ASSOCIATED STUDENTS, INC.
CAL STATE SAN MARCOS

POLICY: **Viewpoint Neutrality Policy and General Procedures**

EFFECTIVE DATE: **January 17, 2020**

REVISED DATE: **FEBRUARY 9, 2026**

I. Definitions

Viewpoint Neutral Funding

A process in which all funding or allocation decisions are made pursuant to narrow, objective, and definite standards, and which does not involve the exercise of judgment or formation of an opinion concerning the content of the event, or is otherwise affected in any way by the viewpoint of a student organization or the proposed event.

Recognized student organizations (RSO)

Recognized student organizations are student organizations that are currently properly registered and in good standing with CSUSM Student Leadership & Involvement Center (SLIC).

Associated Students, Inc. (ASI)

Associated Students, Inc. is a nonprofit public benefit corporation. ASI's mission is to serve, engage and empower students and promote a campus climate that meets the educational, social, and cultural well-being of all students. ASI supports and serves the University's educational purposes by (i) providing opportunities for students to enjoy the educational benefits and social enrichment gained from participation in extracurricular programs and activities, and (ii) stimulating discussion and debate on a wide range of issues from a variety of viewpoints.

PURPOSE

ASI adopted a viewpoint neutral standard guiding decision-making in connection with the allocation of mandatory student association fees made to any Recognized Student Organizations (RSO) or other similar- student conducted event that involves viewpoint expression.

As part of the policy revisions, any allocation of mandatory student association fees by ASI for events shall (1) be made in a viewpoint neutral manner; (2) not discriminate against any funding request based on the viewpoint to be expressed by proposed event; (3) be made in accordance with viewpoint neutral objective criteria; and (4) be adjudicated by ASI in a process that provides (a) that if the ASI fund application is denied or reduced, the decision-maker shall state on the record or in writing the reasons therefore, and (b) provide for a right of prompt appeal of the denial or reduction of the request to an appropriate official or administrator.

POLICY

Funding Standards and Viewpoint Neutrality Compliance

I. All individuals making funding decisions on behalf of ASI must agree and warrant that they will comply with and abide by the requirement that decisions must be made in a viewpoint neutral manner. With respect to any funding decision, all of the individuals making the funding decision are responsible for ensuring compliance with the requirement of viewpoint neutrality. Individuals who knowingly and intentionally violate the viewpoint neutrality requirement are subject to any otherwise available and appropriate corrective measures, including removal or suspension from their ASI office(s) or position(s), or disqualification from any future funding decisions. Any funding decision made in violation of the viewpoint neutrality requirement is null and void.

II. All funding decisions must be made without regard to the viewpoint being expressed by an RSO. An RSO cannot be granted or denied funding based on its viewpoint or because it advocates a particular opinion or view. Funding decisions must be based on procedures and criteria that are not tied to the viewpoint expressed by the RSO or the approval, disapproval, acceptance, or rejection of that viewpoint.

III. Viewpoint neutral criteria and processes will be utilized during the decision-making process for any and all ASI funding policies and procedures involving expressive activities. If there is a conflict between the CSUSM-ASI Viewpoint Neutrality Policy and General Procedures and other ASI funding guideline(s), the viewpoint neutral guidelines control.

PROCEDURES

Evaluating Applications or for Decisions to Allocate Student Association Fees to Expressive Events.

I. Within ASI there are two programs under which Student Association Fees may be reallocated to fund an event containing expressive activity: (1) Upon application by a qualifying RSO, under the ASI Leadership program (ALF) for reimbursements for events and activities; and (2) Upon application by a qualifying student, under the ASI Leadership Funding - Travel Policy (for conference attendees). These two programs will be collectively referred to and called the ASI Expressive Activity Student Association Fee Reallocation Programs. Any additional programs regulating or supporting student speech activities funded by mandatory student association fees created by ASI in the future must have written policies that provide Viewpoint Neutral Funding as defined herein.

II. Specific and separate procedures have been adopted to guide decisions made under these two programs, including the right to appeal any adverse decisions regarding applications for funding. Adverse decisions, if any, are appealable to an appropriate campus official as

provided in the specific ASI Expressive Activity Student Association Fee Reallocation Program Procedures.

Appeal Process

I. If decision violates or did not comply with the viewpoint neutrality requirement, it may file an appeal. The complainant has five (5) business days after receipt of the written post-meeting decision to file an appeal. Such appeal must be in writing and state the reason believed the funding was wrongfully denied or reduced. The appeal shall be limited to the question of whether the application was properly denied pursuant to the policy or whether viewpoint or opinion played an impermissible role in the denial or reduction.

   a. The CSUSM Vice President of Student Affairs ("VPSA") or the VPSA's designee will review the appeal and issue a written decision as soon as reasonably practicable but no later than ten (10) business days of receipt of appeal.

   b. The VPSA or the VPSA's designee shall determine "de novo" (*i.e.*, without any deference to the ASI decision) whether the funding decision complied with the terms of the policy or whether it violated the viewpoint neutrality requirement.