ways to grow and sustain philanthropic support. She encouraged trustees to respond enthusiastically to inquiries about their connections and interests as these efforts progress.

The main focus of the meeting was the presentation of the 2024-2025 CSU Trustees' Award for Outstanding Achievement, the highest recognition of student accomplishment within the CSU system. Each of the 23 recipients is nominated by their university president and selected based on superior academic performance, personal achievements, community service, and financial need. Scholarships range from \$7,000 to \$18,000, made possible by the generosity of CSU trustees, the CSU Foundation Board, and additional donors. Trustee Gilbert-Lurie introduced the agenda item, noting that these scholars represent the best of CSU and that the awards demonstrate the immense impact of philanthropy.

Chancellor García, in her first ceremony as Chancellor, shared her excitement about participating in this longstanding tradition. She highlighted how each awardee embodies the values and ideals of CSU, with their stories of resilience, dedication to academic success, and commitment to bettering their communities. She also took a moment to recognize the recipients' family members, friends, and loved ones, both in attendance and watching via livestream, for their unwavering support. Chancellor García emphasized that the student's success was a testament to the collective efforts of their communities and how their futures look incredibly bright. She congratulated the awardees and wished them continued success while pursuing their educational and professional goals.

The event's top honor, the Razi Scholar Award, was presented to Rebecca Reyes from California State University, Los Angeles. Chair Clark introduced Rebecca, noting that she has overcome significant challenges, including childhood abuse and drug addiction, to become a top student at CSU. A video showcased Rebecca's journey and her passion for sociology, as she is now pursuing her master's degree to become a community college professor and mentor for first-generation college students. Rebecca's story is of perseverance, strength, and a deep commitment to serving underserved communities. She expressed gratitude for her support and the opportunity to continue her education.

Other notable recipients included Alexandra Brown, a student at CSU Bakersfield and recipient of the Kenneth Fong Scholar Award. Alexandra was recognized for her research on microplastic pollution in aquatic ecosystems and her contributions to national and international conferences. Heather Smith, from CSU Channel Islands, was awarded the Murray L. Galinson Scholar Award for her volunteer work with end-of-life care patients and her goal to work in neonatal intensive care. Luz Gonzalez, the García Scholar from CSU Chico, was acknowledged for her achievements as an undocumented student who plans to pursue a career in elementary education, serving underprivileged communities.

Gabriela Amaya, the William Randolph Hearst Foundation Scholar from CSU Dominguez Hills, is working toward a master's degree in occupational therapy while maintaining a 3.88 GPA and serving as a mentor and leader in her academic community. Estrella de Guadalupe Bonilla, the Edison International Scholar from CSU Fullerton, was celebrated for her mechanical engineering studies and dedication to renewable energy solutions.

Throughout the ceremony, Chancellor García and Trustee Gilbert-Lurie recognized the CSU Trustees Award Selection Committee for evaluating and selecting these outstanding students. The committee included

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Kimberly Good, chair of the CSU Board of Governors Scholarship; Trustee Emeritus Ali Razi, chair of the Trustees Award Committee; Trustee Jean Picker Firstenberg; Elizabeth Boyd, chair of the Academic Senate CSU; Karen Sico, chair of the Cal State Student Association; and Ernesto Rivera, member of the CSU Alumni Council Executive Committee.

In addition to recognizing the students, Trustee Gilbert-Lurie and Chancellor García also acknowledged the generous contributions from trustees and donors who have made the scholarship program possible. Several vital contributors were thanked during the meeting, including Trustee Emeritus Ali Razi, Ron and Mitzi Barhorst, Kristen and Bob Quinn of the School's First Federal Credit Union, and Michael and Lisa Lisara. Trustee Jack Clarke also acknowledged all the CSU trustees, past and present, who have supported the scholarship program. He invited everyone to a reception in the courtyard to meet the student awardees.

The meeting ended with a resounding sense of pride and accomplishment as the trustees congratulated the 2024-2025 CSU Trustees Award recipients for their resilience, intelligence, and community contributions. Trustee Gilbert-Lurie invited everyone to attend the post-meeting reception, which was made possible by the generosity of the Lisara and Takaku families. She concluded by thanking everyone for participating and announcing that the Board of Trustees would reconvene the following morning at 8:30 AM.

Wednesday, September 25, 2024

8:30 a.m. - Joint Committee on Educational Policy and Finance - Part 2

Video

On September 24, 2024, the Joint Committees on Educational Policy and Finance reconvened to discuss two major agenda items: the proposed integration of the California State University Maritime Academy (Cal Maritime) with California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo (Cal Poly), and the challenges CSU students faced due to federal financial aid delays. The meeting, chaired by Trustee Arambula, included critical presentations from Steve Relyea, Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief Financial Officer; Nathan Evans, Deputy Vice Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer; Michael Dumont, Interim President of Cal Maritime; and Jeffrey Armstrong, President of Cal Poly SLO.

The integration proposal was introduced in response to the severe fiscal and operational challenges at Cal Maritime, including a 31% drop in enrollment and unsustainable operational costs due to high maintenance programs and aging infrastructure. Interim President Dumont explained the difficult circumstances facing Cal Maritime and emphasized that the institution could function independently with intervention. Trustee McGrory praised Dumont's efforts in stabilizing the institution and noted that the proposed integration could serve as a model for future collaborations across the CSU system. President Armstrong elaborated on the complementary strengths between Cal Maritime and Cal Poly SLO, particularly in engineering and marine sciences, stating that the integration could increase enrollment and administrative efficiencies.

Several trustees raised questions and concerns. Trustee Gilbert-Lurie asked about using the \$35 million one-time investment and developing success metrics for the integration. EVC/CFO Relyea responded that most funds would support financial aid for students enrolling in high-cost maritime programs. Detailed success metrics would be developed after the board's approval. Trustee Yee-Melichar inquired about faculty retention, particularly with attention regarding tenure and promotion, and DVC Evans assured her that these issues would be addressed per CSU's bargaining agreements. Trustee Lopez emphasized the need for the integration to help address broader financial sustainability goals across the CSU system. She stressed that the proposed merger should also focus on long-term cost savings.

The second major topic was the challenges caused by delays in the federal government's rollout of the new Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). DVC Nathan Evans, April Grommo (Assistant Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management), and Noelia Gonzalez (Systemwide Director for Financial Aid

Programs) detailed the CSU's efforts to mitigate the impact of these delays. The technical issues with FAFSA disproportionately affected mixed-status families and first-generation students, many of whom could not complete their applications. CSU campuses responded by extending deadlines, offering provisional aid packages, and working closely with the California Student Aid Commission to ensure that students could still access state and institutional aid. Sarah Flores, a student from CSU San Marcos, shared her personal experience, explaining how her inability to submit her FAFSA left her uncertain about her financial aid and future enrollment.

Several trustees expressed their concerns about the federal government's handling of FAFSA. Trustee McGrory described the situation as a failure on the part of the federal government and praised CSU's financial aid offices for stepping in to fill the gap. Trustee Fong inquired about the Government Accountability Office (GAO) report on FAFSA. DVC Evans shared that the report revealed significant shortcomings in the system, including millions of unanswered calls to federal support services. Trustee Lopez connected the FAFSA delays to broader issues of affordability, emphasizing that the CSU's efforts must extend beyond tuition to cover the total cost of attendance, including housing and transportation.

The meeting concluded with Chair Clark announcing the appointment of Dr. Vernon B. Harper Jr. as the new President of California State University, Bakersfield. Dr. Harper, who had served as interim president since 2023, was praised for his leadership and contributions to the campus. The Board will reconvene in November to finalize decisions on integrating Cal Maritime and Cal Poly and continue discussing financial aid reforms.

9:00 a.m. - Committee on University and Faculty Personnel

[Agenda](#)

[Video](#)

On September 25, 2024, the Committee on University and Faculty Personnel, chaired by Trustee Fong, convened to discuss several significant matters, including executive compensation for newly appointed and interim presidents, executive transition assignments, and updates on civil rights programming across the California State University (CSU) system. The meeting began with the approval of the consent agenda, which included the minutes from the July 2024 meeting. There were no objections, and the consent agenda was approved.

The first item on the discussion agenda was the executive compensation for Dr. Vernon B. Harper Jr., appointed President of California State University, Bakersfield. Chancellor García presented Dr. Harper's achievements during his tenure as interim president since December 2023. Chancellor García praised Dr. Harper's leadership and innovation, citing his work with the Umoja Black Student Success Transfer Program, his efforts to make CSU Bakersfield a first-choice destination for high school graduates in Kern County, and his leadership in advancing the *Runners on the Rise* capital campaign. Dr. Harper's compensation package included an annual salary of \$429,999, a \$50,000 housing allowance (due to the lack of a university residence), a \$1,000 monthly auto allowance, and standard executive benefits. Trustee Fong then called for a motion to approve the compensation. Trustee Adamson moved, and Trustee Steinhauser seconded the motion. There were no further comments, and the motion was approved unanimously.

The committee then considered the compensation package for Dr. Michael E. Spagna, the newly appointed interim president of California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt. Chancellor García spoke highly of Dr. Spagna's long career in higher education, mentioning his previous role as Provost at CSU Dominguez Hills, his work leading diversity and academic initiatives, and his focus on student success. She also highlighted his work on improving educational outcomes for underserved populations. Dr. Spagna's compensation included an annual salary of \$396,156, a \$50,000 housing allowance, a \$1,000 monthly auto allowance, and standard benefits. Trustee Fong then requested a motion for approval, which Trustee Faigin

moved and Trustee Gilbert-Lurie seconded. The committee approved the compensation package without opposition.

Chancellor García introduced the third item, which focused on the executive transition assignment for Dr. Tom Jackson Jr., the former president of Cal Poly Humboldt. She explained that Dr. Jackson stepped down in August 2024 and would now take on a one-year transition assignment working on projects related to partnerships with tribal communities and addressing the challenges facing intercollegiate athletics. Trustee McGrory raised concerns about how the executive transition program works and whether Dr. Jackson's transition duties were aligned with CSU's priorities. Chancellor García reassured the committee that Dr. Jackson's responsibilities were consistent with his expertise and that he met all the qualifications for the program. Trustee Steinhauser expressed gratitude for Dr. Jackson's leadership and commitment to Cal Poly Humboldt. The committee accepted the transition assignment without objections.

The final item on the agenda was an update on civil rights programming and services across the CSU system. Interim Vice Chancellor Albert Liddicoat and Associate Vice Chancellor Hayley Schwartzkopf led the presentation, providing updates on the California State Auditor's recommendations and CSU's progress in transforming its civil rights programs. AVC Schwartzkopf emphasized the importance of trauma-informed practices and a people-first approach in handling Title IX and discrimination, harassment, and retaliation (DHR) cases. She highlighted CSU's new systemwide office for civil rights, overseeing compliance, conducting program reviews, and providing guidance to campuses.

During the discussion, several trustees engaged with the presenters. Trustee Gilbert Lurie praised the new vision, mission, and values statements for civil rights programs, stating that they provide a solid foundation for CSU's future work. She also suggested greater alignment between the civil rights steering and oversight committees to ensure a more streamlined process and avoid redundant efforts. Trustee Lopez asked about developing an "early warning system" to identify potential civil rights issues before formal reviews. AVC Schwartzkopf responded that such efforts were underway through their data collection and review processes.

Trustee McGrory raised concerns about ensuring timely responses to Title IX complaints, asking whether there were processes to act on reports of misconduct before formal investigations were completed. He emphasized the importance of swift intervention when misconduct is reported. AVC Schwartzkopf acknowledged the concern, explaining that CSU's trauma-informed practices focus on balancing the need for thorough investigations with the urgency of taking immediate action when necessary. She also pointed out that additional resources had been allocated to campuses to improve response times. Trustee Arambula echoed McGrory's concerns, stressing the need for a system that quickly addresses reports while maintaining fairness to all parties involved.

Trustee Lopez also inquired about the timeliness of the civil rights reviews, suggesting that a review cycle of every three years might be too long. AVC Schwartzkopf responded that while the new review cycle would help provide regular oversight, CSU would remain responsive to emerging issues, and data would be collected continuously to monitor campus trends. Trustee Rodriguez added that qualitative data from faculty, staff, and students should also be considered in the reviews to ensure a comprehensive understanding of campus climate and civil rights concerns. AVC Schwartzkopf agreed and emphasized that CSU was working to improve data collection and transparency.

Trustee Faigin noted that the progress made in civil rights programming was an example of CSU's commitment to using its budget to reflect its values, pointing out that the \$15.9 million allocated to civil rights efforts was a clear sign of CSU's dedication to this critical area. Trustee Steinhauser thanked AVC Schwartzkopf for the presentation and commended the work, stating that it represented a significant cultural shift at CSU. Trustee Firstenberg added that the civil rights programming presentation marked a

“miracle” moment for the Board, reflecting how far CSU had come since the Title IX audit, and expressed hope that the system would continue to improve.

Trustee Fong concluded the meeting by thanking AVC Schwartzkopf and Interim VC Liddicoat for their comprehensive presentation and the ongoing work to enhance CSU’s civil rights programs. She acknowledged that while significant progress had been made, there was still much work to be done, and she encouraged the team to keep pushing forward.

The Committee on University and Faculty Personnel concluded its business, having approved executive compensation packages, discussed an executive transition, and received a detailed update on civil rights initiatives within the CSU system. The meeting highlighted CSU’s commitment to addressing civil rights concerns with transparency, fairness, and compassion.

10:30 a.m. - Committee on Audit

[Agenda](#)

[Video](#)

The Committee on Audit, chaired by Trustee Kimbell, convened on September 25, 2024, at 10:30 a.m. in the Glenn S. Dumke Auditorium. The meeting began with Trustee Kimbell calling the session to order, followed by a request to approve the consent agenda. There were no requests for separate discussions or objections, and the consent agenda was approved unanimously. The consent agenda included approving the minutes from the previous meeting held on July 23, 2024, and the routine approval of the status report on Audit and Advisory Services Activities.

Following the consent agenda, the discussion turned to the critical focus of the meeting—an information item on the status of internal audit activities for the 2023-24 fiscal year, presented by Vlad Marinescu, Vice Chancellor, and Chief Audit Officer. VC Marinescu began by providing a comprehensive overview of the department's recent accomplishments under the 2023-24 audit plan. He explained that the internal audit function is structured to assure the Board of Trustees that management controls across the California State University (CSU) system are effectively designed and operational. This approach, he noted, is intended to mitigate risks and enhance governance across the CSU campuses.

The 2023-24 audit plan included 48 completed audits, encompassing various topics across the CSU system’s 23 universities and the Chancellor's Office. The audits addressed critical areas, such as information security, financial aid, youth programs, and business continuity with IT disaster recovery. VC Marinescu highlighted that audit topics are carefully selected through an annual risk assessment process that evaluates quantitative and qualitative factors. This process includes input from university management to ensure that the audits are tailored to each institution’s unique risk profile.

Regarding value-added auditing, VC Marinescu emphasized that the Audit and Advisory Services team has expanded beyond traditional assurance audits to engage in audits designed to deliver additional insights and operational improvements. For example, data analytics have been increasingly integrated into the audit process, providing enhanced capabilities to detect irregularities and highlight areas for improvement. He reported that the data analytics team generated 141 data queries in support of 30 audit and advisory projects. Notably, in fiscal year 2023-24, over 240,000 credit card transactions were analyzed, helping to identify unallowable purchases and ensure compliance with CSU’s financial policies. VC Marinescu was pleased to report that none of the unallowable transactions were found to be fraudulent, and many had already been addressed by university management.

In addition to the risk-based audits, VC Marinescu described advisory services provided to CSU management. These services are proactive and aimed at helping university leadership identify and mitigate risks early. Advisory projects are typically initiated at the request of campus management. During the fiscal

year, 22 advisory reviews were completed, focusing on financial reporting, compliance, and operational efficiency.

VC Marinescu went on to detail the CSU system's work in assisting with external audits conducted by state and federal agencies. One of the significant audits mentioned was the California State Auditor's review of affordable student housing, which began in September 2024. The audit examines the CSU system's efforts, alongside the University of California and California Community Colleges, to provide affordable housing to students. VC Marinescu explained that the CSU has established an interdepartmental working group to facilitate cooperation and ensure transparency throughout the audit process. This audit follows a series of other intergovernmental audits, including a community college transfer audit that reviewed how effectively the CSU supports community college students transitioning to four-year universities.

As the presentation continued, VC Marinescu highlighted specific audit findings that garnered attention from the committee. Trustee Adamson raised concerns regarding two audits with significant findings at California State University, San Bernardino, and San Diego State University. The CSU San Bernardino audit, focused on University Enterprises, revealed multiple findings related to the institution's internal controls. VC Marinescu commended the university management for their cooperation, noting that they had requested the audit as part of ongoing risk assessment discussions. To ensure remediation, the Audit and Advisory Services team will conduct a follow-up review within 6 to 12 months to verify that corrective actions are fully implemented.

According to VC Marinescu, the San Diego State University audit involved information security, one of the most challenging areas to audit. While specific details of the findings were not publicly discussed due to their sensitivity, VC Marinescu assured the committee that university management was committed to addressing the identified issues. Trustee Adamson emphasized the importance of resolving these issues promptly to avoid any negative impact on university operations.

Trustee Steinhauser took a moment to commend Marinescu and the audit team for their clarity and thoroughness, particularly regarding continuous monitoring and data analytics to improve audit quality and prevent potential financial discrepancies. He noted that these tools provide a more forward-thinking approach to CSU's internal controls and governance. Trustee Steinhauser also praised the team for integrating stakeholder feedback into their processes, noting that this continuous improvement mindset ensures that audit services meet and exceed the expectations of CSU leadership and trustees.

Trustee Yee-Melichar echoed these sentiments, particularly recognizing VC Marinescu's leadership in fostering a culture of transparency and accountability across the CSU system. She highlighted the progress made on the 2024-25 audit plan, which is already underway, with 11 audits in progress. Trustee Yee-Melichar also commended the team's work in building strong relationships with external auditors, including state auditors, which has allowed the CSU to stay ahead of potential issues before they escalate.

As the discussion drew to a close, Trustee Kimbell thanked VC Marinescu and his team for their dedication and thorough reporting. She appreciated the detailed updates she receives regularly and praised the collaboration between the audit team and CSU management. She reiterated the importance of maintaining a proactive audit function that continually seeks to enhance operational effectiveness, internal controls, and governance across the system.

The meeting adjourned with unanimous agreement that the committee's work is progressing smoothly and effectively. Moving forward, the focus will remain on implementing and monitoring corrective actions while enhancing audit processes through data analytics and continuous monitoring.

11:00 a.m. - Committee on Educational Policy

[Agenda](#)

[Video](#)

The Committee on Educational Policy meeting, held on September 25, 2024, was chaired by Trustee Arambula. The meeting began with approving the July 2024 meeting minutes, followed by discussions on two key topics: the CSU's commitment to fostering healthy discourse and the Year of Engagement initiative to reimagine student success.

The first significant discussion was centered on CSU's commitment to fostering healthy discourse and free expression on its campuses. Dilcie D. Perez, Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, led the presentation on a newly established systemwide framework concerning "time, place, and manner" regulations. This policy was developed to balance free expression with maintaining campus safety and ensuring the continuity of academic and operational activities. The policy was established in response to the 2024 California State Budget Act and included input from various stakeholders across the CSU system. Each CSU campus was also required to develop a campus-specific addendum to complement the systemwide policy, outlining permissible locations for protests and free speech activities.

Trustee Fong praised the transparency of the policy development process, especially the extent of stakeholder engagement. Still, she sought clarification on the timeline and asked whether faculty and students were included in drafting the policy. DVC Perez responded that while the initial draft was prepared quickly due to tight legislative deadlines, feedback was collected from students, faculty, and administrators across all 23 campuses, ensuring broad consultation. Trustee Fong suggested that more extensive communication efforts be made to ensure that all campus communities are fully informed about the new policy and the opportunities to participate in future feedback.

Trustee Rodriguez raised concerns regarding the enforcement of the policy, specifically focusing on Section 8-f, which addresses identification requirements during protests and events where individuals might wear masks. She emphasized the importance of ensuring that enforcement would not target individuals wearing masks for religious or medical reasons. She suggested that enforcement officers be trained to handle such situations with cultural sensitivity. DVC Perez reassured Trustee Rodriguez that the policy's intent was not to infringe on religious or health-related practices and that the Office of General Counsel had issued guidance to clarify the distinction between masking for identity concealment during unlawful activities and wearing masks for legitimate purposes.

Trustee Yee-Melichar echoed concerns about ensuring the policy's implementation was communicated clearly to all stakeholders across the system. She suggested creating educational materials, including a video, to explain the new regulations and highlight CSU's commitment to protecting free expression and campus safety. DVC Perez welcomed this suggestion, pointing out that an initial video had already been created and was available on the CSU website. Still, the system was open to further enhancing communication efforts especially to all stakeholders across the system.

Trustee Molina Mancio expressed his support for the policy but raised concern about students who may not be fully aware of their rights or the limitations set by the policy. He suggested further outreach efforts, particularly toward first-year and transfer students, to ensure they understand their rights to free speech and the expectations set by the university. He also asked whether there would be flexibility in the policy to accommodate unique campus environments. DVC Perez confirmed that the campus-specific addendums allowed each university to tailor the systemwide policy to local contexts.

Trustee Ghilarducci, reflecting on his background in public safety, expressed concerns about ensuring the safety of students and faculty during potentially disruptive events. He urged the CSU system to work closely with campus police and local law enforcement to prepare for protests or demonstrations, ensuring a

coordinated and over-prepared approach to avoid violence or property damage. DVC Perez responded that safety was a primary concern and that ongoing training for campus police and other university officials was part of the policy implementation plan.

Trustee Kaur Brar acknowledged the challenges of balancing free speech with maintaining order on campus. She emphasized the importance of consistency in applying the time, place, and manner regulations across the system, expressing concern that varying levels of enforcement could lead to confusion or feelings of inequity among students and faculty. DVC Perez agreed and reiterated that consistency was a core principle behind the systemwide policy, with regular reviews and feedback loops to address any inconsistencies.

The second agenda item was focused on CSU's Year of Engagement initiative, which seeks to redefine student success in response to changing student demographics and the evolving needs of California's workforce. Deputy Vice Chancellor Perez and Dr. Jennifer Baszile, Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Success and Inclusive Excellence, led the discussion. The Year of Engagement involves extensive consultations with over one million stakeholders across the CSU system, including students, faculty, alumni, and community members, to gather input on how best to support student success beyond 2025. The initiative emphasizes equity, data-informed decision-making, and the need for scalable programs to help students from all backgrounds.

Trustee Molina Mancio emphasized the importance of engaging high school students and families in the Year of Engagement, as they play a crucial role in shaping the future student body. He suggested expanding the stakeholder outreach to include younger students and their parents, particularly in discussions about college affordability and the total cost of attendance. He also mentioned the importance of preparing students for a smooth transition to college by offering more support in high school and during the college application process. Dr. Baszile acknowledged the value of this suggestion and noted that outreach to high school students and families was part of the plan, mainly through collaborations with K-12 partners.

Trustee Fong praised the initiative's focus on equity and data-driven approaches. She expressed particular interest in the new "Graduate 365" degree progression monitoring tool, developed by Cal State Fullerton, which provides real-time data on students' progress toward graduation. Trustee Fong lauded the system's potential for helping campuses identify students at risk of not graduating and offering timely support. She asked whether all CSU campuses had access to this tool and how it was utilized. Dr. Baszile explained that all 23 campuses were now participating in the program and that the tool was being used to monitor degree progress, identify barriers, and connect students with the resources they need to graduate.

Trustee Ghilarducci emphasized the need for consistent application of data across the system and suggested using the Graduate 365 tool to identify trends and successful practices that could be replicated across campuses. He encouraged CSU leadership to explore how the data could be aggregated to provide insights at both the campus and systemwide levels, allowing the Board to make informed decisions on future initiatives. Dr. Baszile agreed, stating that the data from Graduate 365 would help inform the future direction of the Year of Engagement and other student success initiatives.

Trustee Rodriguez expressed her enthusiasm for the initiative but stressed the importance of ensuring that student voices remain at the center of the process. She encouraged continued outreach to students who had stopped attending the CSU, noting that their feedback would be critical in identifying barriers to completion and shaping future retention efforts. DVC Perez agreed and noted that the initiative actively sought input from students who had left the CSU system, ensuring their experiences were included in the consultation process.

In conclusion, both agenda items underscored CSU's commitment to fostering free expression and advancing student success through innovative, equity-focused strategies. The trustees expressed support for the ongoing efforts and looked forward to receiving regular updates on the progress of these initiatives.

12:45 p.m. - Committee on Governmental Relations

[Agenda](#)

[Video](#)

The Committee on Governmental Relations meeting, held on September 25, 2024, was chaired by Trustee Rodriguez and included updates on compliance with NAGPRA and CalNAGPRA laws and a legislative update.

Vice Chancellor Greg Saks and Assistant Vice Chancellor Nathan Dietrich provided updates on CSU's progress with NAGPRA compliance, highlighting efforts across the system. CSU is working on finalizing a systemwide NAGPRA policy through consultation with tribes. A 90-day consultation period with tribes will conclude on November 30, 2024. Additionally, 19 of 21 required universities have hired full-time NAGPRA coordinators. AB 389 compliance also requires creating systemwide and campus-based committees to manage repatriation efforts. \$3.4 million has been allocated to support universities' compliance efforts, focusing on engaging tribes, addressing repatriation, and ensuring adherence to legal requirements. Specific progress at universities includes San Francisco State receiving a \$100,000 federal grant for its repatriation work and several campuses conducting consultations with tribes and advancing their repatriation processes.

The legislative update focused on bills relevant to the CSU, with three Board-sponsored bills awaiting action by the governor. These include AB 2005, which addresses affordable housing for faculty and staff, and AB 2395, providing flexibility in using CSU's professional and continuing education funds. And AB 3290, supporting in-state tuition for military members stationed in California. The update also covered other legislation CSU is tracking, supporting, or opposing, including bills on nursing education, Title IX policies, and other issues affecting the CSU system. The committee discussed the importance of securing funding for facilities and housing and addressed concerns about navigating legislation, such as AB 2586, which pertains to undocumented student employment.

Several trustees expressed frustration regarding funding for CSU infrastructure, housing, and student support. Trustee McGrory, in particular, voiced significant frustration over the lack of inclusion of CSU in the state's bond packages for facility improvements. He noted that K-12 and community colleges have been consistently included in state bond measures, allowing them to issue bonds independently locally. Still, higher education institutions like CSU and UC have been excluded from bond funding for 18 years. Trustee McGrory emphasized how this has left CSU without critical resources for upgrading aging facilities while K-12 schools have issued \$23 billion worth of bonds, with another \$55 billion available for future use.

He described the situation as "absolutely upside down" and called for a new strategy to correct the state's neglect of CSU regarding capital funding. The concern is that many CSU campuses have deteriorating buildings and infrastructure that urgently need repair. Still, without the ability to raise funds through bonds, CSU remains in a vulnerable position. Trustee McGrory and other trustees expressed the urgent need for legislative changes to allow CSU the opportunity to address these critical infrastructure needs through bond measures.

Trustee Rodriguez echoed Trustee McGrory's frustration, noting that starting conversations with the legislature about changing the laws to allow CSU to pursue bond measures independently was essential. Trustee Rodriguez and Trustee Lopez agreed that this exclusion of CSU from bond funding is a significant policy oversight that must be corrected to ensure CSU facilities' long-term sustainability and safety. Trustee Lopez also raised concerns about financial aid and the lack of action on bills that would support housing for faculty and staff, further contributing to the frustration over state support for higher education.

These frustrations highlight the trustees' concerns about the growing financial pressures on the CSU system and the need for a more proactive approach to advocating for the inclusion of CSU in future bond measures. Trustee Rodriguez thanked staff for their advocacy and compliance efforts, noting the need for continued

robust communication with legislators and stakeholders. The meeting concluded with a commitment to ongoing advocacy for the CSU system.

1:30 p.m. - Committee on Campus Planning, Buildings and Grounds

Agenda

Video

The California State University (CSU) Board of Trustees meeting on September 25, 2024, featured discussions on critical topics, with notable contributions from several trustees, university presidents, and administrative staff. Trustee McGrory convened the meeting to discuss the five-year Capital Outlay Plan. Trustee Adamson raised a significant point, questioning why the CSU asked for only \$2.7 billion for the first year despite a documented need of \$4.9 billion. He expressed concern that continually asking for less than what was needed sends the wrong message to the state and could result in further deferrals of critical maintenance, which already exceeded \$31 billion and could rise to \$40 billion in a few years. Trustee Adamson urged the trustees to request the total amount to reflect the actual need.

In response, EVC/CFO Steve Relyea explained that asking for a lower amount was strategic. Given the state's budget constraints and signals from the Department of Finance that budget cuts were imminent, the CSU administration aimed to balance realism with advocacy. He noted that although the total need of \$4.9 billion was communicated to the governor's office and legislative leaders, the official budget request was adjusted to align with the state's fiscal environment.

Trustee Lopez agreed with Trustee Adamson's assessment of the growing deferred maintenance backlog and supported a comprehensive strategy to address it. She emphasized the need for a long-term funding solution beyond the current approach, perhaps through general obligation bonds. Chair Clark supported further discussion and suggested that this be taken up in the Chancellor's Council and future board meetings to establish clear values and principles guiding CSU's funding requests. Trustee Adamson agreed to withdraw his objection to the current request, provided there would be a discussion about capital improvement funding alternatives in November.

President Adela de la Torre of San Diego State University (SDSU) presented the Fenton Parkway Bridge Project for approval. The bridge, part of the 2020 purchase agreement with the city of San Diego for the Mission Valley site, is meant to enhance transportation options near the newly constructed Snapdragon Stadium and improve emergency response times. While the initial cost estimate in 2018 was \$27 million, the cost had risen to \$53 million due to construction cost escalation and inflation in the sector.

Trustee Ghilarducci expressed concern over the high costs, noting that \$53 million for a 450-foot bridge equates to approximately \$117,000 per foot. He asked whether reducing costs could be reduced by seeking additional bids or finding more efficiencies. Paul Gannoe, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Capital Planning, Design, and Construction, acknowledged the cost escalation but explained that SDSU had already involved multiple independent estimators and construction experts to ensure the best possible pricing. AVC Gannoe also explained that the complexity of constructing a bridge in a protected waterway added to the costs, and while the university reserved the right to pursue a fixed-price bid, it would come with risk.

Trustee Adamson commended on the thoroughness of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR), noting the environmentally sensitive area surrounding the San Diego River. He also echoed concerns about costs and urged the university to explore additional options for cost containment. Despite these concerns, the project was approved after further assurances from President de la Torre that SDSU would continue to monitor and control costs as the project moved forward.

President Ronald Rochon of California State University Fullerton (CSUF) introduced the next item, seeking approval for the schematic design of the Engineering and Computer Science Innovation Hub. This new

building, a 45,000-square-foot facility, is intended to support the growing demand for STEM education and research. President Rochon emphasized the growing enrollment in CSUF's engineering and computer science programs, which had increased by 184% in the past decade, with projections showing continued growth. He noted that the new facility would help address this demand, offering state-of-the-art labs and collaboration spaces.

President Rochon thanked Governor Gavin Newsom and the California legislature, notably Senator Josh Newman, Assemblymember Sharon Quirk-Silva, and Assembly Speaker Emeritus Anthony Rendon, for their support in securing \$67.5 million in funding from the 2022-2023 state budget for the project. He also highlighted the project's importance in promoting social mobility, noting that 28% of CSUF students are first-generation college students and 38% are Pell Grant recipients, with potential starting salaries in the six-figure range upon graduation.

AVC Paul Gannoe provided additional details on the building's sustainable design, including LED lighting, energy-efficient windows, and drought-resistant landscaping. The project was designed cost-effectively, coming in at \$893 per square foot, which is in line with or lower than other comparable CSU projects. After the presentation, the project was unanimously approved.

The meeting concluded with discussions emphasizing the need for strategic action and long-term planning to address CSU's growing financial needs, particularly with infrastructure and deferred maintenance. Trustees called for bold advocacy, creative funding solutions, and continued engagement with state lawmakers to secure the necessary resources for the CSU system's future growth and sustainability.

2:15 p.m. - Plenary Session (Day 2)

[Agenda](#)

[Video](#)

The California State University (CSU) Board of Trustees held its plenary session on September 25, 2024, chaired by Jack B. Clarke Jr. The meeting commenced with a roll call confirming the presence of a quorum. The session began with Trustee Nejabat offering brief introductory remarks. He shared that he was born and raised in San Diego, pursued both undergraduate and law degrees in the Bay Area, and has professional experience in real estate and economic development. He expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to serve on the Board. He looked forward to contributing to the CSU system by visiting campuses and engaging with faculty, staff, and students.

Chair Clarke then opened the floor to approve the consent agenda, which included several items. Lieutenant Governor Eleni Kounalakis requested that Item 3, the Fenton Parkway Bridge Project at San Diego State University (SDSU), be pulled for a separate discussion. This item, which included the project's environmental impact report (EIR) certification, became the subject of significant debate.

Lieutenant Governor Kounalakis voiced her opposition to the bridge project, citing its high cost of \$53 million and expressing concern about spending priorities, especially given the broader financial challenges facing the CSU system. She stated that the per-square-foot cost of the bridge was "extraordinary." She raised concerns about approving such an expensive project when other critical financial needs for CSU students and campuses were not fully addressed. As a result, she intended to vote against the project.

Trustee Faigin echoed similar concerns, noting the overall cost of capital projects and CSU's increasing debt service obligations. He asked why this project would not add to CSU's debt service. EVC/CFO Steve Relyea explained that the funding for the bridge would come from a combination of developer fees, ground lease revenues from the Mission Valley project, and an \$8.5 million contribution from the City of San Diego. He

emphasized that no state funding or CSU general funds would be used for the project, and no new debt would be added to the CSU's existing obligations.

EVC/CFO Relyea, who had been involved in the original negotiations for the Mission Valley site acquisition, explained that the bridge was an integral part of the agreement with the city and a key component for traffic mitigation and emergency response in the area, particularly during stadium events. Trustee Gilbert-Lurie raised questions about the necessity of the bridge and its impact on student services, to which SDSU President Adela de la Torre responded by highlighting the bridge's importance for safety and transportation needs in the Mission Valley area. Despite concerns voiced, the item was ultimately approved by a roll call vote, with only Lieutenant Governor Kounalakis voting against it.

The meeting proceeded with ceremonial honors for outgoing Student Trustee Diana Aguilar-Cruz and Cal Poly Humboldt President Tom Jackson Jr. The Board conferred the title of Student Trustee Emerita on Diana Aguilar-Cruz. Chancellor García and Chair Clarke praised Diana Aguilar-Cruz for her dedication to student advocacy and her journey as a first-generation college student from Mexico. Aguilar-Cruz shared an emotional speech about her experiences, emphasizing her advocacy for students facing financial stress, food insecurity, and housing instability. She highlighted her efforts in promoting equity and ensuring that the voices of underserved students were heard throughout her tenure. Diana Aguilar-Cruz thanked her family, particularly her mother and grandmother, for their support and emphasized the transformative impact of the CSU system on her life. The Board unanimously approved her conferral of the title, with standing applause from the trustees and audience.

The Board also honored Cal Poly Humboldt President Tom Jackson Jr. with the title of President Emeritus in recognition of his leadership in transforming Humboldt into a polytechnic institution. Chancellor García acknowledged Jackson's pivotal role in expanding academic offerings, securing state funding, and building partnerships with tribal nations and community colleges. President Jackson delivered heartfelt remarks, crediting the success of Cal Poly Humboldt to the teamwork of its staff, faculty, and students. He also expressed his gratitude for the support of his fellow CSU presidents and his wife, Mona, who was present at the meeting.

As the meeting drew to a close, Chair Clarke expressed his appreciation to the trustees for their hard work over the four days of meetings. He also announced a scheduling change for the November 2024 Board of Trustees meeting being rescheduled to November 20 and 21, 2024, to accommodate the participation of several CSU leaders at a national conference.

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Faculty Trustee Request for Consultation and Feedback

Based on what I have shared with you in my earlier *Faculty Trustee Reports* and above in this report (links to the specific meeting materials and videos; brief summaries using ChatGPT with technical assistance provided by [SF State Academic Technology](#) and in concurrence with my personal meeting notes), I seek your continued feedback on items which the BoT has considered or will be considering:

- 1) During the January 2024 Board of Trustees meeting, trustees heard that campuses are implementing several cost reduction strategies (see below slide). On your campus, which of these cost reduction strategies are you already implementing? Which of these cost reduction strategies are you considering/discussing for implementation? Are there other cost reduction strategies (not on below slide) that your campus might explore? And, can you think of any inter-departmental and/or inter-campus cost reduction strategies that we might explore together as a system?

CSU The California State University **Budget Planning & Actions**

Universities are implementing several cost reduction strategies:

- Consolidate programs
- Defer capital/maintenance projects
- Reduce hiring and elimination of positions
- Increase class size
- Reduce courses to reflect student demand
- Reduce part-time faculty/lecturers
- Reduce service levels provided by staff
- Reduce travel
- Restructure departments
- Restrict non-essential purchases

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- 2) Can you think of some experiences that may help us to enhance “communication, consultation and collaboration” at our campuses and within the system? Do you have any suggestions on how to plan these experiences so that the Academic Senate CSU might better interface with the CSU Board of Trustees, CSU Chancellor’s Office, California State Student Association, CSU Alumni Council, CSU Council of Campus Senate Chairs, Campus Presidents/Provosts/Vice Presidents, etc.?
- 3) The November 2024 Board of Trustees agenda and materials has been posted online at: <https://www.calstate.edu/csu-system/board-of-trustees/Pages/agenda.aspx>. I invite and look forward to any comments and/or suggestions that you may have pertaining to this agenda that you may wish to share with me. Since I serve on the following four BoT standing committees (including service as Vice Chair of the Committee on Educational Policy), I am especially interested in your thoughts about the following items:

Committee on Audit

2. Status Report on Audit and Advisory Services Activities

Committee on Educational Policy

2. CSU's Commitment to Fostering Healthy Discourse and Exchange of Ideas
3. Graduation Initiative 2025 Data Reveal
4. Year of Engagement: Reimagining Student Success
5. The California Cradle-to-Career Data System and CSU Enrollment Planning

Committee on Finance

2. Approval to Issue Debt for an Affordable Student Housing Project at California State University, Long Beach
3. Approval to Issue Debt for an Affordable Student Housing Project at California State University, Fresno
4. California State University Annual Investment Report

Committee on Governmental Relations

2. Update on NAGPRA and CalNAGPRA Compliance
3. State Legislative Update

Joint Committee on Educational Policy and Finance

2. Integration of California State University Maritime Academy and California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo
3. Annual Systemwide Report on Hate Incidents on Campus

I look forward to hearing (and learning) from you and your campus constituents. Please email me (dyee@calstate.edu) or let me know if you wish to meet through a phone call or Zoom session.

Thank you for your consideration, leadership and commitment to higher education and the CSU. I hope you are enjoying a productive and rewarding autumn and fall semester!