

ASCSU March Plenary Report

March 5-6, 2026

Artificial Intelligence Initiatives in the CSU

Leslie Kennedy, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Academic Technology Services

AVC Kennedy presented an overview of the CSU AI Commons (genai.calstate.edu), a systemwide platform that aggregates resources, training materials, and examples of AI initiatives across campuses. The platform provides guidance on the responsible and ethical use of AI technologies and highlights campus innovations, research projects, and academic programs involving AI.

System AI Initiatives:

- Systemwide AI professional development opportunities for faculty, staff, and students, including facilitated and self-paced courses
- A widely used faculty training course developed by Fresno State
- A student AI micro-credential program and paid AI micro-internships with external organizations
- Systemwide availability of AI tools across CSU platforms, including Microsoft, Google, Zoom, and Adobe environments

The Chancellor's Office launched an AI micro-internship platform with paid, project-based AI opportunities and an AI-enabled research and innovation award linked to the CSU Student Research Competition. AVC Kennedy described the ongoing research initiatives, including a year-long Ithaka S+R study on AI literacy involving CSU libraries and Centers for Teaching and Learning. During discussion, Senators raised questions regarding renewal of the CSU's OpenAI contract, AI detection tools, environmental impacts of AI technologies, and data privacy concerns. Kennedy confirmed that contract renewal discussions are underway and emphasized that CSU policies require responsible use and strong data protections. AI detection tools such as Turnitin's AI detection features are available systemwide but may be enabled at campus discretion.

Systemwide Enrollment Trends and Student Success Priorities

Dilcie Perez, Deputy Vice Chancellor for Strategic Enrollment Management and Student Success

Deputy Vice Chancellor Perez discussed systemwide enrollment trends and the CSU's approach to strategic enrollment management. Her office is coordinating enrollment planning across campuses with an emphasis on aligning enrollment management with student success outcomes. VC Perez emphasized that enrollment strategies must be integrated with student success initiatives, particularly for first-generation students and historically underserved populations. The priorities for enrollment management are strengthening transfer pathways

with California Community College, using data-informed enrollment strategies to address demographic shifts and enrollment pressures, supporting initiatives aligned with the CSU Student Success Framework, and improving coordination between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs to reduce barriers affecting student persistence.

Systemwide Academic Priorities

Junius Gonzales, Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs

Nathan Evans, Associate Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs and Chief of Staff

Vice Chancellor Gonzales provided updates on system advocacy and Academic Affairs priorities. He noted recent legislative engagement, including the Chancellor's testimony before a Senate Budget Subcommittee, and emphasized increasing legislative attention to intersegmental competition in higher education. VC Gonzales highlighted systemwide attainment reporting and the need to recognize multiple forms of postsecondary attainment, including credentials beyond bachelor's degrees. AVC Evans discussed the emerging Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) framework, which focuses on who the CSU serves, how it delivers education, and what academic offerings it provides. Priorities include academic preparation and transfer pathways, affordability and financial aid, improved systemwide data and communication, flexible academic pathways and adult learner access, exploration of additional degree types, including Bachelor of Education, Bachelor of Professional Studies, and Bachelor of Applied Studies. AVC Evans also discussed efforts to streamline academic program development timelines and improve support for multi-campus and consortial programs.

During discussion, senators raised concerns about duplication reviews, departmental workload, and coordination required for new degree programs. Questions were also raised about Pell eligibility implications and community college baccalaureate expansion.

Chancellor's Report

Mildred Garcia, Chancellor

Chancellor García provided updates on budget advocacy and early implementation of CSU Forward. She testified before budget subcommittees and met with leaders in Sacramento. She praised the Governor's \$509 million in new ongoing CSU funding as a "right investment at the right time" and outlined its uses: growing enrollment and access, compensating faculty and staff, addressing a \$9 billion facilities backlog, and advancing CSU Forward with defined metrics and milestones. CSU Voices, the system's advocacy platform, mobilizes stakeholders to support the CSU budget, protect federal funding like Pell Grants, and advocate for CSU students, faculty, and staff in a proposed state affordable housing bond.

She noted the Board of Trustees will consider three career-aligned, time-to-degree-reducing bachelor's degree types: Bachelor of Education, Bachelor of Professional Studies, and Bachelor of Applied Studies. She cited expansion of direct admissions work, financial-aid counseling

support, and Title V changes to allow CSU credits earned at any campus to count as residence credit.

Chancellor Garcia described a new total compensation philosophy and systemwide salary studies expected by June. With the Governor’s funding, the CSU aims to provide compensation increases and correct deficiencies. She launched an employee engagement tool to support data-informed culture and retention. Another initiative amends vendor contracts to include paid internships and scholarships for experiential learning and workforce pipelines.

During the Q&A with Senators, Chancellor Garcia expressed hope for reduced pricing and continued central payment in the renegotiated AI contract. Faculty raised concerns about shared governance and communication regarding proposed Title 5 and new degree-type items. The Chancellor acknowledged communication lapses and committed to improving briefings. CSU rhetoric around “workforce needs” should reflect adaptability, critical thinking, and transferable skills. Concerns about standardization, including common course numbering and credit mobility, were raised. The Chancellor acknowledged these concerns and noted stricter oversight in other states. CSU leadership is raising quality and support-service issues. Enrollment/resource-allocation concerns were addressed by emphasizing the funding model tied to student FTE, campus planning, regional collaboration, and one-time marketing support for campuses facing enrollment challenges.

Other Items of Interest:

CalFresh and Student Basic Needs: Stephanie Bianco, Director, Center for Healthy Communities (Chico State), presented an overview of the CalFresh program, which provides nutrition assistance benefits to eligible students. CalFresh benefits average over \$200 per month per student, which plays an important role in addressing food insecurity, improving retention, and reducing the need for students to work excessive hours. Chico State currently serves as the prime contractor for CalFresh outreach across CSU, UC, and community college campuses and operates a statewide resource hub supporting campus implementation. Federal policy changes will reduce reimbursement for outreach activities from 80% to 25% beginning in October 2026. This shift could significantly impact campus outreach operations. To mitigate the impact, campuses are encouraged to track faculty and staff time spent referring students to CalFresh, as these referrals can count toward required “state share” contributions and help sustain program funding.

California State Student Association (CSSA): Katie Karroum, VP of System Wide Affairs, provided updates on student priorities and legislative advocacy that includes a focus on student employment, CalFresh Eligibility, and financial aid. CSSA also emphasized student mental health as a critical concern, citing survey data showing high levels of anxiety, depression, and stress affecting academic performance. CSSA continues exploring expanded after-hours and tele-mental-health services across the CSU. CSSA published a white paper titled “[CSU Student’s Response to the CSU AI Initiative.](#)”

CFA: Margarita Berta-Ávila, CFA President, reported that bargaining with CSU management continues, with negotiations occurring approximately every two weeks. Key unresolved issues include salary proposals and compensation structure, lecturer job security, academic freedom protections, AI-related policy considerations, and faculty workload provisions. President Berta-Ávila also noted that CFA’s legislative agenda includes bills addressing faculty data privacy, AI protections, presidential search processes, and executive compensation oversight.

CSU Alumni Council: The Alumni Council reported on adopting a 2025–2027 strategic plan. The updated mission unites alumni as advocates and partners in advancing student and alumni success. The plan is based on five core values: advocacy, lifelong connection, collaboration, opportunity and access, and stewardship. The Council’s strategic priorities are strengthening alumni advocacy and public investment in the CSU, expanding alumni engagement in mentorship, experiential learning, and career preparation, and improving internal governance and cross-campus coordination.

CSU Trustees: Trustees Diego Arambula, Vice Chair and Carson Fajardo, Student Trustee met with the ASCSU, introducing themselves. These meetings allow Senators to get to know trustees. Senators raised questions regarding the following: delayed appointment of a new faculty trustee, communication between the Academic Senate and the Board of Trustees, community college baccalaureate expansion, evaluation processes for CSU executives

Resolutions

Second-Reading Items

[AS-3774-26/Exec Academic Senate of the California State University 2026-2027 Meetings](#)

Approved

The resolution establishes the ASCSU’s meeting schedule for 2026-2027.

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

Approved

Amends the ASCSU Bylaws to clarify the process for adjusting membership when an existing campus is closed or integrated.

[AS-3776-25/AA Consultation in the Process of Reviewing CSU \(Systemwide\) Chancellor’s Office Policies](#)

Approved

The CSU is governed by about 350-400 Policies published by the Chancellor’s Office. Each policy is regularly reviewed approximately every two years. This resolution asks that the ASCSU be integrated into that review process when appropriate and where possible in order to improve the Policies and make their implementation more effective.

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

Approved

Updates ASCSU bylaws on the responsibilities of the Academic Preparation and Education Programs Committee partially in response to historic changes to policies regarding remediation and the separation of CSU GE (CSU program) from Cal-GETC (intersegmental transfer program).

[AS-3778-25/APEP Process for Appointment of Area 6 Ethnic Studies Discipline-Based Faculty Reviewers](#)

Approved

Clarifies the processes and requirements for appointing Ethnic Studies discipline expert faculty reviewers for Ethnic Studies articulation.

[AS-3779/FA Establishment of Revised Plenary Session Hours to Boost the Effectiveness, Health, and Wellness of the Academic Senate of the California State University](#)

Approved

Establishes ASCSU plenary session times that are slightly shorter than recent practices to provide more reasonable working and travel conditions, and more effective use of time overall.

First Reading Waiver

[AS-3788-25/FGA 2026 Initial State Legislative Advocacy Positions Of The Academic Senate Of The California State University](#)

Approved

Sets the ASCSU's preliminary positions on pending 2025-2026 legislation in the California State Legislature.