



FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

SGA Budget Hearings 2026-2027

Meeting Minutes

Date: January 21, 2025

- I. Call to Order
 - a. 9:05am

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	
David Riera	GPSC Chair	Present
Hailey Menendez	Governor of BBC	Present
Conor Tafur	Finance Chair	Absent

- a. Quorum has been established

III. New Business

1. College Life Coaching

Presenter: Aqsa Mahmood

- Student center goal driven program with transition support into college
- Program goals: provide a safe place, remove barriers that hinder success, build partnerships, connect students to resources, support students in improving GPA's
- Services: coaching, workshops, events, departmental collaborations, students and staff training
- Topics: goal setting, time management, study strategies, motivation, overcoming obstacles, personal organization

- Populations: available to all undergraduate students, academic probation, advisor or staff referral, self-referral
- Highlights: increased followers and engagement on social media, workshop offerings: +37.5%, workshop attendance: +13.69%
- 2026-2027 goals: 5% increase
- New initiates: Dear Me Event, BBC Collaboration
- Budget request: \$6,798 for giveaways, outreach, programming, and food

Q&A:

President Casanova – How did you support your costs without SGA funding from last year?

Response – Used giveaways from previous year and snacks, food, etc. would come out of their own pockets.

Comptroller Phillips – How is the money going to be used differently than the money that was requested from the Appropriations Committee?

Response – They are still waiting to receive the money and would like to have as much funding possible to broaden their impact.

2. Office of Ombudsperson

Presenter: Sofia Trelles

- Work with students who have not been able to address issues or challenges within FIU.
- Budget request: like last year's requests for programming and graduate assistants.
- Programming: Ombuds Day on the first Thursday of October, tabling, engagement fairs to be present in front of students, referrals across institution for students' transition throughout the university
- Presentations, outreach and awareness, Ombuds Day, Micro-credential course

Q&A:

President Casanova – How many students complete the micro-credential?

Response – 12 to 15 students per semester.

President Casanova – Are the MMC and BBC events on the same day for Ombuds day?

Response – Not on the same day, they are a team of two.

GPSC Chair Riera – How do you measure success?

Response – They will only find the outcome of case by case if the student chooses to share and reveal since the office is confidential.

GPSC Chair Riera – How do you access the graduate assistance process?

Response – Available on the website and word of mouth.

3. Student Life and Development

Presenter: Lesly Rivera

- Budget Request: \$57,075.50 giveaways, anti-hazing programming, marketing, travel, operational expenses

Q&A:

President Casanova – Looking at 2025-2026 there was \$5,000 for miscellaneous, can you explain the breakdown of those expenses?

Response – SLD is asked to make up for an event; it is for room rentals, giveaways that are not associated with a particular department and rather with the whole university.

President Casanova – In 2025-2026, was the \$17,000 sole for the Admissions box, or a mix of things?

Response – There is a mix of things. There are collaborations. For example, this year t-shirts are going to come out of that line this year for orientation.

President Casanova – What are you planning to use the \$30,000 in the request for this year?

Response – T-shirts, and emergency kits for travelling, and minute items.

President Casanova – What is the line item of room rental, since you fall under SGA room rental agreement?

Response – For additional rooms they have to use when they cannot use GC rooms.

4. Spring Luau

Presenter: Lesly Rivera

- Request: \$47,475.00 - programming, operational expenses, catering, giveaways, and marketing

Q&A:

President Casanova – What was the attendance at the event?

Response – Over 1,000 students. The goal is to increase attendance next year.

President Casanova – Did students stay through the entire event to see the drone show?

Response – The drone show was moved up timewise to ensure students can enjoy the drone show.

President Casanova – Are there opportunities to use the student programming council, where part of their programming?

Response – They will continue to partner with other organizations and departments on campus.

5. Agencies and Bureaus Comp

Presenter: Lesly Rivera

- Budget request: \$113,940
- Requesting less than last year because there are a better idea and structure of leadership positions within the Agencies and Bureaus
- 48 total positions that are being compensated for student leadership positions

Q&A:

President Casanova – For this fiscal year, were all positions fully filled?

Response – Yes, all positions have been filled.

6. SLD –Student Tailgate

Presenter: Lesly Rivera

- Budget request: \$34,561.80 increase due to increase in overall costs like FIU PD and parking and transportation, and space rental

Q&A:

President Casanova – Why is there charges to rent the grass space?

Response – The streets have to be blocked off in order for students to cross to the stadium properly.

President Casanova – The room charge invoices, who gets the funding?

Response – Housing and parking

GPSC Chair Riera – Have you considered relocating tailgates, to avoid having to pay certain costs?

Response – It would hurt the attendance for the tailgates and games.

7. Nursing & Health Sciences Student Council

Presenter: Michelle Caldera

- Active since 2022
- Priority to increase engagement
- The college underwent transformational change to ensure they align with the strategic plan through research innovation
- Partnerships: student organizations, college and university departments, external organizations
- Expenses: Mentorship – 35%, Trips - 5%, Events - 60%
- Mentorship & Advising: Meet and greets – 40 %, How to Apply – 33.3%, Student Celebration – 26.7%
- Budget priorities: events that increase engagement, travel to conferences, and support professional development

Q&A:

President Casanova – How were the student milestone ceremonies funded last fiscal year?

Response – There has been an increase in students and admissions. They want to be able to support all the students with the increase.

President Casanova – For the ceremonies, how are those ceremonies funded?

Response – The council covered the pinning; food was covered by the college in collaboration, the college would fund, and the students would fundraise hooding and other events.

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

All those in favor: 5

All those opposed: 0

It is unanimous, motion passes.

Call meeting to order: 10:31 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	
David Riera	GPSC Chair	Present
Hailey Menendez	Governor of BBC	Present
Conor Tafur	Finance Chair	Absent

8. Center for Fraternity and Sorority Enrichment

Presenter: Stephen Dominy

- Grown to nearly 3,000 students today in 4 years.
- Proposed Budget: \$190,000 for \$63.33 per student – projected over 3,000 members
- Spring 2026: SGLA, Greek Unity Week, Wellness Wave, From Greek Letters & Paws to Professional Success, Sexual Assault Awareness Month programming in Development

Q&A:

President Casanova – Can you give us a brief overview of recruitment technologies?

Response - \$39,000 a year from the executive order. The rest is for onboarding and training.

President Casanova – How do the chapters use the resources?

Response - Campus Director is used by Panhellenic. Chapter Builder is used by the other 4 councils. They can track messages, interests, and conversations.

President Casanova – What do you see as the biggest challenge from a funding perspective, where do you cut from if not given full request?

Response – Dealing with a not stabilized environment of what is going to cost. Work has gone into funding for programmatic frameworks.

President Casanova – In reviewing room rental agreement, when chapters host their meetings, where do that reservation costs come out of?

Response – The chapters get 10 free rooms and then the chapters pay for it.

9. Student Programming Council

Presenter: Yselande Pierre

- SPC is one of the largest student-facing programs. There are multiple councils and initiatives.
- Allocate funds to programs in advance.
- Budget request: \$466,918 21% increase – maintain consistency for event qualities and scales
- Required Institutional expenses: FIU Fire and Safety, Security and Police, Stage permits and insurance, facilities and media services, parking and transportation
- Top priorities: concerts, special events, marketing, student engagements and networking
- Impact of budget reduction: fewer concerts, reduced artist diversity, fewer leadership opportunities for students

Q&A:

President Casanova – Mentioned that this budget allocation caused a reduction in your board, can you provide feedback as to how those things are correlated?

Response - We had to cut the members on the board due to salary pay.

Comptroller Phillips – What is the selection process for music that all students are interested in?

Response – Based off artists who are not as popular. They go based off the budget of what they can afford. They table in GC Pit and BBC collect feedback for artists.

President Casanova – Can you explain why events are being canceled, and why it is being charged?

Response – There are changes in what needs to happen with the events that can be low participation or as a buffer for in case something does happen.

GPSC Riera – Have you ever considered partnering outside of campus?

Response – It can be less expensive, but we are inviting people in the comfort of campus.

10. Center for Academic Success

Presenter: Monica Corbetto

- 6781 students

- Wide range of majors attending LNAP with target to Freshman classes

Q&A:

President Casanova – Last year you did not receive funding from SGA, so how did you receive funding?

Response – They collaborated with organizations and their own budgets.

11. Student Creative + Media

Presenter: John Parmenter

- Design and market for all of SLD and many favors for departments around campus
- Design: flyers, brochures, stickers, zoom backgrounds, banners, apparel, giveaways, TV posts, email blasts
- Cover 200+ student organizations, SGA, SPC, BHC, DC-Fly In, etc.
- Focuses: NOMOFOMO growth – 8,376 students have opted in, Creative Juices, diving into AI
- Budget: Hardware, software, travel, student interns

Q&A:

President Casanova – When students come to you for a t-shirt design, what is the process for designing?

Response – Merging ideas and colors, covering all FIU guidelines while targeting student groups.

GPSC Chair Riera – AI is taking out more artists, so why include more AI in your work?

Response – We use AI to add pieces to the work, not to create the whole design.

President Casanova moves for seven-minute recess. GPSC Chair Riera seconds.

All those in favor: 5

All those opposed: 0

It is unanimous, motion passes.

Call meeting to order: 11:46 am

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Francesca Casanova	President	Present
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12. Student Access & Success – McNair Scholars Program

Presenter: Samantha Marin

- McNair scholars research conference: showcase different graduate programs, enhance graduate school pipeline, mentorship, professional development
- Required FIU PD charges and covering 30 poster printings
- Priorities: free and accessible for all students
- Increase local access to research opportunities

Q&A:

President Casanova – How was previous poster printing costs covered?

Response – Would rely on labs, mentors, or out of pocket for printing.

President Casanova - Do you have a breakdown of FIU students and visiting students attending the program?

Response – 107 student participants, 56 poster presentations, 40 oral presentations

President Casanova – For any outside member they are charged for a ticket, where does that revenue go?

Response – That goes towards breakfast for attendees per day or other meals, or any materials like a bag, pen, or notebook.

GPSC Chair Riera – Can you talk more about the connections, to help the committee understand the McNair program?

Response – Federally funded program nation wise, one of three programs in Florida, encouraging first generation low-income students into graduate programs.

13. One FIU; Infinite Possibilities

Presenter: Diann Newman

- One FIU: one day program with speakers and lunch
- Budget request: \$9,495 – speakers, BBC Ballroom rentals, lunch, media services

Q&A:

President Casanova – What did in person attendance look like this past year?

Response – 200 to 250 attendees and online support.

President Casanova – Do you use Panther Connect to track attendance?

Response – Yes

President Casanova – How many people attended through Panther Connect.

Response – Would have to get the number. It was submitted with the request form.

President Casanova – Did you feel it was helpful to have an SGA member on the committee?

Response – Every member is helpful. Each member takes on a different responsibility.

14. Student Ambassadors

Presenter: Diana Galiano

- Official ambassadors of FIU on campus
- Offer: professional development, leadership, FIU traditions, program support
- Trail of the Torch: one of FIU's most meaningful traditions to bring together knowledge, service, and opportunity
- Events: professional retreat and banquet, Sweetheart Kissing bridge – raises funds for initiatives like the campus student food pantry
- Become an ambassador: open to all majors, interview process, FIU advocacy
- Past collaborations: Relay for life, admitted students' day, homecoming, etc.
- Budget request: \$11,077.50 - Trail of Torch, banquet, and professional development

Q&A:

President Casanova – Can you provide clarification as to what the line item of \$5,000 covers?

Response – Covers facilities, security and safety, and FIU PD.

Comptroller Phillips – If not provided funding, how will you keep operations running?

Response – Budget sourcing comes from FIU Alumni office out of request from FIU Foundations. It is not a confirmed budget source, so they want to mitigate that request, because it is not secure.

15. Activity & Service Business Office

Presenter: Silvana Rogelis

- A&S Business office coordinates the disbursements of the allocations that stay within budget and follow finance codes.
- Agencies and Bureaus that mainly serve under the office: BSU, RSOC, Homecoming, GPSC, Multifait, RHA, SPC, etc.
- Budget request – OPS students, food for hearings, deliberations, training, staff retreat, office supplies, professional development travel and training, shared services = \$46,483.30
- Office does not program

Q&A:

President Casanova – For printing of budget binder, was there a significant decrease in cost?

Response - \$130 to print two binders. They want to move away from prints.

GPSC Chair Riera – The 5.5% is not coming from your office?

Response – It comes from the university.

16. BMI

Presenter: Silvana Rogelis

- Federal license to be able to play union anywhere on campus.
- Payment is based on calculation of the total student population.

No questions.

Meeting Adjournment: 12:31 pm