

INTRODUCTION

The Legislative Affairs and Advocacy Committee (henceforth LAAC) serves as one of ASI's standing committees, responsible for ensuring there's a strong connection between external partners and the broader campus constituency. At its core, the LAAC is dedicated to supporting students through strategic legislative advocacy, robust civic engagement, and policy analysis of all bills affecting higher education. Our mission is to empower the student body by researching, monitoring, and evaluating local, state, and federal legislation that impacts higher education, the CSU system, and, most importantly, the day-to-day lives of Cal State LA students.

The LAAC works to keep the campus informed about important legislative developments and student-related issues while also advocating for tangible solutions through advocacy at the California State Student Association (CSSA) plenary meetings and conferences. Our approach includes direct student outreach through town halls, workshops, surveys, and other interactive platforms to gather feedback and better understand our community's challenges and the current needs that must be prioritized. Through coordination with CSSA and other campus partners, we drive initiatives such as voter registration drives and public policy interventions that align with student needs.

This Advocacy Agenda serves as a blueprint for the LAAC's efforts throughout the academic year. The document will outline the committee's core focus areas, current initiatives, and plans for future advocacy. The document provides a structured approach for how the committee will:

1. Track, analyze, and respond to laws and policies that affect higher education and the CSU system
2. Ensure continuous communication with students to gather input and raise awareness of legislative issues, as well as promote civic participation and engagement
3. Represent student concerns at the statewide level and participate in CSSA committees
4. Develop an action plan with timelines, goals, and accountability measures to guide ASI's legislative efforts
5. Establish future priorities that may be implemented by the next administration and beyond

The completion and implementation of this Advocacy Agenda will ensure that the LAAC remains focused, organized, and adaptable in its mission to observe the student body, and it underscores our commitment to fostering a collaborative, informed, and civically engaged community.

LEGISLATIVE MONITORING AND POLICY EVALUATION

The goal of the LAAC is to stay ahead of policy developments that affect the CSU system, with a particular focus on areas like student debt relief, financial aid reform, access to mental health

resources, and housing affordability. We achieve this through a combination of research, legislative analysis, and engagement with campus partners. Through a structured process of monitoring local, state, and federal legislation, we aim to ensure that Cal State LA students have a strong voice in legislative matters that affect their academic and personal success.

The LAAC begins by identifying critical legislative priorities through various channels, including student surveys, campus-wide feedback, and consultation with key partners like the CSSA. These priorities guide the committee's legislative tracking efforts, which involve the use of online resources and legislative databases. Members regularly consult platforms such as the [California Legislature](#) website, which provides detailed information on state bills, amendments, and voting records. At the federal level, the committee tracks higher education policies using tools like [GovTrack](#) and [LegiScan](#), which ensures that national initiatives such as student loan reform and Pell Grant expansions are monitored closely. This was not used frequently this Fall, however, given the political climate, we find this more important now than ever.

In addition to digital tracking, LAAC members participate in key legislative hearings and stakeholder meetings to stay informed about developments in real time. This includes CSU Board of Trustee meetings, systemwide committees on campus, and (though rarely) even attending sessions of the California Assembly and Senate Education Committees, where bills impacting the CSU system are frequently discussed. The Committee also stays up to track by signing up for newsletters from relevant and reputable news sources, such as [The Chronicle of Higher Education](#), [EDSource](#), [LA Times](#), [CalMatters](#), and the [Governor's Newsroom](#). Finally, the LAAC collaborates with external stakeholders, including campus administrators, faculty, and advocacy groups, to help understand and analyze the potential impact of proposed legislation on students.

A crucial component of legislative monitoring involves the analysis of bills under consideration. As such, the LAAC reviews bill summaries and expert testimonies to assess how new policies may affect students. While the CSSA generally provides bills for recommendation, the LAAC does its own review. As of Spring '25, the LAAC is monitoring two specific bills:

1. [AB 9](#): Introduced in December 2024, AB 9 mandates that the CSU establish specific goals for the adequate representation of community college transfer students in each discipline, program, or major by September 1, 2026. The bill also requires the CSU to report various ratios of community college transfer students to other undergraduates on its website.
2. [AB 95](#): Introduced in January 2025, AB 95 proposes the establishment of the Coordinating Commission for Education in California. This state-level body would be composed of workforce, education segment, and employer representatives tasked with creating joint and regional plans and making recommendations on state and federal funding related to statewide educational attainment and career education goals.

To support advocacy efforts for initiatives like the California Higher Education Student Summit (CHESS), the LAAC prepares key materials such as fact sheets, talking points, and data-backed testimonials. These resources equip student representatives tasked with representing ASI and

Cal State LA to effectively communicate the importance of various legislative initiatives during meetings with lawmakers.

The LAAC's legislative monitoring process is not static. The committee continuously revisits and refines its priorities based on legislative updates, student input, and the overall political climate. Through meticulous tracking, we hope to strengthen our capacity to advocate for policies that enhance the overall experience our students have at Cal State LA.

ADVOCACY FOR STUDENT NEEDS THROUGH CSSA

CSSA is the recognized voice for over 480,000 CSU students and operates through regular meetings, task forces, and committees to address statewide issues related to higher education. Our involvement with CSSA ensures that Cal State LA's student concerns are represented system-wide and incorporated into statewide advocacy initiatives.

During monthly plenary meetings, CSSA convenes representatives from all 22 CSU campuses, which consist of multiple committees that include: the Board of Directors, Internal Affairs, Systemwide Affairs, Finance, and Legislative.

The Board of Directors is the organization's primary governing body and convenes to deliberate on policies, set strategic priorities, and make decisions that guide CSSA's initiatives.

The Internal Affairs Committee ensures that CSSA's internal policies and practices are legal, efficient, and comply with sound business practices. It reviews and updates governing documents, oversee compliance with regulations, and addresses internal organizational matters.

The Systemwide Affairs Committee addresses issues affecting the CSU system as a whole, such as academic policies, tuition, and systemwide initiatives, ensuring that student perspectives are considered in system-level decisions.

The Finance Committee is charged with maintaining CSSA's financial health, developing the annual budget, monitoring expenditures, and formulating financial policies to ensure fiscal responsibility.

Finally, the Legislative Affairs Committee focuses on government and legislative advocacy, tracks state and federal legislation impacting CSU students, develops positions on bills, and coordinates advocacy efforts to influence policy decisions.

Through sitting on these committees, the LAAC aims to insert Cal State LA's voice in conversations when input is directly needed. However, the LAAC has also been a part of several initiatives throughout the year, such as being a part of the Solidarity and Equal Partnership Taskforce, a dedicated group within CSSA that works to redefine how collaboration, inquiry, and advocacy are practiced between the CSU and CSSA. The task force, specifically, aims to ensure

that student voices are prioritized and that there is an equitable partnership between students and systemwide administration, especially the CSU Chancellor's Office. As active participants in this task force, two of the LAAC's representatives have been committed to ensuring that our student concerns remain central to these broader advocacy efforts.

Through this task force, we have helped shape a clear understanding of these concepts and have worked to define measurable outcomes that promote equitable representation and engagement for all students across the system. The task force does not hold direct decision-making power but provides recommendations to the CSSA Board of Directors, the Executive Team, and the Systemwide Affairs Committee.

STUDENT OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

This section will talk about our informational events like town halls, workshops, and tabling to spread awareness of key issues, as well as a more detailed report on how we use student surveys to collect and analyze feedback, ensuring student voices are heard. For context, I aim to plan a town hall after our October plenary and will be submitting a program proposal soon!

The ASI team has consistently engaged in efforts to promote civic participation among students, particularly by facilitating voter registration. For several weeks, we conducted outreach every Tuesday from 9:00 AM to 2:30 PM during the campus Farmers Market. During this time, we provided students with essential resources to simplify the registration process and enhance their understanding of voting. Our setup included iPads with direct access to voter registration links, ensuring students had the tools they needed for easy and informed participation.

ASI, in collaboration with PBI, hosted a program titled "Good Jobs: Pathways to Work that Matters." This initiative featured a workshop and panel designed to facilitate networking opportunities for students and to introduce them to various careers in public service. CSULA alumni participated by sharing their experiences in fields such as government, journalism, non-profits, education, and more. Additionally, students had the opportunity to engage directly through "power sessions," which provided a platform for them to discuss questions and concerns.

"Breaking Down the Ballot: Burritos & Ballot Measures" was an event organized during Voter Education Week. Attendees enjoyed lunch while receiving insightful information on ballot measures from the League of Women Voters of Greater Los Angeles. Additionally, representatives from the L.A. County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk's Office provided detailed guidance on the voter process and proper procedures. This event proved to be an excellent opportunity for valuable learning and strengthening civic knowledge among participants.

Voter Fest was a larger-scale event that engaged students with various departments and organizations both on campus and beyond. This festival served as a celebration of our civic engagement efforts over the past weeks. The event garnered significant media coverage from

outlets such as KCAL, KABC7, KNBC, and Spectrum News 1. Featuring a focus on art and interactive activities, Voter Fest provided an enjoyable atmosphere for students to learn about voting while having fun.

ASI utilized the USU Theater to present the film "Selma," creating an additional space for students to register to vote during the event. The film illustrates the significance of voting and the civil rights movement, serving as an educational backdrop for the evening. It provided an opportunity for students to reflect on the struggles faced in the pursuit of voting rights and the ongoing importance of civic engagement. Moreover, the event fostered an environment where students could engage in meaningful discussions about pressing civic topics. Attendees were encouraged to delegate and share their thoughts on issues related to voting and social justice, enhancing their understanding of the electoral process. Overall, this gathering not only entertained but also empowered students to take an active role in their democracy.

These events were designed to empower students to use their voices for meaningful change. We recognize the immense impact that collective action can have on our communities and society at large. By providing opportunities for education, engagement, and discussion, we aimed to inform students about the significance of their participation in the democratic process.

Through workshops, film screenings, and interactive festivals, we sought to equip students with the knowledge and tools necessary to navigate the complexities of voting and civic engagement. Our commitment to fostering an informed student body stems from the belief that when individuals are informed and engaged, they can drive progress and advocate for the issues that matter most to them.

Ultimately, our goal was to inspire students to not only understand their rights but also to take action and advocate for the changes they wish to see in the world. By encouraging dialogue and participation, we hope to cultivate a generation of active citizens who are dedicated to making a difference in their communities.

ADVOCACY ACTION PLAN & NEXT STEPS

LAAC will pursue a proactive advocacy agenda over the next year with concrete steps focused on students' needs. These actions will amplify student voices and push for solutions on urgent issues like tuition, undocumented student support, basic needs, mental health, course access, and labor fairness. Key planned actions include:

1. **Organize Campus Advocacy Events:** Host town halls and forums on tuition increases and budget cuts, giving students a platform to share how higher costs and class reductions affect them. For example, a "Tuition Impact Forum" can collect student testimonies (e.g. difficulty paying an extra 6% tuition each year) that LAAC can forward to CSU administrators and state legislators. Similar forums on course availability can

highlight the effects of class shortages (noting that 1,430 course sections were eliminated across several CSU campuses this year due to budget-tightening). These events inform decision-makers with real student stories.

2. **Launch a Student Advocacy Campaign:** Develop a year-long campaign focused on the main priorities or issue areas students are focused on (e.g., undocumented student support or basic affordability). This might include tabling and social media drives educating students on their rights and resources (e.g., how to apply for hardship grants, where the food pantry is, and how to contact officials). A signature part of the campaign could be a “#FundTheCSU” initiative that mobilizes students to email or call legislators to fully fund the CSU and prevent further tuition hikes or class cuts. LAAC can provide toolkits with scripts and addresses to make engagement easy.
3. **Empower Student Voices in Governance:** Ensure student representation on key university committees addressing these issues. For instance, with the campus facing a deficit and planning cuts, LAAC should place student advocates on the new Budget and Planning Committee to fight for student priorities (maintaining course sections, preserving tutoring services, etc.). LAAC can also formally request that mental health task forces or basic needs working groups include student members. By being at the table, students can push administrators to act on promises (like hiring more counselors or expanding housing aid).
4. **Pass ASI Resolutions and Monitor Implementation:** Draft resolutions through ASI supporting specific changes (e.g. a resolution urging the university to add at least X new full-time counselors to reach an acceptable student-counselor ratio, or a resolution supporting the creation of more on-campus student jobs for undocumented students via internships or stipends). Once passed and sent to university leadership, LAAC will follow up each quarter to track progress on these resolutions. This creates a paper trail of student demands and an expectation that the university respond.

To complement its direct actions, LAAC will develop policy recommendations for both ASI and University leadership that address the major student issues in a sustainable way. These recommendations will focus on institutional changes and new initiatives that prioritize student welfare, affordability, and academic success. Key policy and initiative recommendations include:

1. **Support Undocumented Students with Campus Resources:** In light of federal inaction on immigration and the decline in undocumented student enrollment (down nearly 50% in the CSU since 2016 as DACA has stalled), recommend policies to bolster support. This could include establishing a permanent funding line for the campus Dreamers Resource Center to provide legal services, mentorship, and emergency grants for undocumented students. LAAC can also advocate for a “Workability Scholarship” program; since undocumented students lack work authorization, the University could offer paid research assistantships or stipends (framed as scholarships) to help them finance their education without violating federal law. These initiatives would demonstrate that Cal State LA is investing in undocumented student success even amid

external funding cuts or vetoes (as happened with a recent state proposal to hire undocumented students, which would have helped 55,000 students statewide

2. **Expand Housing and Food Security Programs:** Recommend that University leadership treat housing and food insecurity as top priorities. A 2018 CSU study found 42% of CSU students had experienced food insecurity and 11% had been homeless in the past year—an alarming rate that likely persists today. LAAC will urge the campus to expand the food pantry (e.g. longer hours, more food distribution events) and increase the availability of emergency housing. Policy suggestions include dedicating a portion of any new campus funding to the Basic Needs Office, creating a “Housing Security Guarantee” (such as short-term hotel vouchers or priority in dorms for displaced students), and partnering with local organizations to provide grocery gift cards or meal vouchers for students in need. LAAC can recommend that ASI co-sponsor a Basic Needs Summit on campus each semester, bringing together administrators and student service providers to implement these ideas and continuously assess student needs.
3. **Improve Mental Health Access:** Push for a formal plan to hire more counselors and expand mental health services. The committee should recommend that Cal State LA commit to meeting the recommended counselor-to-student ratio of 1:1,500 (a standard only about one-third of CSU campuses currently meet, with some campuses having as many as 3,000 students per counselor). This could mean adding at least several counseling staff or contracting external therapists for student appointments. LAAC will also suggest extended counseling center hours and the addition of services like tele-therapy or an on-call psychiatrist (noting President Eanes’ recent plan to bring on a university psychiatrist and a new counseling faculty line). These policy recommendations align with making mental health a “first principle” for the university and ensuring every student can access help in a timely manner.
4. **Protect Course Availability and Academic Resources:** Recommend policies to safeguard the academic experience despite budget pressures. LAAC will formally advise the University to minimize the elimination of class sections and programs that students need for graduation. For instance, suggest adopting a policy that requires graduation courses must be offered each term (or online through another CSU if not in-person) so students aren’t delayed by cuts. With CSU campuses already cutting hundreds of courses due to budget shortfalls, Cal State LA should pledge to prioritize instructional spending in any budget adjustments. Additionally, the committee can propose maintaining library and tutoring center hours, and exploring cost-saving through open educational resources (to reduce textbook expenses for students). If some academic resource cuts are unavoidable, LAAC will insist on student consultation and creative mitigations (like alternate labs or peer-led study sessions) to uphold educational quality.
5. **Uphold Fair Labor Practices to Avoid Disruptions:** In light of the recent faculty strike—the first-ever CSU-wide strike across all 23 campuses—LAAC will recommend that University leadership adopt a more proactive, collaborative approach to labor relations. This could entail establishing a campus labor-management council (including

student observers) that meets regularly to address faculty and staff concerns before they escalate. The goal is to prevent labor disputes from reaching a crisis point that affects students' education. LAAC can also urge a campus policy that respects workers' rights to organize and strike while committing the administration to bargain in good faith for fair wages and conditions. Students recognize that faculty working conditions directly impact student learning, so advocating for fair contracts is inherently a student-centered stance. By supporting policies that lead to equitable solutions (like the new contract with raises and improved benefits), LAAC helps ensure continuity in instruction and a positive campus climate.

These policy and initiative recommendations will be formally compiled and presented to the ASI Board and campus executives. By addressing tuition, undocumented student support, basic needs, mental health, academics, and labor, the recommendations cover all major challenges students face. LAAC will work to see these adopted as official policy or new programs, partnering with administrators on the details but keeping student interests front and center.

A key part of the next steps is broadening collaboration. LAAC can achieve more by working with allies across the campus and beyond. By partnering with established organizations and institutes, the committee will amplify its reach, gain expertise, and present a united front on student issues. Major collaboration opportunities include:

1. **Collaboration with CSSA (California State Student Association):** Leverage the statewide influence of CSSA, which “monitors and advocates legislative policy on behalf of CSU students” and has a Legislative Affairs committee reviewing state and federal items. LAAC will coordinate Cal State LA’s advocacy agenda with CSSA’s priorities. This means sharing information on pending bills (for example, bills on financial aid, basic needs, or tuition) and co-sponsoring CSSA resolutions that align with our campus needs. LAAC members can participate in CSSA working groups and provide testimony or student perspectives for CSSA’s advocacy efforts. By acting as a two-way conduit – bringing CSU-wide issues back to campus, and elevating Cal State LA student concerns to the statewide level – this partnership ensures our students have a voice in Sacramento and across the CSU system.
2. **Partner with the Pat Brown Institute for Public Affairs:** The Pat Brown Institute (PBI) at Cal State LA is dedicated to “unleashing the power of participation” and runs programs that motivate young people to be engaged in their communities and raise awareness about timely policy issues. LAAC will work with PBI to co-host events such as candidate forums, policy panels, and civic workshops on issues affecting students. For example, ahead of state elections or votes on higher-ed funding, PBI and LAAC could organize a “Higher Education Town Hall” where students can interact with elected officials or expert panelists on topics like tuition or student debt. PBI’s network can help bring public officials closer to students (fulfilling its mission of connecting constituents and officials), giving our advocacy targets a face-to-face understanding of student challenges. Additionally, LAAC can tap into PBI research to get data or reports that

strengthen our advocacy (such as polling data on student voter turnout or policy preferences).

3. **Work with the Center for Engagement, Service, and the Public Good:** Cal State LA's Center for Engagement (which houses programs like EPIC – Educational Participation in Communities) focuses on service learning and civic involvement. LAAC can collaborate with this Center to integrate advocacy with community service. One idea is to encourage students involved in community service (for instance, volunteering at homeless shelters or food banks via EPIC) to share their experiences and inform our advocacy on housing and food insecurity. The Center's mission of turning students into "productive, responsible and caring citizens" through real-life community work aligns with our goals of fostering active, informed student advocates. We can co-create workshops that train student volunteers on how to translate their service experiences into policy advocacy (e.g. a student volunteering at the food pantry can speak at a LAAC meeting or Board of Trustees session about why food assistance matters on campus). This partnership also helps recruit more students into advocacy by drawing from those already engaged in service programs.
4. **Coordinate with On-Campus Student Service Providers:** LAAC will strengthen ties with campus offices that directly support students, such as the Dreamers Resource Center, the Basic Needs (food pantry and housing) program, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), the Health Center, and the Office of Dean of Students. Regular communication and joint initiatives with these providers will ensure our advocacy is grounded in current student needs. For instance, LAAC can meet monthly with the Dreamers Center staff to learn about any increased demand or issues (perhaps due to changes in immigration policy) and then advocate for resources accordingly. We can co-host an "Undocu-Ally Day" with the center to educate peers and generate solidarity for undocumented classmates. Similarly, working with CAPS, LAAC could support a Mental Health Awareness Week and use it to survey students about counseling wait times and satisfaction – data we then use to push for hiring more counselors. These collaborations both improve services (by boosting student awareness of them) and inform our policy asks with on-the-ground insights from service staff and students.
5. **Engage with Faculty and Staff Allies:** While student-led, LAAC recognizes the value of aligning with faculty and staff organizations when interests intersect. We will maintain dialogue with groups like the California Faculty Association (CFA), especially on issues like instructional quality, class sizes, and labor conditions that impact students. By collaborating with CFA's student outreach (such as the Students for Quality Education chapter, seen in joint protests against tuition hikes), we strengthen the student-faculty coalition. Likewise, partnering with unions or staff councils on campus (for example, in joint letters supporting more state funding for higher education) can amplify our message that the entire campus community benefits from investment in students. These broader coalitions make our advocacy more formidable and show administrators and legislators a unified front.

Through these partnerships, LAAC will expand the reach and expertise of its advocacy. Each partner brings valuable resources: CSSA offers statewide legislative influence; PBI brings policy know-how and civic engagement programs; the Center for Engagement offers channels to involve more students in community issues; service providers contribute data and direct support; and faculty/staff lend credibility and solidarity. By coordinating efforts, we avoid working in silos and instead build a networked advocacy movement. This collaborative approach ensures continuity too; even as student leaders graduate, our partners remain, helping to carry forward the agenda in years to come.

To make lasting progress, LAAC will establish mechanisms for accountability – both to hold university administration accountable for addressing student issues, and to ensure continuity of advocacy from one student administration to the next. The following steps will embed transparency, follow-through, and student oversight into our efforts:

1. **Advocacy Roadmap with Timelines:** LAAC will turn its agenda into a public “Advocacy Roadmap” that lists each major goal (affordable tuition, undocumented student support, etc.) alongside specific targets and timelines. For example, the roadmap might state: “Hire 3 additional counselors by end of Spring 2025” or “Open 100 new housing beds for students by Fall 2025.” By setting clear deadlines and quantifiable goals, we create a yardstick to measure progress. This roadmap will be shared with campus leadership and widely with students. If deadlines approach and goals aren’t met, LAAC ensures that the next administration is well-versed in the progress the previous LAAC has fostered and how to continue efforts, as the new roadmap also helps new LAAC members each year to immediately see ongoing initiatives and pick up where predecessors left off (promoting continuity).
2. **Student Surveys and Feedback Tools:** To hold future administrations accountable to student needs, we must continually listen to our students. LAAC will deploy surveys each semester to gauge student satisfaction and concerns on topics like financial aid, class availability, campus services, and more. For example, a post-strike survey could ask how students felt about communication during the faculty strike and whether class continuity was managed well, generating data to discuss with administrators. We will also solicit suggestions: e.g. an open-response survey question, “What is the biggest obstacle to your success at Cal State LA right now?” The aggregated results (made anonymous) will be published and used as evidence when advocating for changes. In addition to surveys, LAAC can set up an online student reporting system – a simple form where students can report specific problems in real time, such as being unable to get an academic advisor appointment or being waitlisted for all sections of a required course. These reports will feed into our meetings with administrators (for instance, if dozens of students report course bottlenecks in a particular subject, we can demand more sections). By institutionalizing feedback channels, we ensure student voices continuously inform and pressure administrative action, beyond just the voices of student government members.

3. **Public Accountability Forums:** Another mechanism is hosting at least one public “Accountability Forum” each year where top campus officials address the student body on these issues. LAAC can organize a town hall with President Eanes or relevant vice presidents specifically to discuss progress on the advocacy agenda (tuition, basic needs, etc.). Students would have the opportunity to ask questions like, “Last year you promised to expand mental health staffing – what has been done so far?” and get answers on the record. Having such a forum, say every spring, creates an expectation that administrators must publicly reflect on their performance in improving student conditions. It also empowers students to directly pose concerns and reinforces that the administration works for the students. LAAC will archive the commitments made at these forums and follow up on them in subsequent meetings.
4. **Documentation and Transition for Continuity:** Internally, LAAC will keep thorough documentation of its initiatives, contacts, and progress. We will maintain an advocacy tracker (a living document updated with the status of each goal, who in administration is responsible, and what has been done). Additionally, at the end of each academic year, the committee will produce a short “Advocacy Agenda Report” summarizing achievements, pending items, and recommendations for the next committee to carry forward. This report will be given to incoming LAAC members and ASI leaders so that hard-fought progress does not dissipate with turnover. For example, if state legislation affecting students is mid-process or if a campus project (like a food pantry expansion) is underway, the report will flag these for the next team to continue. By creating an institutional memory in ASI, we promote continuity. Future administrations will be held to the same advocacy commitments until they are fully realized, and students won’t have to restart advocacy on the same issues from scratch each year.

Accountability and continuity are about building trust and momentum. When students see that their representatives are consistently checking on results – and holding administrators to their word – it builds confidence in the advocacy process and encourages more student engagement. Moreover, by preserving knowledge and setting up long-term oversight, LAAC ensures that even as individuals graduate, the push for student-centered improvements carries on powerfully.