



California State University SAN MARCOS

Committee for Undergraduate Research (CUGR)

MINUTES

January 29 · 12:00–1:00 PM · Administration Building 2302 · <https://csusm.zoom.us/j/82869404191>

Attendees: Brandon Moore, Charles De Leone, Deanna Schmidt, Dennis Kolosov, Elinne Becket, Ezequiel Vidal, Jane Kim, Jimmy Kezos, Kang Du, Kaitlyn Woltz, Lucy HG Solomon, Michael McDuffie, Mtafiti Imara, Osmar Pinto Neto, Sergio Nigenda Morales, Sheila Van Metre, Sujal Phadke, Robert Iafe

Call to order

Chair Deanna Schmidt called the meeting to order at 12:03 pm

Approval of the Agenda

Schmidt invited members to propose changes to the agenda. Dr. Becket suggested an ideation item to be added. The committee approved with the ideation item added.

Approval of the Minutes

Minutes from the November 20, 2025 CUGR meeting were presented for approval. With no amendments, the Minutes were approved as distributed.

Announcements & Events

- [Research Seminar Series 2025-26](#), Innovative Approaches to Global & Environmental Health
February 3 – ACD 102 | Speaker: Shannon Switzer Swanson
- Student Success Funds and ASI Leadership funding links were provided:
[CEHHS](#), [CHABSS](#), [CSTEM](#), [CoBA](#), [ASI Support](#)

- **Goldwater Scholarship Update**

Dr. Iafe reported there are five CSUCM nominees: 2 chemistry students, 1 biochemistry, 1 biology, 1 psychology major with chemistry minor. He proposed nomination recognition certificates be issued to nominees (signed by CUGR & OGSR). The committee agreed to pursue; Iafe and Van Metre will coordinate.

- **Giving Day Update**

Dr. Kim stated that a dedicated account has been established to ensure students receive the full amount of the \$3,500 in donated funds. The allocation of funds could be determined through an application and award process. The committee will evaluate and decide on the next steps during the February meeting.

Student Poster Showcase (SPS)

- The SPS took place on December 4, 2025, with 69 posters and 175 student presenters. The Committee reviewed successes, the importance in showcasing a variety of work, and alternative layout options.
- At the event, the **Kerri Mowen Excellence** in Faculty Mentoring award was presented. Dr. Kim was recognized for sharing the award's history during the ceremony. Dr. Kimberley Vanderbilt and Dr. Haylee DeLuca Bishop were honored as recipients, each receiving a \$500 award.
- The **Student Excellence Award** sub-committee chose two winners, Marisa Mendoza and Quetzalli Johnson (\$500 each) and three finalists, Luiza Borges, Andres Hinojosa, and Camila Valderrama-Martinez (\$100

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each) from nine applications at the SPS event. Judges were thanked, and the committee will clarify award language. This is the award's second year.

Symposium on Student Research, Creative Activities, and Innovation – February 27, 2026

- **Application deadline:** Tomorrow, January 30th at 5:00 PM. The committee agreed to keep submissions open until 11:59 pm if needed.
- **Location:** The event is held on campus, historically Markstein Hall. Final room scheduling dependent on campus room reservations which open on February 9th. Event typically runs in the afternoon; presentation sessions followed by awards.
- **Prep Session:** Richard Armenta will run a prep session for all applicants on Tuesday, Feb 3 during U-Hour in Mark 103. Slides will be shared with all presenters.
- **Clarification for judges** was requested: Discussion centered around how the abstract should be weighted in scoring. Faculty presented pros and cons of including the abstract in the scoring. It was discussed if the written summary/abstract was intended to provide context to help judges prepare questions or how it should be incorporated in the rubric. Action item is to compare to other CSU campuses instructions and provide clarity for judges.
- **Moderators / Judges needed:** <https://forms.office.com/r/8wi1PPanXc?origin=lprLink>

Statewide Student Research Competition / Hosting 2027 (CSUSM host)

- CSUSM will host the statewide symposium in April 2027. A subcommittee (planning committee) has been formed. Subcommittee responsibilities include logistics, communications, website, volunteers, student experience, and faculty support. Brandon Moore and Kaitlyn Woltz agreed to join.
- **Time-sensitive:** February 23 application deadline for **Exceptional Service to Students Awards** (to request possible course releases for faculty doing planning work). Interested faculty should consider applying; planning committee hopes some members will apply for course releases to free time for planning. Application link: <https://www.csusm.edu/senate/exceptionalserviceawards/index.html>
- **Instructionally Related Activities (IRA) | Division of Student Affairs | CSUSM:** Becket volunteered to lead effort to apply for IRA funds to support student volunteers during the statewide event.
- **Event Website:** Schmidt is working with Jay Reese in IITS to create a placeholder landing page. Woltz volunteered to work with IITS to later expand the content and report back to the committee.
- Campus design/logo contest for student-made logo was tabled until the next CUGR meeting.

Discussion item

Ideation — Student–Faculty Research Match forum

- **Problem identified:** students unsure how to find cross-disciplinary research opportunities; faculty sometimes welcome cross-dept students but lack a simple mechanism to discover interested students.
- **Proposed solution:** Student interest form provided by CUGR where students can state research interests, motivation, availability, and preferred disciplines. Faculty could review pre-screened students and invite them to labs/mentorship. An annual email push at start/end of semester to faculty was suggested. The form would be low-maintenance and optional for faculty to use. Could be combined with an in-person “meet faculty” event in fall.
- Committee would like to revisit this idea for further discussion and possible pilot.

CUGR Feedback

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The committee was reminded that an anonymous [feedback form](#) is available to share comments and suggestions.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned by acclamation at 12:59 pm

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