



FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

SGA Budget Hearings 2026-2027

Meeting Minutes

Date: January 20, 2025

- I. Call to Order
 - a. 9:30 am

II. Roll Call

Name	Position	Attendance
Francesca Casanova	President	Present
Wilkin Caseres	Vice President	Present
Richard Phillips	Comptroller	Present
Isabella Romeo	Speaker of the Senate	Absent
	Speaker Pro Tempore of the Senate	
Julian Esquivel	GPSC Chair	Absent
Hailey Menendez	Governor of BBC	Present
Conor Tafur	Finance Chair	Present

- a. Quorum has been established.

III. New Business

1. Registered Student Organization Council

Presenter: Kayla Jospitre

- Support RSO's and support university to govern and
- 261 RSO's as of Fall 2025
- Reviewing 2026 Spring registration
- New organizations: inactive for 1 year, or never existed before
- 91.6% funded
- Non-funded 8.4
- MMC 92.7 BC 3.9 % 3.2% EC

- 302 attendees at organization fair 50+ organizations tabled
- 200 + for organization training – exceeded capacity in space
- Collaborations with SCAI, ASBO, ISU, Campus Recreation, Student Experiences
- Blue and Gold recruitment week will be next week
- Affinity & engagement: organization fair, Cash Flow Crash Course, Beyond Events
- Main priorities/funding: programming, program assistant, giveaways
- Experience Impact 2030: strengthen the FIU Experience Pillar – focused on student success, engagement, and welcoming campus
- Impact on Student Body: Over 1,000 students – funded organizations serve as multiple members and engages broader audiences with open events

Q&A:

President Casanova – In terms of 2026-2027 Allocation, do you all expect to see a bigger increase beyond that?

Response – Projecting to about 300 RSO's

President Casanova – Are there two separate registrations?

Response – There are three registration periods

2. FIU in DC

Presenter: Michelle Castro

- Solutions (federal priorities), idea exchange, talent lab
- Key areas are the federal priorities focusing on improvement for Miami
- Talent Lab: Preparing the future advocates. Opportunity to advance exponential learning regardless of major. Learning outcomes drives what they do.
- Main focus areas: Policy, Politics, History, Communications, Technology, Global Learning and Doing, Professional & Career Development
- Key Information: 900 participants, 95 internships during Fall, Spring, and Summer, micro credential, Fly-In's, 3 different groups of classes: Green School, CARTA, Hamilton Scholars (Honors College) - courses taught by FIU alumni
- Key Highlights of Internships: White House, Members of Congress, FBI, Department of Energy, Punchbowl News, NBC Universal
- Fall 2025: America 250, Aerospace Fly-In, Health, Environment, Resilience, Miami
- Spring 2026: America 250, The Americas, G20 Planning, Health, Resilience, Miami in DC
- Budget Request: \$175,868.50: headcount has gone up, report to the President's Office, Fly-In's

Q&A:

President Casanova -What is the driving force for a bigger increase in budget requests?

Response - Fall and Spring work diligently to engage students to go up to Washington D.C. Stretch to make sure they are providing opportunities for students and enhance experiential learning

President Casanova – Out of 900 participants, how many are retained and come back to DC for another Fly-In or internship in DC?

Response – About 30%, would need to pull up exact data. There is tracking of the students who are interested and engaged.

President Casanova – When student groups conduct Fly-In's, do you all incur costs or the program cover?

Response – DC will cover a meal or two with snacks.

3. Peer Mentor Program & Success Courses

Presenter: Soray Moragado

- High-impact courses that teach students life skills for navigating college
- Mentors co-facilitate First Year Experience Courses
- Summer 2025: Mentor Training, Fall 2025: Panther feud event, winter jeopardy,
- Need funding to grow cohort, rent space, food, professional development, and recruitment
- 2024: In partnership with CLS they continue to present the Certified Student Leader Medallion
- Achievements: Two trainings in Summer, host professional development workshops, Peer Mentors complete feedback surveys, continue to collaborate with other campus organizations, like SGA and CLS
- Budget Request: fund semesterly Peer mentor programming events, funding can continue to grow as a resource for undergraduates

Q&A:

President Casanova – Could you give us a number of what your cohort size is and if there has been an increase?

Response – 47 peer mentors, 55 sections. There has been an increase in interest and peer mentors. Currently in recruitment for the upcoming year, already 57 students interested.

4. University Graduate School

Presenter: Sophie Loureiro

- Support 10,000 graduate students. Focused on making sure students complete their requirements.
- Looking to receive assistance and make it possible to attend events: Major Swap Event – promote networking for students to provide space to connect – can then fund a lunch for students (9 events throughout year – once a month), Mind Matters Event: Healthy Living Program presentation (2 events per year – one per semester), Graduate Day on the Bay – connect more with BBC campus (shuttle to take students and provide food voucher)
- Looking for support in new engagement opportunities

Q&A:

President Casanova – In previous years, was food provided in previous years? If it was, how were cost cover?

Response: Two of the events have not yet happened. If food has been provided, costs would be pulled from other areas, or Assistant Dean would apply for grants to cover concession budgets.

President Casanova – Do you collaborate with other departments on campus?

Response: Excellence in Writing for dissertation retreat, Current Talent Development to host development conversations, Healthy Living Program, CAPS, graduate student organizations, GPSC.

President Casanova moves for five-minute recess. Vice President Caseres seconds.

All those in favor: 5

All those opposed: 0

It is unanimous, motion passes.

Call meeting to order: 10:33 am

Name	Position	Attendance
Francesca Casanova	President	Present
Wilkin Caseres	Vice President	Present
Richard Phillips	Comptroller	Present

Isabella Romeo	Speaker of the Senate	Absent
	Speaker Pro Tempore of the Senate	
Julian Esquivel	GPSC Chair	Absent
Hailey Menendez	Governor of BBC	Present
Conor Tafur	Finance Chair	Present

5. Honors College

Presenter: Valeria Perez

- Open to everyone, all majors welcome, interdisciplinary classes, ARCH program: focuses on undergraduate research
- Budget request: \$100,000 – lowest funded college and institution, fund: Honors College Student Organizations, Panthers Mock Trail, URFIU, Honors College Leadership Council. Student initiatives: organizations open to all students. Edge Lab: Open to all students located in Parkview. Honors College Career Center:
- Undergraduate Research at FIU: open to all undergraduate students, largest multi-disciplinary
- Sensory-friendly Halloween competition: event focusing on creating an inclusive space
- Panther Mock Trail: Student organization where students compete nationally, coached by local practicing attorneys, focuses on public speaking and teamwork, has been ranked top 20.
- Team Awards: Bull Bowl Invitational, UCF Sword & Shield recognition, along with team and individual awards
- Honors College Leadership Council: student leadership body, HCLC interdisciplinary covers multiple views of study, flagships initiatives, and focuses on engagement
- 775+ students engage across all types of events with student satisfaction 4.25-4.48 out of 5

Q&A:

President Casanova – In terms of Panther Mock Trail, funding only covers 27% currently, how do you cover rest of costs?

Response: The rest is covered by Foundation Accounts. That is their secondary source of funding to cover travel.

President Casanova – For RSO’s under Honors College, do they fall under RSOC or Honors College?

Response – Organizations are not under RSOC.

President Casanova – To clarify, some organizations are not under RSOC and are limited to Honors College and receive A&S funding?

Response: Organizations close to Honors College do not.

6. Bayview Hall Council

Presenter: Larissa James

- Bayview Hall events are open to anyone. Promote fun and studious environment for residents.
- Highlight events: Meet BHC, Carnival, and Karaoke at end of the semester
- Future events: Basketball tournament, talent/music show, speed friending, end of semester recruitment/move out event
- Budget request: \$6,119 to incur costs of food for events or for space if needed, sometime PD must be present. Each event to be no more than \$600.
- Budget justification: increase in \$619. They are budget conscious when making purchases, collaborating with other organizations.

Q&A:

- No questions.

7. Children’s Creative Learning Center

Presenter: Silvia Valdes

- Division of Student Affairs, established in 1975 as a center for childhood development, provide support for children between 2-5 years old, 50th anniversary now serving children of center and FIU alumni, “Panther Cubs” youngest FIU students
- Student parents: refers students to support services, promotes university enrollment and retention, Child Acre Access grant to provide free tuition subside for child to attend the center
- Student Support Staff: university employees, learning opportunities, advancing academic studies, relating to career goals

- Student Support Staff Work Program: 70% of staff are students, 80% receive financial aid, fulfill requirements of maintaining low child to staff classroom ratios, career readiness
- 2026-2027 budget priorities: student employment, winter festival event, student support staff work program

Q&A:

President Casanova – Breakdown of current enrollment: how many or community parents, faculty staff, etc.?

Response – Students, faculty and staff, alumni, and community

President Casanova – Is increase in funding to add another position or for more complete pay

Response - Minimum wage is increasing to \$15, so those students already at \$15 an hour would have to increase the competitiveness to keep retention

President Casanova – In regard to outreach, how do you connect to industrial who need support?

Response - Reached out to financial aid office, started posting on Instagram account, attend Spring students admitted day.

8. Roar Core

Presenter: Camilo Balzan

- The team is growing and bigger things are coming. Previously, did not have an advisor, but was able to recruit a student director and co-director. Are continuing to recruit.
- Role: Campus partner, fostering school pride, athletic spirit promotion
- Ensure that merchandise is being worn, and students are engaged in university athletics.
- Measurable outcomes: event participation growth, over 300+ attendees, larger than previous Panther Power 6 events combined. Social media engagement – reached 1,000 followers, collaborated with Panther Now.
- Elevating game day: enhancing the game day experience
- Proposed increase budget: \$40,000

Q&A:

President Casanova – How do you all collaborate with athletics?

Response – Set up meetings, coordinated to ensure they are not stepping on their toes, reach out for upcoming events, and in talks of how to have a successful event.

President Casanova – Have you all played a role in the creation of the athletics app?

Response – Have not been directly involved yet. They have been made aware they will be involved when there is the right time and place.

President Casanova - How are you intentional in managing all sporting events other than just football?

Response - Keep tabs on all sports going on, especially the winner and promote that sport.

Comptroller Phillips – How are you going about growing your team?

Response – Creating an Executive Board team to create a team of seven and consider a volunteer force.

9. Outstanding Student Life Awards

Presenter: Sofia Trelles

- Only university wide award process for students
- Students are nominated for presidential award
- 20-25 awards annually
- OpenWater License: software used for nomination process, platform saves hours of manual work, increase visibility and number of students recognized
- Timeline: Open nomination period – January, Round 1 Review and Finalist Identified – February, Round 2 review and recipients selected – March, awards ceremony is held in GC Ballrooms – April
- Budget Request: OpenWater platform, GC audio and visual, catering, certificates, linen rentals and decorations, and awards = total: \$18,000

Q&A:

President Casanova – Since the cost of OpenWater License is shared, has the cost decreased?

Response – The cost is now shared and has decreased by \$150.

President Casanova – Are there additional costs for the room rentals?

Response – The room rentals are additional costs.

President Casanova moves for five-minute recess. BBC Governor Mendez seconds.

All those in favor: 5

All those opposed: 0

It is unanimous, motion passes.

Call meeting to order: 11:47 am

Name	Position	Attendance
Francesca Casanova	President	Present
Wilkin Caseres	Vice President	Present
Richard Phillips	Comptroller	Present
Isabella Romeo	Speaker of the Senate	Present
	Speaker Pro Tempore of the Senate	
Julian Esquivel	GPSC Chair	Absent
Hailey Menendez	Governor of BBC	Present
Conor Tafur	Finance Chair	Present

10. SGA Room Rentals

Presenter: Larissa James

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Q&A:

Response -

11. Orientation and Family Programs

Presenter: Carol Galladian

- Assist students and family members in having a positive and smooth transition into the university
- Student survey: 89% report meaningful interactions with current students, 91% report an increase in their knowledge of co-curricular involvement, 92% report increase knowledge of social connections
- Panther Camp: 419 attendees (includes Spring Camp 2026), transportation - \$12,000, Panther Camp EBoard salaries - \$25,000, camp giveaways - \$8,250
- Orientation: team salaries - \$80,660, student meals - \$26,790, giveaways - \$66,650
- NODA Student Leader Development: professional development - \$8,560

- Orientation fee - \$35, Panther camp ticket - \$125

Q&A:

President Casanova – In regard to salaries of students, can you give us a breakdown of those numbers?

Response – Hire two different teams: Facilitators are not compensated; executive board is compensated.

President Casanova – Do you see a lot of students that participate in Panther Camp, do they turn around and become a facilitator?

Response – It is rare to see a student who went through the program, not become a facilitator.

Orientation leaders are compensated, so some may choose to be compensated for work.

President Casanova – How are you collaborating with other university departments?

Response – Starts with admitted student day and being proactive like requesting own space.

Collaborate strongly with SGA, as an advisor is a committee member.

12. Disable Student Union

Presenter: Juno Quintanilla

- An SGA Bureau established to create an inclusive space and empower all students.
- Provide education, awareness, and advocacy through events.
- Fall events: Fall Welcome reception, Resource Fair, Sensory-Friendly Halloween Competition, and GBM's
- Spring 2026 events: Disability Forum, professional development panel, end of year celebration
- 131 members on Panther Connect – 43% increase
- Social media – 485 followers – 24% increase
- Barriers: Lack of ADA training and gaps in reliable lifts operated shuttles – limit to DSU events
- Launching DSU advocacy committee, DSU advisory council, joining the National Coalition on Accessibility in Higher Education
- Budget priorities: Welcome reception, End of Year Celebration, and Accessibility Forum, and giveaways

Q&A:

President Casanova- Has there been an instance or event that you all have brought an ASL interpreter, and not needed them?

Response – They may bring one but ever know who will show up, and there will be a deaf student in the room.

President Casanova – Have you considered doing an RSVP asking for specific accommodations?

Response – Starting to use Panther Connect to add those types of questions.

Comptroller Phillips – What other sources of funding do you look for?

Response – Looking for outside funding with grants and different organizations across Miami to receive external funding.

President Casanova – How do you track your attendance for your events? Have you seen an increase in attendance?

Response - They track membership through sign in.

President Casanova- For GBM's or other events, what does your attendance looked like?

Response – Depends on the event and how it is marketed. 20 to 30 students on average per event.

13. Esports

Presenter: Jose Toscano

- Student engagement, varsity, FIU gameHERS
- Gc Pit, tabling, online programming, 25+ events hosted, tournaments, National video Game Day, Collaborations: Sensory-Friendly Halloween Competition, Marvel Rivals Tournament
- Performance: 31 varsity players, 4 competitive titles, multiple 1st places
- Traveling competition: All state universities compete in a day and a half – FIU has taken all around 1st place years prior
- Signature events: Panthers Game Expo – 400+ attendees last year, goal: 600+ this Spring, look for collaborations, tournaments, career panels, guest speakers, cosplay
- Our challenge: in order to be ranked, they must travel. Compete for prize pool: players can receive prize winnings if placed highly.

Q&A:

President Casanova – Can there be an update on the Esports arena?

Response - The arena is run by FIU Online. There are 3 components that oversee Esports. The arena is planned to be opened this Spring, March/April.

Comptroller Phillips – Do you have any sponsorships that can help cover travel?

Response – Have been working with foundations to look for sponsorships.

President Casanova- Have you seen an increase in participation in students wanting to join and participating?

Response – Over 100 folks try out all week long, but the team is a team of 4. There are few positions available.

14. Panthers First Night

Presenter: Jose Toscano

- 101 student organizations who were engaged, 19 vendors, 27 university departments, 243 Greek Alumni (capped at 300)
- Waiting list of 22 student organizations and departments for Fall 2025
- Tracking events for 4 years: student engagement increases in students who want to attend a football game – if a football game is during a week of welcome, students are likely to attend.
- Request: \$119,675 for production, facilities, decor, FIU police and security
- New vision: less speeches, more activations on football field, more student organizations and departments, more carnival style games, create walkway of famous FIU alumni, possible light show inside stadium prior to fireworks, possible mini concert/performance

Q&A:

President Casanova – In terms of production costs, does SGA fund full operations or are there other areas that contribute?

Response –\$25,000 comes from alumni, \$20,000 comes from strategic communications (may not happen this year if there are cuts in speeches, etc.)

Meeting Adjournment: 12:36pm.