ASCSU January Plenary Report

January 15-16, 2026

Budget

The Governor's January proposed Budget for the CSU can be reviewed at the following link: https://ebudget.ca.gov/budget/p/2026-27/Department/6610)

Chancellor's Office Updates

Chancellor's Office Updates: Division of Student Success & Strategic Enrollment Management Junius Gonzales, Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs; Dilcie Perez, Deputy Vice Chancellor for Strategic Enrollment Management and Student Success and Chief Student Affairs Officer; Nathan Evans, Associate Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs provided the following updates.

The CSU is in the process of launching a new Division of Student Success and Strategic Enrollment Management, to be led by a future Vice Chancellor. This division is intended to unify and coordinate systemwide student success efforts that currently exist across multiple units. Its work is explicitly aligned with CSU Forward and the CSU Student Success Framework, with the goal of producing a single, coherent implementation plan rather than parallel or duplicative initiatives. The system is prioritizing improved access to real-time, disaggregated student data, clearer and more consistent definitions of student groups, and the establishment of explicit institutional student success goals with accountability measures. Campuses are being engaged in discussions to set measurable targets for student success, with particular attention to students entering in Fall 2027 and beyond. Faculty involvement in shaping how these goals are defined and measured locally will be important as expectations become more concrete.

Strategic Enrollment Management & Retention
Strategic enrollment management continues to be a systemwide priority, but the focus has broadened beyond recruitment alone. The CSU is emphasizing yield, persistence, and graduation, with particular concern for second- and third-year retention, where systemwide attrition remains a challenge. There is also a push to improve data sharing across campuses, as well as a systemwide review of outdated policies and procedures that may unintentionally create barriers to student progress. Importantly, there is openness at the system level to reconsider long-standing practices that no longer align with current student demographics or educational pathways. For CSULA faculty, this signals potential future conversations about curriculum structures, academic policies, and program design that affect student momentum and completion.

Cal State Apply & Changing Student Demographics
The CSU is actively working to streamline Cal State Apply by mapping the student experience from application through enrollment and identifying points of confusion or inefficiency. This effort is part of a broader strategic planning response to California's changing demographics, including the continued decline in the number of traditional-age college students. As a result, the system is increasingly focused on how to serve adult learners through flexible and accessible academic programs that extend beyond traditional PACE or Extended Education models. This direction has clear relevance for CSULA, given our large population of working adults and

place-bound students, and raises questions about how degree pathways, scheduling, modality, and support structures may need to evolve.

<u>PACE, Fully Online Programs, and Cross-Campus Collaboration</u>
Systemwide reviews are underway of PACE and fully online programs, examining their structure, funding models, and alignment with both student and workforce needs. At the same time, the CSU is exploring opportunities for cross-campus collaboration, particularly where existing policies—such as those governing consortium degrees or academic residency requirements—limit flexibility and innovation. The system is also responding to increased interest in Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) and examining how CPL can be expanded responsibly. These conversations explicitly acknowledge the need to balance workforce alignment with the CSU's broader educational mission, including liberal arts education and social justice-oriented programs, a balance that is especially salient at CSULA.

<u>Systemwide Adobe Contract & Faculty Development Opportunities</u>
A new systemwide Adobe contract has been finalized, providing all CSU campuses with access to the full Adobe suite. Each campus will receive $30,000 in dedicated professional development funds, with additional centralized funds available to support scalable, cross-campus projects. A call for proposals is expected shortly. At the state senate meeting, faculty leaders discussed leveraging this opportunity to create faculty learning communities, strengthen teaching and learning development, and invest in systemwide instructional capacity. For CSULA, this presents a concrete opportunity to support faculty innovation, digital pedagogy, accessibility, and curriculum development through coordinated proposals.

Alumni Council Update & Systemwide Alignment
The CSU Alumni Council provided an update on its work to align a newly developed strategic plan with systemwide priorities, including CSU Forward. A central focus of this alignment is strengthening alumni engagement as a contributor to student success, rather than viewing alumni relations solely through fundraising or post-graduation engagement. The Council expressed a strong interest in deeper collaboration with faculty and academic programs and is actively seeking guidance from faculty on meaningful ways to integrate alumni into the student experience in ways that are pedagogically relevant and mission-aligned.

<u>Next Steps & Opportunities for CSULA Faculty</u>
Alumni Council representatives explicitly welcomed additional ideas from faculty and offered to help facilitate connections between departments and local alumni through campus alumni directors. For CSULA faculty, this presents an opportunity to formalize and scale alumni engagement efforts that many departments are already doing informally. As alumni engagement becomes more closely tied to student success metrics, faculty input will be critical in shaping approaches that are academically meaningful, equitable, and sustainable.

Professional Development for Faculty Senate Members

Nimisha Barton, Lecturer in History at California State University, Long Beach, presented on **"The DEI Debacle: Past, Present, Futures,"** drawing on her scholarship, professional

experience, and her recent book, *A Just Future*. Dr. Barton framed the current backlash against DEI initiatives as part of a **long-standing historical cycle** rather than a new phenomenon. She traced resistance to expanded access in higher education back to the **late 19th century**, noting that each wave of progress toward inclusion has been followed by periods of retrenchment and backlash.

From Radical Equity Movements to Institutionalized DEI
Dr. Barton highlighted how student- and community-led equity movements of the 1960s and 1970s often rooted in racial justice, anti-war activism, and labor organizing were gradually reshaped into more institutionally acceptable "diversity and inclusion" frameworks in the 1980s and 1990s. While these shifts allowed equity language to enter formal university structures, they also diluted more radical demands for structural change. She emphasized that DEI efforts are often among the first targets during periods of political backlash, austerity, or conservative retrenchment, a pattern that mirrors the present moment. Unlike prior cycles, however, today's challenges are amplified by coordinated, well-funded political opposition, requiring heightened awareness and intentional action from faculty.

Faculty Positional Power, Silence, and Collective Action
A central theme of the presentation was the role of faculty positional power. Dr. Barton noted that DEI practitioners—often staff or contingent faculty—face disproportionate risk and pressure to remain silent, particularly as institutional leadership may hesitate to speak publicly or take clear stances. She urged tenure-line faculty and faculty leaders to:
- Use their relative protections to advocate publicly and collectively
- Engage in coalition building, mutual aid, and community engagement
- Recognize academic senates, unions, and off-campus organizations as critical sites of resistance and accountability

For CSULA faculty, this framing directly connects equity work to shared governance, collective bargaining, and community partnerships—areas where faculty already exercise influence.

Reflection, Solidarity, and Sustaining the Work
The session incorporated small-group discussions, where participants reflected on their own experiences with equity work, shared challenges, and exchanged strategies for sustaining that work while supporting one another. These discussions reinforced that equity labor is often isolating and unevenly distributed across institutions. Dr. Barton concluded with a call to action grounded in empathy and solidarity, encouraging faculty to understand differing perspectives without losing sight of justice-oriented goals. She emphasized the importance of sustaining one another and continuing the difficult, often uncomfortable work required to uphold inclusive, equitable, and transformative higher education.

CSSA Liaison Report
Student Advocacy Priorities & Legislative Activity
California State Student Association (CSSA) Vice President of Systemwide Affairs Katie Karroum shared updates on current student advocacy efforts and systemwide priorities. CSSA is co-sponsoring SB 323, legislation intended to improve the California Dream Act Application and more clearly distinguish it from the FAFSA. The goal of the bill is to reduce student confusion and improve access to state financial aid, an issue with direct relevance for CSULA, given the

large proportion of students who rely on state aid and are navigating complex financial aid pathways.

Budget Advocacy & Student Basic Needs
In response to the Governor's proposed budget, CSSA will focus its advocacy on:
- Affordability for students
- Greater transparency around deferred funding
- Increased investment in student financial aid and basic needs, including housing and food security

These priorities align closely with ongoing concerns at CSULA related to cost of attendance, basic needs infrastructure, and the impact of budget decisions on student persistence and completion.

AI, Student Trustee, and Upcoming Plenary
Karroum reported that CSSA's AI white paper is nearing completion and will be shared with the Academic Senate once finalized. This document is expected to inform systemwide conversations about AI use, policy, and student impact. She also noted that the student trustee application is currently open, with a deadline of January 26, 2026. CSSA's next plenary will be held at Sonoma State University, where CSSA is expected to consider a resolution on non-resident tuition, an issue with potential implications for enrollment and revenue across CSU campuses.

Resolutions

AS-3763-25/JEDI
Support for Minority Serving Institutions
Approved

AS-3764-25/FGA
Change in the Advocacy Positions Taken on Academic Senate of the California State University Monitored Legislative Bills
Approved

AS-3765-25/FGA
2025-2026 Academic Senate of the California State University Policy Agenda Priorities and Goals
Approved

AS-3768-25/AA
California State University Discipline Based Councils
Approved

AS-3773-25/Exec
Apportionment of Academic Senate of the California State University Seats
Waiver – Approved
Resolution - Approved

First Readings:

AS-3772-25/Exec
Supporting the Establishment of a Systemwide Staff Representative Body

AS-3774-25/Exec
Academic Senate of the California State University 2026-2027 Meetings

AS-3775-25/Exec
Amending the Academic Senate of the California State University Bylaws to Address Campus Closure and Integration

AS-3776-25/AA
Consultation Regarding CSU Chancellor's Office Policies

AS-3777-25/APEP
Update to Academic Senate of the California State University Bylaws: Responsibilities of the Academic Preparation and Education Programs Committee

AS-3778-25/APEP
Process for Appointment of Area 6 Ethnic Studies Disciplinary Faculty Reviewers

AS-3779-25/FA
Restoration of Sane and Efficient Plenary Session Hours to Boost ASCSU Senate Health and Wellness