



FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

SGA Budget Hearings 2026-2027

Meeting Minutes

Date: January 23, 2025

- I. Call to Order
 - a. 9:05 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	Present
	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 Conduct & Academic Integrity

Present: Devin Parra

- Administer Student Conduct and Honor Code, oversee the Student Conduct Committee, process conduct checks, dean certifications, and letters of standing
- Request: \$20,945.96
- Programming: International Day of Action for Academic Integrity, 294 attendees, SCAI Sparkling Summer, 120 attendees, SCAI Conduct Cab, resource fairs, giveaways
- SCAI Student Conduct Committee: 82 hearings
- Support: compliance, student engagement, student conduct committee

Q&A:

Speaker Romeo – Is the request for merch or other areas as well?

Response – Merchandise plus giveaways like coffee carts for programming.

2. Campus Recreation – Special Request

Present: Linda Buonanno

- Offers wide variety of recreational programs, and create meaningful opportunities
- Components: Intermural sport clubs, operations, fitness, reservations, marketing, membership, athletic training, aquatics, safety & wellness
- Impact: 629,802 visits, 2,000 students a day, most impactful for retaining students
- Supporting the FIU Experience: expand programming, competitive nationally, demand growing for activities
- Total request: \$417,525.58

Q&A:

President Casanova – Which section would you prioritize if you have to choose?

Response – Second floor north. The secondary would be the 1st floor lower.

GPSC Chair Riera – How do you track recurring visits versus new visits?

Response – We use Fusion for access swipes. 25,000 students come in regularly.

GPSC Chair Riera – How regularly does the football team replace their equipment?

Response - Probably every 8 years.

President Casanova – How is it operational with pickleball and other additions?

Response – The field house has made it easier to count in, there are restrooms, and pickleball has been skyrocketing. Provides an opportunity to provide community. More programming opportunities.

3. Student Centers – Special Request

Present: Debaro Huyler

- Assessments: 82.2% students report that Student Centers are welcoming, 81.5% express high satisfaction with cleanliness, 81% staff are seen as available, 86% highly agree student centers are essential
- Top 10% student centers nationwide
- Utilization: 32.5 million, 451K visitors Wolfe Center, 48.1K e-sports & game room
- Efficiency: 21 full time admins – reduction from 31 admins
- 102 student employees
- Request: \$100,000

Q&A:

President Casanova – Is there a finalized date for the opening of the building?

Response – Soft opening for this Summer. Grand opening in Fall of 2026.

President Casanova – Have you measured the desire from students to use that space?

Response – Our faith-based groups. Church groups have asked to use the space.

President Casanova – To that operational plan, how would that look like without increasing costs?

Response – We have been trying to not increase costs, looking to utilize teams more efficiently. Using the same equipment, same supplies, organizing and scheduling, streamlining all functions.

GPSC Chair Riera – Is this chapel going to host funerals and weddings?

Response – There have been inquiries for them, but do not want to add a burden.

President Casanova motioned for an extension of 2-minute Q&A period. Vice President Caseres seconds.

All in favor: 6

All opposed: 0

It is unanimous; the motion passes.

GPSC Chair Riera – Is the chapel going to generate more jobs for students?

Response – Yes, there is a goal for more student employment opportunities.

President Casanova – How are you going to manage and balance, how is that going to impact a student reserving a space with outsiders?

Response – All events will move over to the events team with the facilities team to make sure it is clean and in order.

4. Center for Student Engagement

Present: David Bynes

- Enriches student experience through cultural and intercultural understanding.
- Goal and strategy plans: increasing affinity, enhancing development and engagement, improving space and infrastructure
- Request: \$120,270.00 for operating expenses
- Programming: Rev Dr. Martin Luther King Jr Celebration, Juneteenth Celebration, Panther Dialogue Lab

Q&A:

President Casanova – Looking further down the schedule, where does multi-faith council fall?

Response – In conversation with student experiences. Vision to create a student version and work together on initiatives.

5. CSE – Women's Center

Present: Brittany Davis

- Program highlights: FIU alumni collaborations for guidance and mentorships
- Student engagement and feedback in planning
- Student development: internships, volunteer opportunities, ambassadors
- Engagement: 400+ students
- Request: \$40,037.25

Q&A:

President Casanova – Is it easier for the allocation to CSE and they work through dividing, or is to keep it divided?

Response – They have adjusted and are ready for whatever the committee decide.

6. CSE – Pride Center

Present: Tiffany Peacock

- Increasing affinity: mentorship program, GLAM fashion show, Creating Change Conference, Holistically Queer Wellness, Miami Beach Pride Festival
- Collaborations: Black Student Union
- Request: \$41,118.63

Q&A:

President Casanova – How do you select for Washington DC travel?

Response – Application and go through interviews to allow each student to learn more about the conference.

7. Pride Student Union

Present: Tiffany Peacock

- Leadership: 4 executive board members
- Membership: 631 members on Panther Connect
- Social media: 13% increase from last year
- Programming: Queer social, fall Welcome Reception, Halloween mixer, GBM's
- Collaboration event: Latin culture night, DSU
- Budget: Drag show, promotional items, intersectional queer mixers
- Request: \$22,000 based on feedback from students

Q&A:

GPSC Chair Riera – Is the mentoring program included in this budget request?

Response – Over the years it has been found to be difficult to find young men that want to be mentored.

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

Response – Mainly the pride center with donors, depending on the program there may be sponsors. Pride center typically has 1-2 donors.

8. Career and Talent Development

Present: Amy Miller

- Moving to PC 140

- Career Milestones: create career path, develop network, build narrative, apply skills
- Help students explore and prepare
- Career readiness competencies: critical thinking, oral and written communication, career management, digital technology, teamwork and collaboration
- Request: \$16,616.25 for events and programming
- Workshops and tutorial: resume and cover letters, interviewing skills, internship and job search, salary negotiations
- Enhancing micro-credential recognizes knowledge in identifying resources critical to career success
- 175 students enrolled in the class, 25% completed the course

Q&A:

President Casanova – How was this funded in previous years?

Response – Through the micro-credential allows students to complete and receive a badge.

President Casanova – How many students were enrolled in the course and completed?

Response – 175 enrolled, 25% completed

9. Student Media

Present: Francesca Rosario

- Student media bootcamp: held every Fall term
- Programming: hybrid bootcamp, in person and virtual events
- Updates: new website by revamping website
- Coverage: news, sports, arts and entertainment
- Student success: create expectational opportunities, employ and provide internships, hands on experiences

Q&A:

President Casanova – How do you structure staff salaries?

Response – Various positions, that are for The Roar and Panther Now based on average time they put in a week. Paid by the article or paid depending on how many they publish a week.

President Casanova – Can you provide pay breakdown?

Response – Yes

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

All those in favor: 6

All those opposed: 0

It is unanimous, motion passes.

Call meeting to order: 11:06 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	
David Riera	GPSC Chair	Present
Hailey Menendez	Governor of BBC	Present
Conor Tafur	Finance Chair	Absent

10. International Student Union

Present: Melissa Binns

- Represents and supports international students.
- ISU is a newly established Bureau and has expanded. They have grown to 5 executive members.
- World Fair: signature event implemented since first year, promoting cultural awareness and engagement throughout campus
- An increased budget allowed for more programming
- Attendance: World Fair 290+ attendees, 20+ intercultural exchange tables and registered student organizations
- Upcoming events: Global Talk, GBM, ISU recruitment tabling, Student Town Hall
- Priorities: international education week, programming, GBM, tabling, marketing
- Request: to continue tradition by advocating for cultural awareness and appreciation, while showcasing the diverse traditions and communities from around the world
- Goal: secure sufficient financial flexibility for ISU to operate more independently and reduce reliance on external departments

Q&A:

No questions.

11. Student Experiences

Present: Dr. Christy A. Calderon

- Mission: engage students in diversity, leadership, and personal development
- 9 full-time staff, 3-4 graduate assistants, 5-8 student staff, 6 SGA Agencies & Bureaus
- Budget request: \$612,388.32
- New initiatives: Early Fall Week of Welcome, reoccurring night programming/movie series

Q&A:

President Casanova – With the night programming, is there going to be a significant impact on OPS costs in staffing and salary?

Response – No, they think the team they have can execute it just fine with staggering and times.

GPSC Chair Riera – Are you taking into account that graduate students start their classes at 5pm and end at 8pm?

Response – They plans now are to test and see the success, planning for events to be no later than 10pm.

President Casanova – You mentioned an error in budget request; can you explain that?

Response – OPS fundings from last year did not include 4 graduate assistants.

12. Student Bar Association

Present: Ryan Rodriguez

- Student run organization with the interest of the student body of the college of law.
- 580 students enrolled in the college of law
- Mentor program with 1L's to aid in transition into law school
- On and off campus resources to connect with legal professionals
- Finding enables the abilities to host guest speakers and panels

- Student wellbeing: sponsors activities that promote both physical and emotional health
- Highest achievements: increasing student attendance and initiatives, collaborating with SGA, increase affinity, continue to promote wellness, engaging with undergraduate prelaw programs

Q&A:

President Casanova – How many different clubs do you support and how do you distribute the funds?

Response – Over 50+ clubs within law schools. They do not get allocated specifically; just ensure they do not go over maximum amount.

President Casanova – How many students attend Barris’s ball?

Response – Do not have an exact number. More or less 300 last year.

13. Medical Student Council

Present: Carlota Gimenez

- Highly qualified, community engaged, socially accountable health care professionals.
- Projects: project Amazons, DC fellowship, early skills development
- Professional development: clinical practice, workshops, seminars
- Sustainable infrastructure: tired funding, umbrella system
- Canvas roadmap system: funding resources has decreased number of complaints
- Expanding community impact: 800 children served, 100+ undergraduates mentoring programs supported
- Increase in events, asking for slight increase, especially in travel funding
- Increase need: new research opportunities with partnerships with Baptist Health
- 34% of class were FIU undergraduates

Q&A:

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

Response – No; funding comes from MMC or GPSC, or regional scholarship opportunities.

GPSC Chair Riera – Is the work you do in the Amazon to have student input?

Response – Yes, they do the program every year.

President Casanova – Have you explored any donors or sponsorships for travel?

Response – We have been looking but have not received.

GPSC Chair Riera – How many students do you support historically?

Response – Eight students every year are sent.

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

All those in favor: 6

All those opposed: 0

It is unanimous, motion passes.

Call meeting to order: 12:06 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
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14. Center for Leadership and Service

Present: Patricia Lopez-Guerrero

- Leading, serving, learning: leadership, community service opportunities
- Accomplishment: student positions 33 external partners, 16 campus partners, 22 presentations, workshops, pit events, interacted with over 18,000 students documents through Panther Connect, One card, and Give Pulse, 3,363 service hours completed
- Collaborate: student affairs, academic affairs, strategies
- Programming: 8 competencies, leadership education, community engagement
- Priorities: increase program and attendance, expand opportunities, more direct services
- Challenges: no budget increase since 2022, student employment costs
- Highlights: 23 programs, events, and presentations

- Request: \$262,036.32 -student staff, programming, office operations, new initiatives, graduate assistants

Q&A:

President Casanova – In the budget, you have Give Pulse tire, what is that?

Response – We pay for Give Pulse Tier 2 (\$15,000 a year).

President Casanova – For AOL, is there a fee associated for the students?

Response – Small fee for the students of \$60.

GPSC Chair Riera – For certified leaders micro credential, what are the numbers?

Response – Does not know exact number. Free yearlong opportunity, enrolled throughout a calendar year.

15. Student Food Pantry

Present: Joanna Garcia

- All currently enrolled students can use the pantry as a resource
- Two locations: MMC & BBC
- Visitors: 12,025 in 2025-2026
- Pounds of food distributed: 54,339 in 2025-2026
- There to assist in food insecurity students have a place to grab some items to help students stay enrolled in school. 1 in 3 college students face food insecurity.
- Request: \$98,658.00

Q&A:

President Casanova – How many students are at MMC and BBC pantry?

Response – 4 MMC student employees and 3 BBC student employees.

President Casanova - Are hours of operations the same or vary?

Response - The house varies on student and class schedules and what are the needs for operations.

Comptroller Phillip - Does the food pantry receive any funding from any other sources?

Response - The food they have is through foundation and donations.

GPSC Chair Riera – Is there movement towards refrigeration items?

Response - One of the challenges is space.

GPSC Chair Riera – They included in the GC expansion; they included the food pantry?

Response – No.

16. Government and Community Services

Present: Liane Sippin

- Serves as the official government and community relations as the official liaison between the university and all levels of government.
- Reestablished office since President Jeanette Nunez
- Government Fellows Program: help FIU students gain skills to peruse careers in government, meet elected officials and staff, and visit government offices
- Areas of interest: zoning, public services, real estate, county mayor, property taxes
- Commit to four workshop sessions, participate in two local government site visits
- Connect with FIU alumni across local government
- Request: \$18,040.50 travel, snacks, marketing, communications, operational expenses

Q&A:

President Casanova – What does your interest look like and how are you getting the word out?

Response – 20 students interested. Word of mouth, marketing materials, flyers.

President Casanova – What does FIU benefit with students in these elected offices?

Response – The objective is to become a top 30 public university by 2030. This touches in on student success in professional development, exposure to career opportunities, and many students will become elected officials. Those alumni will come back to give FIU funding and support in partnership.

GPSC Chair Riera – Do you see an extension for this for alumni?

Response – Would love to support alumni and help place them.

Meeting Adjournment: 12:54 pm