



FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

SGA Budget Hearings 2026-2027

Meeting Minutes

Date: January 22, 2025

- I. Call to Order
 - a. 9: 07 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	
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. Student Government Association

Presenter: Larissa James

- Engage and connect with students
- Increase request of \$6,852: Legislative - \$2,000 increase, Banquet - \$1,500 increase, Elections Board - \$3,000 increase
- Biggest challenge: many ideas and want to program but do not have enough time
- Engagement: table at events, increase presence on Instagram, welcoming environment
- Priorities: create memorable experiences and measure our impact

- Collaborated with: Healthy Living Program, ISSS< For the Panthers, Panther Mock Trial, etc.

Q&A:

President Casanova – Do you have the breakdown of the line items of what has been spent?

Response – Can share with us to give a tentative expense.

President Casanova– Was there an increase to GPSC?

Response – No. Only increase in legislative, banquet, and Elections Board.

President Casanova –Do you think the split in line items need to be split?

Response - No for this year, but for next year.

2. Student Government Association Main Office/BBC Office

Presenter: Larissa James

- \$1625.25 increase to account for minimum wage
- BBC budget: request decrease - \$14,590 do not need as many student assistants there
- Highlights: SGA members use office spaces at both campuses, added boards in office, tablets for check ins

Q&A:

President Casanova – For MMC main office, how many student assistants is it?

Response – Five

President Casanova – For training and professional development, can you breakdown that?

Response – It is for training, the phones, copier, and water cooler come out of there.

3. First Generation Initiatives

Presenter: Moria Lertora

- Goals: increasing affinity, engagement, national best practices & services, increase retention and graduation rates
- 1 in 3 undergraduates are first generation students

- First Gen Forward Network Champion
- Events: resource fair, online panel, networking reception, social media showcase
- Increase in budget: \$22,443.90
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Q&A:

President Casanova - Based on your concerns expressed in how do you plan on overcoming your challenges this year?

Response - Contingency plan, a back up plan, this year they did not have that, but they want more numbers and engagement.

GPSC Chair Riera – How do you guys identify first gen students, or are they self-identifying?

Response – Now students can select in their application, identification from FASFA, creating in Panther Soft can also select first generation at any point.

GPSC Chair Riera – Does that help marketing your events?

Response – Yes.

4. Relay for Life

Presenter: Amber Borrero

- Major fundraising event for American Cancer Society: chance to come together as a community
- Raised over \$1.3 million for Cancer Society
- Main events/collaborations: Relay for Life kick off, Bark for Life, Breast Cancer Awareness Night of Hope Gala
- 2025: 48 teams registered, 500 participants attended, raised over \$40,000, main sponsor was Baptist Health
- Achievements: increased student participation, new and creative events, strengthened engagement strategies, enhanced digital engagement, created a budget committee
- Challenges: rising costs of supplies and resources
- Next year: projected to impact over 1,000 students – use Panther Connect to track attendance, retention, recruitment, surveys, and feedback
- Request: \$15,034 to cover operation costs, training, and support engagement

Q&A:

President Casanova – How do you market to local community?

Response – Finance team reach out to sponsors through social media and emails.

President Casanova – Do you have a breakdown of teams that did register this year?

Response – 60% Greek life participation, with about 40% other organization including collaborated efforts

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: 10:02 am

Name	Position	Attendance
Francesca Casanova	President	Present
Wilkin Caseres	Vice President	Present
Richard Phillips	Comptroller	Present
Isabella Romeo	Speaker of the Senate	Absent
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5. Alternative Breaks

Presenter: Amber Borrero

- Opportunity for students to take winter, spring, or summer break to engage in community service.
- 200 AB programs and over 500 nonprofits partnerships
- Achievements: First DC Fly-In with Network Nola, completed 96 service hours on this trip
- Engagement: four site experiences, engaging 45 students, 8 structured workshops, 7 different departments collaborating

- Network Nola Fort Myers mission, Santiago, DR Global Community Engagement mission
- Request: \$50,000.61 program is expected to travel and enhance leadership development

Q&A:

President Casanova – How do students participate in these service opportunities?

Response – Must apply through Panther Connect. There is an interview process.

President Casanova - Do the students who participate have to pay any fees?

The allocation does not cover all costs, so students do pay a fee.

President Casanova - What does your retention look like?

Response - Yes. Many students return every year.

GPSC Chair Riera – How do you select the site? Is that co-chosen with your students?

Response - Yes, the students are asked for their input and issues they want to make an impact in.

GPSC Chair Riera – Do you look at SGD's that you have not attended?

Response - Yes, we keep track on a chart.

President Casanova – Are you limited in terms of budget?

Response – We have many students applying, but not enough funds to support.

6. Black Student Union

Presenter: Collete Harrington

- Encourage campus involvement and serves as a voice ensuring black students are represented.
- Achievements: monthly GBM's, volunteer opportunities
- Challenges: finding leadership, resource constraints
- Expanding outreach: connecting with more students
- Budget priorities: organizational sustainability, student engagement, impact: signature programming

Q&A:

President Casanova – Can you explain how you had a budget restrain with an increase?

Response – It is hard to keep consistency in programming with increased costs.

President Casanova – Have you seen an increase in engagements?

Response – Yes, engagement in amount of different students that want to come to events that are not black. Increase in BBC events as well.

GPSC Chair Riera – Have you ever tried going to I-75?

Response – Yes, they have been in communication. The scheduling is different, but they hope to include that in programming.

President Casanova – What is the general board you mentioned?

Response – G-Board is like their backbone. The running of programming and logistics is with the general board in collaboration with the executive board.

7. Model United Nations

Presenter: Carlos Padilla Monroy

- Cultivating next generation leaders. Competing with different universities. Provide training and opportunities to represent FIU.
- Program is open to all students, majors, and backgrounds
- Engagement with ambassadors and officials
- Conferences: Canada, Orlando, Boston, New York, Chicago
- Year in review: ranked #3 in North America out of 150+ schools, over 80 individual awards

Q&A:

President Casanova – How many students are participating in Model UN?

Response – 106 students in the program

President Casanova- Of those 106 students, at most 32 travels. Are the same students traveling to every conference?

Response - Equal opportunity for the program; some delegates do travel more than others.

President Casanova – Does the Green school provide any support?

Response – Covers the position on salary.

GPSC Chair Riera – What was the highest and lowest placement in the conferences?

Response – Best Delegation Awards

8. Homecoming

Presenter: Noriana Milan

- Events: Jungle fest - over 500 attendees, taste at the Bay – 250+ attendees, Roary's Rocky Run – 300 students, Talent Show – 500+ students, Uncaging – 4,000 students
- Highest achievements: Uncaging event with over 4,000 attendees, the most attended event this year
- Collaboration: FIU Athletics and Marching Band
- Challenges: student expectations
- Request: \$388,000+ for marginal adjustment for rising prices

Q&A:

President Casanova – In regard to Crown Island is \$50,000, who did the editing?

Response – Local videographer as an intern along with the students

GPSC Chair Riera – Can you expand on your reality TV program?

Response – It is short term content creation. It also to reach students digitally.

GPSC Chair Riera – How is your 5K marathon different?

Response – Setting trends and bringing traditions to the students.

Comptroller Phillips – Do you have a breakdown of the \$50,000 on the videography?

Response – The \$50,000 covers production costs. It would go to the team to take care of the production.

9. FIU at I-75

Presenter: Diana Arcentales

- Graduate and undergraduate classes are hosted. Support with enrollment services and advice.

- Events: Tabling for Week of Welcome and First Night, Sweet September, Fall Fest, Pre-Homecoming grab & go, Homecoming kickoff, Release Week

Q&A:

President Casanova – How do you track attendance at your events?

Response – We use a QR code and generate information into Panther Connect.

10. Veteran & Military Affairs

Presenter: Phillip Hamilton

- 1,540 military affiliated students
- Florida Colligate Purple Star Campus recognized by the Florida Board of Governors
- Partnership with Student Veterans of America on campus: campus resources, VA benefits, social engagement, staff connection
- Career and leadership development: Career Summit, DC Fly-In, etc.

Q&A:

President Casanova – How were you funded in the past?

Response – Through FIU Foundations, sponsor who underwrote many of those funds.

GPSC Chair Riera – How many students were sent to NatCon?

Response – Sent students first week of January.

11. Resident Hall Association

Presenter: Janiya Russell

- Programming geared towards Health & Wellbeing for students
- Request: \$1 per resident for each community per semester
- 3,700 residents with new resident hall development
- Tracking: Panther Connect, Microsoft Forms, Roomcompact
- Hall Council retreat: 570 attendees, 10+ Fall programs, state leader conferences

Q&A:

President Casanova – Do you receive funding from other sources?

Response – For Hall Council, no.

GPSC Chair Riera – Did I hear correctly that a new goal is \$1 per resident?

Response – Yes, this would give more of a budget to program.

President Casanova moves for six-minute recess. Senator 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
Wilkin Caseres	Vice President	Present
Richard Phillips	Comptroller	Present
Isabella Romeo	Speaker of the Senate	Present
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David Riera	GPSC Chair	Present
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12. Roarthon

Presenter: Lucila Logan

- Yearlong fundraising campaign that has raised over \$1.7 million.
- 50+ student leaders help plan the main event
- 400+ schools across the nation participate in Dance Marathon
- Provide leadership opportunities, foster panther pride, and allow students to become involved in philanthropy
- Tracking through Panther Connect: Minimarathon – 242, roarthon Champion – 220, Child Health Day: 130
- Designs student journey, faculty and staff belonging, strengthen FIU community
- New incorporations: First Year Transfer and Honor College team
- Requesting: operational expenses, special events, marketing/giveaways, leadership development and travel

Q&A:

President Casanova – The biggest cost is the rental of the recreation space, correct?

Response – Yes

President Casanova – Is there a conflict with Spring admitted day this year?

Response – No, the event has been moved up.

13. International Student and Scholar Services

Presenter: Natalia Bocsi

- Create programming for engagement and belonging
- Goal: Bring domestic and international students together
- Florida International Leadership Conference, Little Havana Heritage Tour, Zoo Miami Trip
- Collaborative events: preparedness, financial literacy, social gatherings, cultural efforts
- Growth in engagement: new assistant director or engagement and activities, increased presence on social media, in person events, events on Panther Connect
- Main priorities: create belonging with events to help students adapt faster and succeed
- Tracking: Panther connect and student feedback
- Impact: 5,000 students
- Increased request due to change in priorities with student engagement

Q&A:

President Casanova – In terms of the conference, is this the first time the organization has attended?

Response – They have been taking students to the conference for about 12 years. In the past, have been supported by SGA for this conference.

CPSC Chair Riera – How do you find the graduate students?

Response – The graduate assistants come from the Higher Education Leadership Program.

President Casanova – Do you receive other sources of funding besides SGA?

Response – No other funding for programming, recently introduced fees for graduate citizens applying for benefits and scholars programs.

14. MOU

Presenter: Larissa James

- Subsidizes room rentals in GC and Wolfe Center for student organizations
- Removed departments no longer a part of SLD
- Funds Expanded: \$112,938 – GC, \$20,736 – WUC
- Request: \$330,000 no increase in request

Q&A:

No questions.

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

All those in favor: 5

All those opposed: 0

It is unanimous, motion passes.

Call meeting to order: 12:28pm

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	
David Riera	GPSC Chair	Absent
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15. FIU Museum Insiders

Presenter: Susana Perez

- Community organization dedicated to foster engagement with the arts
- Student benefits: access to cross disciplinary community, internships, advance career goals
- Highlights: interdisciplinary collaboration, community and creativity, FIU student showcase
- Frost After Dark: 100 attendees

- Vision and Impact: Local Music Showcase, Open Mic Night, enhance student engagement, empower local art scene, professional development opportunities
- Request: \$6,013.50

Q&A:

President Casanova – Do you have any other sources of funding?

Response – Monthly programming comes from Access Bridges (grant ends at the end of this year) Programming funded by the Wilsonian.

President Casanova – Are you registered under RSO?

Response – Not an organization; they are a program run between three museums to offer student opportunities.

Meeting Adjournment: 12:42pm.