California State University SAN MARCOS | The Foundation

The CSUSM Foundation California State University San Marcos 333 S. Twin Oaks Valley Road San Marcos, CA 92096-0001
Tel: 760.750.4400 **Tax ID:** 80-0390564 www.csusm.edu/foundation

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY SAN MARCOS FOUNDATION
A California Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation

September 24, 2025

Directors present (virtual): Richard Armenta, Kyle Casement '11, Kristin Crellin, Dan Epstein, Alisha (Wilkins) Franklin, Tommy Friedrich, Ingo Hentschel, Nathaniel Keifer '09, '21, Carleen Kreider, Simon Kuo, Mitch Kuvinka '24, '26, Carol Lazier, Lou Monville, President Neufeldt, Itsarely Palma Castillo '26, Julian Parra, Esther Phahla, Jason Simmons, Steve Wagner (Emeritus Director) and Leon Wyden, Jr

Directors absent: Emilie Hersh, Annie Norviel '09, Justin Perron and Taylor Sutherland

Staff present (virtual): Christine Andersen, Alison Aragon, Sean Briner, Lori Brockett, Debby Clark, Michelle Clark, Donna Day, Chuck De Leone, Matias Farre, Godfrey Gibbison, Liora Gubkin, Mike Helé, Claire Hill, Carl Kemnitz, Christa Koen, Megan Muret, Mary Oling-Sisay, Jennifer Ostergren, Ron Ramirez, Juliana Rodriguez '23, Stacy Slagor '19 (MBA), Melissa Teetzel, Jackie Trischman, Kris Vasquez, P. Vien Walker and Jocelyn Wyndham '04, '16

Members of the Public: None

Call to Order – 8:32 am

I. **Public Comment** – Chair Kuo acknowledged no members of the public were in attendance.

II. **Board Connections & Updates**
- Welcome: Michelle Clark, Interim Vice President of University Advancement
  - Chair Kuo welcomed all to the meeting and commented on the success of the campaign launch. He stated his vision during his tenure as Board Chair aiming to leverage Director's networks to continue to tell CSUSM's story of impact and increase Director feedback during meetings. Chair Kuo asked Michelle Clark to introduce herself.
- Chair Kuo offered congratulations:
  - The Board launched the Blueprint for the Future campaign and Chair Kuo highlighted the success of the donor dinner and virtual launch.
  - President Neufeldt was a LEAD Visionary Award Honoree and winner of The Innovation and Economic Opportunity Award.
  - Leon Wyden received the highest annual honor from the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO) and was named the winner of the 2025 Distinguished Business Officer Award.
  - Itsarely Palma Castillo will be recognized as CSUSM's Volunteer of the Year at the North County Philanthropy Council's Volunteer Awards Celebration.

    - Justin Perron received a promotion to Professor after exceeding standards in teaching, research, and service.
- Mr. Wyden offered gratitude for the Board's support and participation to make the student wellness and recreation center a reality.
- Engagement Spotlight: Chair Kuo asked Directors to share insights.
    - Question of the Quarter: How have you engaged with the university this past quarter?

III. President's Remarks – President Ellen Neufeldt provided the following updates:

- The President welcomed Michelle Clark as the Interim Vice President of University Advancement, remarking how fortunate we are to have her leadership while the university conducts a national search for the new Vice President.
- President Neufeldt reflected on the Blueprint for the Future campaign launch dinner and thanked Board Directors who participated in the program, as well as the Advancement team for their execution of the event. She extended gratitude to Directors who serve as ambassadors for the university and the campaign by sharing what CSUSM means to them and inviting others to be a part of the journey to support students. President Neufeldt noted that the public launch received significant media coverage and announced that the campaign has now reached nearly 75 percent of its goal.
- President Neufeldt recognized Hunter Industries for their recent $10M gift to the Integrated Science and Engineering Building which, pending CSU Board of Trustees approval, will be named in their honor. Hunter Industries is the largest private employer in San Marcos and currently employs 120 CSUSM alumni.
- In recent engagement with the CSU Board of Trustees (BOT), President Neufeldt shared she concluded her 6-year review. The BOT approved CSUSM's innovative financing model for a public-private partnership with North City to develop a new student wellness and recreation center. She reminded Directors that the students passed a referendum last fall to increase student fees to pay for the facility and the campus community looks forward to the groundbreaking.
- President Neufeldt remarked on the physical growth of the campus with several construction projects currently underway including:
    - Integrated Science and Engineering building with expected completion in Fall 2027
    - Black Oak Hall and Kwíila Dining – affordable student housing and dining space
    - Elevator additions in Arts and Science Hall 1 buildings to improve accessibility
    - Completion of the renovated student life centers in the University Student Union including the addition of Asian-Pacific Islander/Desi-American and American Indian centers
- President Neufeldt reported CSUSM had record enrollment with just over 17,000 students and the largest first-year class, both of which are milestones in the mission to expand access to higher education. In his first weeks the new interim Chief Enrollment Officer, Dr. Ed Mills, brings a wealth of experience to support CSUSM's Strategic Enrollment plan.
- President Neufeldt closed by expressing deep gratitude for the leadership of the Foundation Board as well as their efforts to support the Blueprint for the Future campaign reinforcing CSUSM's commitment to student success and social mobility.

Business

IV. Approval of Consent Agenda –

- Chair Kuo asked if there were any items to remove from the consent agenda. Ms. Kreider requested additional information regarding the Financial Statements. Chair Kuo then

requested a motion to approve the consent agenda, which included the previous meeting minutes, committee minutes, investment performance, financial statements, quarterly report, the CSUSM Athletics Excellence Quasi-Endowment, and proposed 2026 Foundation Board meeting dates. The motion was made by Mr. Monville, seconded by Mr. Wyden, and unanimously approved, pending response to the financial statements.

- **Financial Statements (Report)**
  Following approval of the consent agenda, Mr. Farre provided additional information on the Financial Statements, including clarification of expense variances: $400,000 in support of the SWIFT program, $480,000 related to the land transfer to the University Corporation, and campaign expenses included in this line item. The report was shared via Zoom chat during the meeting. No further action was required.

V. Proposed Stewardship Committee

- Vice Chair Crellin noted discussion took place at the Executive Committee to determine interest in creating a Stewardship Committee. She conveyed the impact of stewardship and the role a committee would play to strengthen how the Board engages with, provides feedback on impact reporting, and thanks donors. Directors discussed interest in exploring the establishment of a Stewardship Committee and next steps.

ACTION ITEM: Staff will schedule a Foundation 101 presentation related to the creation of a Stewardship Committee

VI. Student Perspectives: Our Future in Action

- Student Philanthropy Council (SPC) – Mr. Kuvinka shared the SPC held their first meeting of the semester and will once again volunteer at the Taste of Rancho Santa Fe event.
- Mx. Palma Castillo shared that the SPC will write thank you notes to steward employee donors who participated in the Dibs Employee Giving Campaign. Members will also be challenged to write a case for support for the ASI Cougar Pantry in less than 100 words.
- Mr. Kuvinka shared the Epstein Family Veterans Center hosted two 'Chow on Deck' events for the campus community with over 100 attendees at each offering military-affiliated students the opportunity to foster community connections, learn about services provided by the Veterans Center and network with campus and community partners.
- Mx. Palma Castillo remarked about the energy on campus since the start of the semester and as the CoBA representative on ASI, they recently coordinated workshops for first generation students creating resources and engagement across campus.
- Chair Kuo shared he and Mx. Palma Castillo will be featured on the news to share information about CSUSM's campaign launch.

VII. Campaign Momentum

A. Funding Progress – Mr. Keifer provided an update on fundraising progress and referenced his participation in both CSUSM's campaigns noting he is thankful to be able to contribute in different ways over time.
   - Ms. Wyndham shared this year's annual philanthropic fundraising total is more than double the annual average achieved during the last campaign. She noted that, just three months into the current fiscal year, nearly as much has been raised as the total from the previous fiscal year. The Advancement team has also identified a range of philanthropic opportunities.

- Ms. Wyndham celebrated the recent $10M gift from Hunter Industries as the largest corporate gift to the university and the third $10M gift during this campaign.
- Ms. Wyndham noted Dr. De Leone will share updates on campaign research funding and commented on the importance of diversified philanthropy with uncertainties in Federal funding. To ensure consistent reporting given pending federal responses, reports will include an asterisk notation.

VIII. CSUSM Today: Realities & Opportunities – Chair Kuo introduced campus leaders to share information and updates allowing Directors to better understand where philanthropy and the Board can make the most impact to advance CSUSM's mission.

A. State Budget Outlook
- Mr. Wyden provided an overview on the state budget.
  - While an 8% budget cut was anticipated for 2025–26, the CSU instead received a 3% "one-year reduction" with the stated intention of restoring the 3% in 2026–27. The reduction to CSUSM is $4.3M.
  - Mr. Wyden closed by stating philanthropy is not just important, it's essential and he thanked Directors for helping us amplify the campaign message.

B. Research Funding Landscape – *Drs. De Leone Armenta provided an overview of research funding.*
- Dr. De Leone shared updates on new grants received through the Office of Graduate Studies & Research and announced a total of $21.8M was received in 2024/25 reflecting an 8 percent increase over the prior year.
- Dr. Armenta offered sincere thanks to the university for supporting the development of grants noting CSUSM resources far exceed those available at many CSUs and other higher-ed institutions. He noted that grant and innovative research funding directly supports student experience in labs contributing to the important work of training the future workforce of our local communities.

C. Advocating for Higher Education
- Mr. Monville thanked Directors for their continued support in advocacy and highlighted successes from recent months.
- Mr. Monville shared the proposed dates for the 2026 Advocacy Day in Sacramento and the CSU Hill Day in Washington D.C. He also shared advocacy plans for the next year noting the work of advocacy and philanthropy together strengthen CSUSM's ability to continue progress on its mission of student success.

D. Campaign in Action: Tools & Stories for the Public Phase – Ms. Clark shared gratitude for Directors that have already promoted the Blueprint for the Future campaign on their social channels and provided updates on media activity for the launch.

i. Refining Your Elevator Speech
   1. Share your 30-second pitch with the Board
      - Ms. Clark reminded Directors of the storytelling workshop at the previous meeting and the need for unified messaging during a campaign. She encouraged Directors to share their stories of why they support CSUSM.

ii. Amplifying the Message: Your Campaign Tools
- Ms. Clark showcased the toolkit available for Directors to utilize when they communicate about the campaign, as well as the planned communication schedule

and ways the Directors can thoughtfully weave in campaign stories on their social channels.

iii. Annual Fund: Driving Board Participation
- Mr. Briner shared updates on the Dibs Employee Giving Campaign, reminding Directors that $4M of the last campaign came from employee giving.
- Mr. Briner provided updates on crowdfunding and the development of a student organization crowdfunding month each March. This year 26 student orgs and clubs participated learning how to write a case for support, how to use social media to promote a fundraising campaign, and collectively raised almost $27k.
- Mr. Briner asked Directors to save the date for CSUSM's 11th Giving Day on Tuesday, December 2. He shared an example of 2024 Giving Day fundraising by the CSTEM Chemistry and Biochemistry Program Fund which allowed 32 students to travel to the American Chemical Society Conference where several presented their original research. Mr. Briner highlighted Directors who have previously provided advance gifts used for challenges and matches to incentivize donors on Giving Day. CSUSM's collective Giving Day total is $3.7M raised to date.
- Ms. Wyndham previewed avenues Advancement is using for communication to members of the campus community and closed by thanking Directors for their pivotal role in sharing CSUSM's campaign with their networks.

IX. Board Commitments: Looking Ahead Together
- Chair Kuo asked Directors to share one action they plan to take to advance the campaign before the next meeting.

Adjournment: There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:25am.

Minutes submitted by: Christa Koen
Dated: September 24, 2025



Secretary Leon Wyden
2026-01-23 18:46 UTC