

Board of Directors Meeting
Friday, December 6, 2024
10am–noon with lunch following
Student Center or Via Zoom

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:01am by Board Chair, Bob U'Ren, as quorum was met (quorum is 13 of 25 directors present).

U'Ren announced Ed Mills, VP for Strategic Enrollment Management will join the meeting at 11am for a time certain presentation on enrollment updates at SSU.

Mario Perez noted, as shared in a recent email communication, the SSUF 50th anniversary luncheon was postponed and will be held as a single celebration in the spring, to commemorate the founding of the Foundation. This celebratory gathering is planned to be in conjunction with the Undergraduate Student Research, Scholarship & Creativity Symposium. This in-person event features the outstanding research accomplishments of students across all disciplines. This is a great opportunity to showcase student research, talents, and creative activity to the campus and surrounding community. More details to come regarding the 50th anniversary celebratory component, which will likely include current and former Board members and guests.

2. Public Comment Period

U'Ren presented the opportunity for any members of the public that wished to speak. There were none present in person or online.

- ❖ Pursuant to California Education Code 89920-28, this time is for any member of the public to address the Board on any item affecting higher education. Each speaker will be allowed no more than three (3) minutes to address the Board, total max of 10 mins.

3. Consent Agenda

U'ren presented the items in the consent agenda, shared with the board in advance of the meeting, including:

- ❖ September 27, 2024 Minutes
- ❖ Graystone Quarterly Performance Report
- ❖ Quarterly Financial Statements
- ❖ CSU Guidance on Open Auxiliary Meetings
- ❖ New Board Director Orientation – agenda and slides

U'Ren asked if there were any objections to approving consent agenda items or desire by anyone to pull an item out of consent agenda for further discussion. None were requested and the board approved the Consent Agenda items unanimously.

4. Student Update

Associated Students President Vanessa Sanchez provided the Student Update noting it is the end of the year and many resolutions have been sent to the Cabinet, the Chancellor's Office, and to the Governor regarding the interpretation of the Time Place and Manner Policy.

Associated Student Productions (ASP) closed out their events for the year. Student Basic needs of Hygiene and Food will be accessible by appointment during the break. Hundreds of students continue to access Lobo's Pantry. The Election process is opening and there is a robust candidate list. If students don't seem happy, it is finals week and soon it will be a new semester with a new start.

Perez commented on how much he appreciates the students and their involvement and for stepping up and serving on the Board.

5. Alumni Association Update

Libby Payan provided the Alumni Engagement Report, noting the following:

- ❖ In early October, SSU launched Big Blue Weekend. The Alumni Association, during this weekend of festivities, hosted a couple of events specifically for our alumni community, including a packed Trivia Night at Lobo's in the Student Center hosted by SSUAA Board members, as well as Palooza on Saturday, where a beer and wine garden, food and festivities took place in the quad here on campus. It was a great turnout for our first year, despite the triple digit heat and are looking forward to building on this. We had alumni back on campus from southern California and other areas outside of our immediate area. It was great having a way to bring alumni back to campus to reconnect with SSU.
- ❖ October 28, we held our second annual Life After the Game networking event in collaboration with SSU Athletics. Alumni were invited back to campus to network and connect with current SSU athletes to help them learn the techniques of networking and building relationships. Close to 200 people attended this event. SSU alumna, Aubrie Tolliver, sideline reporter for the San Francisco 49ers was the emcee, sharing her experiences with making connections, and Professor Rich Campbell gave a quick overview of how to network. It was a great event. We are looking forward to doing more events like this in the future where we can make connections with our alumni and students.
- ❖ SSUAA is currently in the middle of the Winter Wishes giveaway. Dec. 4-15 SSU alumni and their businesses are featured with giveaways on the Alumni Facebook and Instagram pages. Be sure to check out what the next several giveaways are. It's a great way to showcase our alumni.
- ❖ Toast of the Town is this Wednesday, December 11 at 7 p.m. at the Student Center. I personally invite each of you to join in celebrating our Fall 2024 graduates. It's a fun evening recognizing the achievements of our graduating students.
- ❖ The Alumni Association will be helping with SSU's Hygiene Drive December 17-19. For more information, I believe there are postcards with the information on how to participate or you can visit advancement.sonoma.edu/support-students.
- ❖ On Tuesday, January 7, we're excited to host the *2025 Outlook on Politics and Economics, the Road Ahead*. Two of our shining star faculty members, Dr. David McCuan (SSU alumnus) and Dr. Rob Eyler (CSU alumnus) will be our speakers. This is a zoom webinar that will be at 6:00 p.m. To register for this informative event please visit: <https://www.ssualumni.org/theroadahead>

U'ren asked how many members the SSUAA had. It was noted that the figure is now north of 80,000 alumni with the majority being contactable. Tiffany O'Neill has reinvented the SSUAA Board, Annual Giving and Events with efforts to re-create Homecoming and alumni engagement with current students.

6. University President's Report

Dr. Emily Cutrer provided the board with the University Update. Cutrer announced the first semester is nearly done and it's been an eventful year. Appreciation from Cutrer and others on the decision to postpone the 50th anniversary celebration to the Spring.

She advised the board, she had news to share that wasn't necessarily going to be the easiest to hear, and that the Board can help us move through these difficulties. The Budget is the issue.

Cutrer noted that Higher Ed is dealing with a lot of trouble and SSU is not alone. State Universities in particular and small private institutions are the hardest hit. There are CSU issues related to a reduction in funding from the State and new practices around reallocation of budget amongst campuses due to enrollment. SSU has had an almost 40% drop in enrollment over last decade, which is having a significant impact; regionally the northern CA campuses are having the toughest time. SSU is doing a great job on graduation rates but it is impacting overall enrollment.

In October, the campus community gathered for a forum to discuss the current \$21M structural deficit. One-time funds have addressed these issues up to this point. Unions were notified of potential layoffs, noting that everything is on the table. There is a lot of stress and anxiety, people are worried and there was recognition that it would be painful. SSU is looking at everything we do. The President gave a commitment of January to reveal a public plan so there would be time to do it well. The \$21M includes a 8% cut in funding from the State. Other contributors include the 2nd year of the enrollment reallocation in the CSU, unfunded salary increases, and increased mandatory costs such as for insurance, energy and benefits. The Campus is planning for the worst, while still advocating for State to support Higher Education. The campus leadership is reassessing and looking at reorganizing.

There is still a great future ahead. Cutrer continued letting the Board know that we must stay positive organizing SSU for the future. The CSU and SSU has a goal to do a better job at career preparation. It is really important for students to see a pathway and model for every student. The Alumni Association is already doing great things in this area.

The CSU is investing funds over the next two years to relaunch SSU through marketing efforts to provide an identifiable presence both locally and more broadly. The campus community has provided ideas of how we can do things differently and/or better. The idea from some that college isn't worth it is another battle we face. For economic, leadership and citizenry we know that it is. There is also a misconception that college debt is excessive.

SSU is advocating with elected officials to reduce the cut to the CSU. There will be systemwide advocacy at the state and federal level this spring. Economics Professor, Dr. Rob Eyler is to be officially re-designated as SSU's legislative liaison.

Maraskeshia Smith appreciated how Dr. Cutrer has humanized this and the collaboration efforts. The message still gives hope even during the budget imbalance and tough decisions.

7. Special Presentation Topic – Strategic Enrollment Management Update

Vice President for Strategic Enrollment Management, Ed Mills joined the meeting via zoom at 10:55am to present on enrollment, how campus got here and how the campus is moving forward.

Last year, the campus made progress on the number of students enrolled and at the same time, graduation rates improved. Equity gaps are closing and have been eliminated for the two-year transfer students. Freshmen retention has increased and overall new student enrollment is up 5%, offset by a large graduating class in the Spring. We have flattened the drop and now the focus is to push the numbers up with some headwinds – enrollment cliff/drop in 2026-2030 and again in 2030-2040 a second drop; then flattens out. This will lead to a considerable change in the competitive nature for recruiting students. Cal State Apply requirement and bugs present another challenge.

What are the next steps:

- ❖ Aggressive rebranding and marketing initiative to focus on recruitment – years ago there was a rebranding that was not fully launched or implemented as it was more so tied to the nostalgia of the past and didn't connect to the students of the future.
- ❖ Building structure for Enrollment Marketing [tools]
 - CRM - Slate
 - Communication flows
 - Curating lead generation
 - Creating prediction models in our work with Deloitte
 - Developing marketing assets and enrollment marketing videos – social media, welcome center, Tiktok, Facebook, Instagram, weekly – digital, print, Youtube channel
 - Paramount Plus campaign – Fall to drive apps and Spring to drive yield
 - AI – generative and conversational; use of Collegevine platform will go live in early in 2025
 - Western University Exchange (WUE)
 - The way students are searching for college has changed - apps like Encoura
 - Curate personalized marketing
 - Scholarship help; including housing scholarships
 - Expand dual enrollment – Petaluma Promise; Rohnert Park four year pathway program; interest from other local school districts
 - Guaranteed admission
 - Alumni Student Ambassador program

8. Committee Reports

Perez introduced the committee reports

Investment Committee Report

Brent Thomas asked Ian Hannah to cover the CSU systemwide endowment data overview, provided in the board package. Hannah reported the preliminary results of the CSU combined systemwide endowment market value is \$2.7B where SSU's total endowment market value is \$70.5M.

The performance of the CSU one-year average investment return 23/24 = 11.6% / SSU = 11.1%.
The CSU ten-year average investment return thru 23/24 = 6.1% / SSU = 5.9%

The comparison of asset allocation:

- ❖ Public Equity: CSU = 58%; SSU = 49%
- ❖ Fixed Income: CSU = 22%; SSU = 21%
- ❖ Alternative Strategies and Real Assets: CSU = 18%; SSU = 30%
- ❖ Cash: CSU = 2%; SSU = less than 1%

SSU has higher allocations to alternatives such as private equity and hedge funds and lower allocation to public equity than the other CSU campuses on average.

The Spending Policies of the CSU mainly use moving average methodology and range from 3% to 4.5%; median is 4.0% of 12 QTRs (3 years); SSU's is 4.0% of 20 QTRs (5 years).

Endowment Management Fees across the CSU = avg 1.34%; median is 1.0% annually; SSU = 1.0% annually.

When comparing return objectives - Roughly 6% avg 10-year return vs. 8% objective in CSU (for spending + inflation + management fee). SSU is similar return but closer to 7% return objective due to lower spending rate and lower management fee. The CSU as a whole is not keeping pace with inflation or maintaining intergenerational equity over the last 10 years, putting downward pressure

on spending rate and/or management fee %; SSU is in a similar but slightly better situation since distribution rate and fee % are slightly lower.

Thomas reported that Graystone recommended four new private equity funds that the committee agreed with, which will keep SSUF's target asset allocation commitment of 15% to private investments.

The committee took a final review of the North Pier Consulting OCIO evaluation report findings and corresponding recommendations. The review results were largely positive. The committee and SSUF staff are working on next steps to tighten up reporting/ benchmarks etc. as recommended by Northpier as well as updates to the Investment Committee Charter. The Investment Committee will not be pursuing an RFP for OCIO as there was consensus to maintain the current OCIO relationship with Graystone.

The Investment Committee Charter recommended revisions reflect feedback from Northpier to be more in line with Investment Policy and also from CSU AOA liaison to be in line with committee delegation limitations and will be presented as an action item later today. This was provided to the board in the board package.

Philanthropy and Audit Committees

Did not meet this quarter; no report.

Governance Committee Report

Hannah provided the report for the Governance committee as Ali Pourghadir was unable to attend. The committee reviewed the Governance Charter and recommends minor edits/ revisions to reflect current functions. To be action item later in the agenda. The last review and revisions were in 2019.

The committee discussed succession planning and the board nomination of Davis Campbell, III, and recommends to the Board his appointment to the Board and to Governance Committee. A nomination form and self-prepared bio of Mr. Campbell was provided in the package. Campbell brings extensive board and governance experience, including serving on the UC Davis Foundation Board. In 2008, he was a SSU distinguished alumni recipient.

The committee also reviewed and recommended the Board Recruitment and Nomination process updates. This provides a general process to follow for bringing on new board members. The minor edits recommended reflect the current process. This will be used as a guide with case-by-case adjustments since each new individual has a different relationship with the University.

The committee reviewed the Board Make-Up Sheet, which provides high level assessment of the current make-up of the board from the lens of profession/industry representation and other considerations as we look to bring on additional members to the board. In addition, the committee reviewed the Board Member Term Dates, a current snapshot of individuals on the board, their current committee participation and their term status/anticipated end date. A key takeaway from this exercise is the need for on-going succession planning as many board and committee members will be reaching the end of their final term in June 2026. These include vacancies in committee chair roles, with an immediate focus on the Audit and Investment Committees and the need for expertise in the near term. The Committee discussed a short list of potential individuals.

Hannah also noted that he and Perez recently met with Jacob Yarrow, Exec Dir of GMC, to discuss potential board crossover between SSUF Board and GMC Board for potential succession planning for both boards.

The committee also discussed the Board of Directors Status Report and Personal Engagement Plan documents, that will help to engage Board Directors beyond roles and responsibilities as outlined by the Statement of Understanding Doc and look to provide updates on participation and discuss use of each individual's "time, talent and treasure".

Finally, the committee discussed the Emeritus Board member designation process, form, and potential nominees. This is new to SSUF, though documented in the bylaws. The committee reviewed and supported draft process for selecting emeritus board members and recommended potential individuals who met the criteria to Executive Committee for review.

Executive Committee Report

Hannah continued by providing the Executive Committee report. The committee also reviewed the Emeritus director process and nomination review and following review of the potential nominees are recommending Wally Lowry be extended posthumously the distinction of the first ever Emeritus Director of the SSUF Board of Directors – a draft resolution was shared with the meeting materials.

The Board Agenda planning & future special presentation topics are not yet decided for the March Board meeting. Some future ideas include Marketing efforts on campus, beginning a series of each Academic Deans to come and speak to happenings and priorities in their College, and requesting Student Affairs representatives provide a presentation on various student support programming – Including Center for Academic Access and Student Enrichment (CAASE) and/or Student Basic Needs programs.

9. Action Items

Hannah presented the items for the Board to take action on:

- ❖ Revised Investment Committee Charter Revisions as recommended by Investment Committee
- ❖ Revised Governance Committee Charter Revisions as recommended by Governance Committee
- ❖ New Board, Committee, and Emeritus member confirmations as recommended by the Governance and Executive committees
 - Recommend approval of Davis Campbell's nomination to join the board and Governance Committee, effective following this meeting.
 - Emeritus nomination and Board resolution for Wally Lowry

(Maraskeshia Smith left at noon for prior engagement).

U'Ren asked for a motion to approve these recommendations, so moved, seconded and unanimously approved by the board. (vote occurred at 12:03pm – quorum intact).

10. University Advancement Report

Perez provided the quarterly Philanthropic Report. The university has raised \$2.9M through the first quarter of this FY (as of 9/30/24). This is trending slightly higher in the number of donors than this time last year. He reported that additional gifts have been booked since then and the totals are around \$4.6M as of this meeting, including a \$1M cash gift in support of multiple areas, with the majority going to an endowment to support the Green Music Center (GMC) as well as current cash to support the GMC. Our goal this fiscal year is \$10M, and Perez felt confident that we were on track to be at 50% of the goal by calendar year end.

Perez informed the board of some organizational changes in Advancement in support of the campus budget deficit including in Strategic Communications, Governmental Affairs and in Marketing. The Campus is evaluating all areas to be sure we are receiving a high return on our investment. This also includes evaluating potential changes to software.

Perez advised the board that Alicia Hodenfield will be reaching out to Board Directors to schedule meetings with each director and U'Ren and Pourghadir (if available) to discuss and develop each Board of Director's Status Report and Personal Engagement Plan.

The first Commencement Logistics Planning meeting was just held. Again, SSU has a robust number of graduates – a testament to the faculty and support systems available for students. SSU will have two days of Commencement Ceremonies, May 17-18, 2025.

Perez provided the date for the 2025 SSU Giving Day – 4.24.25. He shared that working with the Philanthropy Committee a recommendation for a Giving Day challenge is planned to be drafted and presented at the spring meeting. The campus would appreciate the Board's engagement on Giving Day; and to use it as an opportunity to mobilize their networks.

There will be a signing ceremony in the new year celebrating a new MOU between SSU and the cities of Cotati and Rohnert Park. More to come on this.


Perez closed his report thanking the board for their support and leadership.

11. New Business / Announcements / Adjournment

Perez noted there had been a suggestion from Chair Bob U'Ren for future Board meetings. The meetings will now be from 10am-1pm and the special presentation will occur *during* the lunch gathering at the end of the board meeting to allow more time for the remainder of the meeting topics. Beginning with the March Board meeting we will take a 15-minute break for lunch set-up in our same room, and return to a working lunch/special presentation.

Next Meeting: 3/7/25, 10am-1pm, returning to the Sonoma Valley Room.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:18pm


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


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

2024/2025 Record of Attendance
December 6, 2024

	<i>Title</i>	<i>First</i>	<i>Last</i>	<i>Attendance</i>
1	Mr.	Monir	Ahmed	Present
2	Dr.	Frank	Chong	<i>Absent</i>
3	Ms.	Anita	Christmas	Present
4	Dr.	Emily	Cutrer	Present
5	Mr.	David	Felte	Present
6	Mr.	Asad "AJ"	Franklin	Present
7	Mr.	Tom	Gillespie	<i>Absent</i>
8	Mr.	Ian	Hannah	Present
9	Mr.	Joseph	Huang	<i>Absent</i>
10	Mr.	Tom	Isaak	<i>Absent</i>
11	Dr.	Brigitte	Lahme	Present
12	Dr.	Karen	Moranski	<i>Absent</i>
13	Dr.	Andréa	Neves	<i>Absent</i>
14	Mr.	Ernesto	Olivares	Present
15	Ms.	Libby	Payan	Present
16	Mr.	Randy	Pennington	Present via zoom
17	Dr.	Mario	Perez	Present
18	Ms.	Marcela	Piedra	Present
19	Mr.	Ali	Pourghadir	<i>Absent</i>
20	Ms.	Vanessa	Sanchez	Present
21	Ms.	Maraskeshia	Smith	Present via zoom
22	Mr.	Mike	Sullivan	Present via zoom
23	Mr.	Brent	Thomas	Present
24	Mr.	Robert	U'Ren	Present
25	Ms.	Amanda	Visser	Present

Directors Present 18/25

Directors Absent 7

Board Quorum 13/25

Article IV, Section 6, Bylaws

Staff/Guests Present:

Ms. Alicia Hodenfield – Administrative Manager for Advancement and Foundation Operations, SSU

Dr. Ed Mills, VP Strategic Enrollment Management, SSU, via zoom