

University Senate Chair Report December 9, 2025

Hi Folks,

Welcome to week 16, we made it! I hope your fall break was restful and you are finishing out the semester strong. I am always particularly excited for winter break and love the holiday season and spending time with loved ones. I pride myself on being the *Clark Griswold* of my street, so we had Christmas lights up the weekend of Thanksgiving, though I haven't built up my light collection to be as impressive as his.

We have made excellent progress with all "The Big 5" polytechnic programs and have one more to discuss and vote on: The STEM Education M.A. Additionally, you may have noticed we have a massive ICC consent calendar to consider, and while I'd love to say that's it for our curricular discussions for the semester, we have a little bit more work to do. Due to the calendar this year, we missed a Senate meeting because of the Veterans' Day holiday, and that put us off by one week relative to the ICC's calendar. They have another large consent calendar to consider, and will do so at their last meeting on December 16th during finals week. If we wait to consider those items until next semester at our first meeting on January 20th, that will not give folks very much time to make those updates for the Fall 2026 catalogue deadline at the beginning of February. All of the items on the December 16th consent calendar were turned in on time, and I'd like us to honor the hard work the proposers did getting that work done, as well as the hard work the reviewers are doing to make sure the proposals are sound. So, the Senate Executive Committee (SenEx) mulled over some ideas last week, and we came up with the following:

We are presenting you today with a draft of the December 16th ICC consent calendar and will make time to discuss any of the items as necessary. The ICC will vote on these items during its December 16th meeting from 9–11 AM, and a finalized version of the consent calendar will be sent to all members of the Senate shortly thereafter. On that same day, the Senate Executive Committee will be meeting, and we will have a time certain on Tuesday, December 16th, at 3:15 PM to vote on the consent calendar. According to Appendix F, Part 2, Article 11.13.iv:

The Committee [SenEx] may act for the Senate on matters that call for immediate action or attention. Such action shall require an absolute two-thirds majority vote of the Executive Committee and shall be reported to the Senate as a specific agenda item at its next meeting

We openly invite all members of the Senate to attend this meeting to be present for the discussion and vote. Any member of the Senate who wishes an item to be pulled for discussion may do so by finding a sponsoring SenEx member. You may also raise an issue on any one item based on the draft document that is on our current agenda. The goal here is to support the shared governance process; however, we would like to act in a timely way. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me or Sara Sterner, ICC chair, if you have any questions, issues, or dissensions.

Moving on, I followed up with nearly all of our open-forum speakers from our last meeting, where, if you recall, the theme was accessibility. While I am new to the conversation, being in my first semester as Senate chair, I am not new to the fact that our campus is difficult to navigate, even for folks who do not have mobility issues, and for folks who do, it is a jarring, if not impossible, task. I spent a lot of time reflecting on this over the fall break and putting this into the context of our graduation pledge:

"I pledge to explore and take into account the social and environmental consequences of any job I consider and will try to improve these aspects of any organizations for which I work."

We are leaders in social and environmental justice; it is a part of our soul. You see this every day when looking at the various campus initiatives we have been praised for, like the *Seal of Excelencia*, decolonizing sustainability, supporting Indigenous communities, researching climate impacts on marginalized groups, running student-led eco-projects (CCAT), promoting local resilience, fostering dialogue on equity in sustainability (Decolonizing Sustainability Series), and a host of other examples too numerous to list. So, as I thought about all this stuff, it occurred to me that we have a real opportunity here to flip the script. We have been historically terrible with accessibility issues on our campus, and that must change. I view this as an opportunity to position ourselves as leaders in social justice related to accessibility. Let us put the past aside, because we can't change that, and focus on what lies ahead. So, I challenge you to think about how we can turn this around, how we can leverage our expertise in social justice work to make this a beacon in the CSU for accessibility. For some, that may mean detailing improvements to your own microcosm of the university. For others, that may mean starting a large-scale, capital campaign to raise the millions of dollars necessary to be compliant and then some, to go above and beyond what the letter of the law says we are required to do (ADA). I can imagine several newly adopted accessible pathways around our campus, funded by alumni or other donors, that are impassioned by work like this and who want to see things improve for future students, faculty, and staff alike. For example, we could have several *named* pathways to navigate from one corner to another, honoring those who donated, or even those who created awareness for the need. This will not be easy, but anything worth doing rarely is. I really want to reiterate that be leaders in this initiative, we should be going above and beyond the minimum requirements specified by the ADA. Even to make up for our troubled past, we should be going above and beyond. It's not just money we need to raise, either; we need to raise awareness. Admittedly, it is hard to hear some of the stories and ugly truths that some people on this campus have been subjected to; however, we must immerse ourselves in these truths to make a difference.

With that, I wish you all the best in finishing out the semester, and I hope to see you at the Holiday Party this week and the Graduate Ceremonies next week.

Best regards to you and your loved ones during this holiday season!

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