**ASSOCIATED STUDENTS, INC.**



# CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, DOMINGUEZ HILLS

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Minutes

Pizza with the President

Wednesday, November 13, 2019 12:00 PM

Loker Student Union Courtyard

Itzel Marin, ASI Director of Student Services, opened the event by introducing the panel of administrative campus leaders.

Panel Roll Call:

**President** – Dr. Thomas A. Parham

**ASI President** – Christian Jackson

**Vice** **President** – Dr. William Franklin

**ASI Executive Vice President** – Makonnen Tendaji

**Interim Vice President** – Ron Coley

**Provost** **and Vice President for Academic Affairs** – Dr. Michael E. Spagna

**ASI Vice President of Academic Affairs** – A. Victor Giron

**Vice President of University Advancement** – Carrie E. Stewart

**ASI Vice President of Finance** – Rihab Shuaib

**Vice President and CIO of the Division of Information Technology** – Chris Manriquez

**Question 1: When will the student services and success hubs be moved to more appropriate locations?**

**Parham** – The campus is currently out of space; with the current construction projects, we are trying to create more. The university’s student population has now increased to approximately 17,000, and the new construction projects are in place to try to create needed additional space. In the next year or two, administration will be discussing how to improve quality of students’ daily life in the temporary contexts (the permanent solutions will be the completion of the construction). Right now, replacing, rather than creating, is where the focus is. In regard to the student success centers, a long-term goal is to have more permanent spaces for the centers.

**Coley** – Next semester, Coley will be meeting with the Provost and other campus leaders to find solutions. They have approximately six alternative solutions; a town hall meeting will be held on December 5, 2019 to discuss these options with the student body and to offer more clarity about this solution-seeking process.

**Question 2: As the student population has increased, will student fees be increased?**

**Jackson** – It is necessary for some fee increases to take place, due to deficits in the university’s health center, housing facilities, course fees, and ASI services requested by students. There will be a student vote regarding the passage of the ASI fee increase.

**Spagna** – On March 3, 2020, there will be a big vote on a larger bond measure for increased funding for the school. Students are encouraged to get out and vote in the state election.

**Parham** – Quoting Martin Luther King, Jr., “Life at its best is a creative synthesis of opposites in fruitful harmony.” Some of our university’s greatest strengths are also our weaknesses – for example, DH has some of the lowest fees in the CSU system, which can be our “worst nightmare” in terms of having less funding for the university to operate. An example of this is the university’s healthcare cost – we have a structural deficit (approximately $3,000,000 and growing), and the university’s debt is shackling us. The fee increases are not to increase anyone’s salary, they are only for improving the quality of services. On other campuses, the students have voted to fund full-functioning recreation centers that include nutrition services – why don’t you deserve that too? What do you think you deserve? What are you willing to invest? The down payment for a recreation center like that would be 10% (approximately $6,000,000) of a $60,000,000 cost. Decide what you deserve so we can pass a referendum. Alumni had to tax themselves to create this student union we are meeting in – what legacy are *you* prepared to leave? Let’s create more jobs for students – a recreation/health center will create more student jobs.

**Question** **3: Why is it that there is money to build entire new buildings for innovation, but our laboratory science equipment is seriously outdated?**

**Parham** – A bond measure that was passed funded infrastructure, but not supplies. We want to reallocate money and advocate with the chancellor and others to improved funding this year.

**Franklin** – The new Science and Innovation building will be a game changer. Much of the new technology wouldn’t even work in the old facility.

**Spagna** – We are developing partnerships with private organizations to improve and increase supplies. Private organizations will donate to the university, so that graduates hired by the organizations will be familiar with modern tools.

**Question 4: Basic needs are very important to college students, and meeting the needs is a struggle for some students. The food court has free will to charge for incidentals like straws, bags, utensils, extra half-filled condiments… why?**

**Parham** – LSU is an auxiliary enterprise – vendors need to generate enough money to provide what they sell. Most materials costs are typically built into the costs at most of the restaurants.

**Franklin** – Spoons and forks are given with purchase of a meal; without purchasing a meal, customers need to pay for requested utensils separately. We will be discussing working as a team to get some utensils we can give out for free.

**Question 5: What is the biggest priority for ASI and our leadership at this moment?**

**Jackson** – Student success hubs – these will be discussed at all meetings, including the town hall meeting next month. Another priority is the ASI fee increase to increase services.

**Parham** – I’ve been here less than 1.5 years. Last year, we created the Toro Team Lunch, during which the whole cabinet here and other administrators and ASI leaders made ourselves available to answer student questions. Transparency is a priority. Student success is always the highest priority – we want students to get in, we want to retain students, and have students graduate and thrive. We are now overenrolled – all other campuses in the Los Angeles area turn to impaction (closing acceptance and/or closing certain majors), but we do not, because we prioritize access. We’re at 17,000 students, when we should be at 16,000, but we’re not closing doors. We want to improve retention rates.

**Tendaji** – Overall, educating students about fees – there are misconceptions that the money is just for tuition, when in reality the money is for so much more.

**Giron** – Making sure students know who ASI members are, because we speak on behalf of the students. The student voice would be stronger if all students knew who their advocates were.

**Franklin** – To understand what the students’ basic needs are. We have a goal of obtaining 4,000 survey submissions (over 2,500 have taken it so far). We want to get a handle on issues pertaining to food, shelter, transportation, etc. so that we can work to lower barriers and not overlook issues.

**Spagna** – Finding a new chancellor – the new chancellor will need courage and conviction to reform the financial aid system, stand up for DACA students, and bring California back to its status as the “Golden Star” of education.

**Shuaib** – Come to ASI Board of Directors (BOD) meetings and learn about other things going on. Right now there is a clothing drive that will provide for students in financial need and students in needs of gender-affirming attire. We have also passed a hot meal cards program.

**Question 6: I have noticed that the staff at the health center are not very welcoming. My first visit gave me the impression that no one wanted to help me. They would ignore me despite calling out for assistance. Will you consider an evaluation of staff to improve the service? Thank you.**

**Franklin** – Most of the students who have shared about their experiences with the health center have found the services satisfactory, but I care about the 25% who had poor experiences. I would love to meet with the individual who wrote this.

**Question 7: When will the bathrooms in LCH 2nd floor have doors?**

**Jackson** – There are other bathrooms on campus that have curtains as well. There is no simple solution; once we modify one small thing, the whole building falls under scrutiny, and then we need to update other things.

**Parham** – We have been putting funders in golf carts and showing them the areas of campus that need help. Once we touch one part of a building, we have to put the whole thing up to 2019 code – my frustration is that we have no reserves, we are in debt. We need to continue to advocate.

**Question 8: Besides PTE, how can students voice concerns and criticism in regards to professors, classes, and department curriculums?**

**Spagna** – The evaluation surveys are just an invitation to the conversation – stay tuned for changes catalyzed by student input and faculty-student collaboration.

**Parham** – Faculty and staff need to take ownership of student success. I explain it as the difference between renting and owning a car – how much maintenance and investment is given. I’ve asked faculty to view it this way, to take ownership of not only As and Bs, but to own Cs, Ds, Fs, Ws, and think “What could I have done better?” Your side is to study and show up. A legitimate question to ask faculty is “What are you doing to own student success?” Faculty and students should work as partners.

**Tendaji** – The BOD includes college representatives from each college – come to our office and talk with representatives, it can be less daunting than approaching university administration.

**Spagna** – Our online instruction needs to be improved.

**Question 9: When will undergrads have the chance to get a nursing program?**

**Spagna** – There will be a meeting regarding undergraduate support for nursing pathways. We want you to be job-resilient.

**Question 10: What’s the plan regarding campus housing?**

**Parham** – Campus housing is currently too small, as the university was historically a commuter campus. The new 506-bed space (apartment style) will be the first new addition since 1984.

**Franklin** – There was a second addition in 1992, but it was a carbon copy of what was previously done.

**Parham** – What we’d like to do next is create a living-learning community. We explain this concept when giving trustees tours. The culture on campus has been characterized by underrepresented minorities and students of low socioeconomic status. The narrative has been that the students can’t afford housing. It should not be a matter of what they can afford, but what the students deserve and are willing to invest in. Consider spending more, if it’s necessary for being able to stay on campus longer for mentoring, research, and other types of investing. I will be asking trustees to grant an exception to the memorandum. We don’t have independent reserves. As for the formula for housing, it is typically 30-33% of the student population; we need at least 25-30% of ours. Our biggest asset is land, and our biggest handicap is funding. My desire is to provide 2,000-4,000 more bed spaces as soon as possible. We had to do health and safety updates on our phase 1 and 2 housing.

**Spagna** – We also want to address mobility challenges. Vice President Stewart is working with Toyota.

**Stewart** – Toyota donated five Mobile Fabrication Labs, each with equipment inside, that introduce STEM to students. Toyota also donated $4,000,000 to our science facility and laboratory in it. This enables students to be exposed to STEM disciplines. Our campus has a transportation challenge, which delays opportunities. We want to address this and find a solution. One idea in the works is a project related to hydrogen cars, Toyota may be willing to use 30 of theirs to help address the need. We will continue to meet with corporations and private partners.

**Question 11: This campus is 69% Latina. When will we get a Latinx Center?**

**Franklin** – Asian/Pacific Islander (API), Native, Latinx, Rose Black, Dream, and QCRC are all centers that the university wants to create or enhance on campus; creation of Latinx and API centers are next, we’ll be exploring space to do this. We recognize that being diverse does not necessarily mean we are inclusive – there will be more conversations regarding these topics in the spring.

**Parham** – Students can create their own cultural comfort zones – in order to do this, space, student interest (which we already have), and budgets are needed. A budget is needed for each center’s director, programming person, administrative support, etc. $200,000-$250,000 is needed for each center to operate. Each staff person added to a center is a 40% increase, due to benefits needed. Students can talk to add to the student referendum, and can vote to put in temporary spaces.

**Franklin** – All success centers are funded by the Student Success Fee Committee (SSFC).

**Question 12: What are there no signs on the Toro Express shuttles? Or more advertising about the shuttles?**

**Coley** – I don’t know why, there should be.

**Parham** – I will look into doing something to change that, we want to spread the marketing – I will take note.

**Question 13: Can we choose our payment date for tuition? The days don’t work for me and many other students.**

**Franklin** – There used to be two dates, then it was stretched to 3-4 – I don’t know why it couldn’t be changed again.

**Question 14: How come we don’t have engineering programs?**

**Spagna** – We do have engineering programs, we just don’t have a college of engineering. We are pushing for a college of engineering to be created in the near future. Cyber security is a new masters degree program we have.

**Question 15: What actions will/have been taken to increase the graduation rates for students onto their 5th years at CSUDH?**

**Parham** – the CSU system has initiated Graduation Initiative 2025, which includes mentorship.

**Franklin** – Students are encouraged to receive advising, where they can receive good information. I encourage student to take the basic needs survey. We want to create more campus jobs/internships.

**Spagna** – We have a Graduation Innovation Team working to remove barriers for 5th year students, including cancelling library fees and providing open source materials (books and other study materials at low or no cost).

**Jackson** – Students need to get required classes at the right time – we are looking at increasing advising. We want to remove holes and change enrollment timing.

**Question 16: What is the university’s plan to address the recent decline in Black student enrollment?**

**Franklin** – This is a regional problem. Ours study body has the highest percentage of Black students (CSU Northridge has the highest number) in the CSU system. We plan to partner with regional high schools that have large amounts of Black students. When African-Americans apply here, that demographic has the highest yield; the challenge is getting them to apply. The Black Community Higher Education Task Force is focusing on reaching high school students in South Central LA early. We want to cover high schools and community colleges. We have concerns around Black student retention and graduation rates too.

**Parham** – The State of California and Proposition 209 states that we are not allowed to recruit based on race. But we can provide students with experiences and resources that will excite interest so that they will apply. We also want to reach out to faith-based congregations and the Inglewood community. We want to create an enticing climate and make it visible.

**Question 17: Why is parking on campus so expensive and packed? What changes will be made?**

**Parham** – Parking doesn’t get help from State funding. Creating and staffing more parking space requires more funding – infrastructures cost money, so parking must generate enough money to operate. If the students want more parking, fee increases will be needed. The fees are designed with a non-profit mindset. We have a need for an infrastructure, which is why the parking is so packed.

**Coley** – We don’t have public transportation that easily accommodates traveling to and from campus, so most students have to drive. We are in discussion about creating a bus hub, and creating a sense of destination here. I am invested in making it simpler to get here and home. Dignity Health and city administration are also involved.

**Question 18: What is CSUDH doing to employ graduates?**

**Franklin** – Career Development is working on strategies. Students need to visit career services earlier (most wait until they are juniors). If you work on campus, start the job earlier in your time here. Reach out, find out what you need to do now – you need experience.

**Stewart** – Alumni Advising Board holds the “Professor for a Day” event, and the Career Center has mentoring panels and alumni support resources - take advantage of both programs. We are working on partnering with alumni who can create meaningful internships for students.

**Spagna** – We believe in responsibility to help – “Once a Toro, always a Toro.”

**Manriquez** – IT is organizing a series of internships in which students can gain experience working with different products. We are working with organizations to identify and match students’ skills and strengths to suitable firms.

**Franklin** – It is helpful to gain experience and make connections by working on campus as a student assistant.

**“ASI REPRESENTS THE STUDENTS”**