SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY | FOUNDATION

ADVOCACY & PHILANTHROPY COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES

September 8, 2026
3:00-4:30 pm
Hybrid: President's Conference Room or via Zoom

Committee Members Present:	Ernesto Olivares (Chair), Rob Eyler, Ian Hannah, Stacey Bosick, Bruce Dzieza, Tom Isaak (joined at 3:30pm)
Committee Members Absent:	Frank Chong, Robert U'Ren
Committee Staff Present:	Alicia Hodenfield, Adam Jarman
Guests:	Jeff Keating; Joan McDermott (z)

1. Opening Comments

Ernesto Olivares called the meeting to order at 3:06pm and welcomed Bruce Dzieza and Rob Eyler as new members to the committee.

Olivares mentioned the recent events, Trombone Shorty on August 16 and A New Chapter for SSU with President Spagna on August 20, noting the excitemet they are bringing and an opportunity to commit to more action.

2. Approval of Minutes

The May 28, 2026 Advocacy & Philanthropy Committee Minutes were provided to the committee in the agenda packet and approved unanimously.

3. Advocacy and Community Relations

Rob Eyler provided take-a-ways from the President's A New Chapter for SSU speech and the campus priorities including the Nichols Hall renovation, the approval of the Health Sciences major, Data Sciences, and Environmental Sciences.

Eyler noted the President's vision is being refined and campus planning and will incorporate the CSU Strategic Plan. Eyler noted some priorities that are moving

forward include but not limited to Nichols Hall renvoation, Business, Entrepreneurial, Athletics.

Joan McDermott, interim Athletic Director, provided an update on Athletics – this will be a primary advocacy issue in next 12 months. McDermott provided the general timeline including Coach and other personnel hiring: Head Basketball Coaches – Men's and Women's, looking for proven head coaches with Division II CCAA experience. Recruitment for a usiness Operations position is also underway. The process is going well and McDermott expressed her excitement. Adam Jarman noted there is also a strong recruitment pool for the Director of Development for Athletics.

The Facilities improvements will include the training room and the basketball court. Will look for naming rights for additional funding sources.

Jeff Keating and Eyler spoke about current and former board communications and are looking to provide greater communications to the directors of the boards and advisory committees.

4. Philanthropy and Stewardship

Jarman provided the Philanthropic Productivity Update acknowledging we knew last year would be difficult with the announcements made the prior January, and then with the sudden loss of VP for Advancement, Mario Perez. 2025/26 did not meet our goal of $10M, raising $3.6M gift commitments from 1,686 donors. Jarman noted that we have met typically met our $ goals in the past. On the upswing, 579 of the donors where alumni, an increase from the prior year following the return of Giving Day in 2026 after a one year hiatus in 2025. There was great traction with Alumni and have been happy with Giving Day results.

Lots of folks are reengaging, and there is a strong pipelie. Fiscal year to date reflects over $1M and donors are reaching out asking to come back to the table; this bods well for things to come. A new annual giving strategy is also being implemented this year for back to school with a scholarship recipient impact piece.

Jarman encouraged the committee to attend Sip N Chat which will be held in GMC this year on Nov 6. Invitations will be mailed and a calendar invitation shared. This event is interactive and includes all scholarship donors and recipients.

5. Charter Review

Olivares reviewed the Committee Charter, which was last reviewed Sept 2025. Recommend updates with more description as it relates to advocacy function. The committee approved the recommended changes. The committee requests that briefings be shared with the SSUF Director attendees also.

Olivares asked the committee to consider what work they can be doing to support Advocacy, Community Relations, Stewardship and Philanthropic work – not just reporting out.

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6. Open Items

The following upcoming events were shared with the committee

- Los Cien State of Community Event – September 24, 2026
- Party For the Green on September 25, 2026 – Wynton Marsalis – President Spagna and Jarman will be attending
- Big Blue Weekend October 2-4, 2026
- Sip N Chat: at GMC this year – November 6, 2026
- Nichols legacy society event – date to come

Ian Hannah signed
Signature redacted

Minutes Approved by:
Ian Hannah
Chief Operating Officer & Secretary, SSUF

Alicia Hodenfield signed
Signature redacted

Minutes Prepared by:
Alicia Hodenfield
Administrative Manager for Advancement and Foundation Operations, SSU