

**Donovan Alix Bersamina**  
Director of Natural Sciences & Mathematics

**To:** ASI Board of Directors

**From:** Donovan A. Bersamina  
Director of Natural Sciences & Mathematics

**Subject:** April 2021 Board Report

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### **General Information**

**Office Hours:**

Monday 10:00 am – 12:00 pm or by appointment  
Friday 09:00 am – 11:00am, or by appointment  
Zoom link: <https://csus.zoom.us/j/89349584368>

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### **A Note to the Hive**

Hello Hornets,

I hope your spring break provided you with some level of relaxation. The day to day monotony of school is even more prevalent when your bed and classroom are less than 6ft apart. I know that many of us feel as if we were dragging ourselves to the finish line and while I would like to say “Stand up and stride it out hornets!” I can only find the strength to repeat the cliché mantra of COVID: Were all in this together!

April brings us into Autism Awareness month and as Director I’d like to highlight some of the incredible work being done by the students and staff of the College of NSM. Senior student Aliyah Penn has brought to my attention the research and lab work that she and many other students are conducting in labs like Dr. Kimberly Mulligan’s. They work with the common fruit fly, *Drosophila melanogaster* in order to study the interactions between environmental and genetic factors during neural development. By doing so they can characterize and identify environmental factors that may confer risk or increase the severity of neurodevelopmental disorders like Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Our college is full of students like Aliyah and staff like Dr. Mulligan; using their education and skill set to represent our university and pave the way for future scientific endeavors.

Notably, we were also full of students with unique skill sets just dying to get into the labs. To all those who have had their research paused because of COVID; I would hope the news of returning to campus next semester has given you something to look forward to. All those looking for lab work should consider reaching out to a favorite professor in preparation of our in person return.

Wishing you all fair mental health,  
Donovan A. Bersamina

### **Internal Committee Updates**

#### *Wellness, Safety and Sexual Assault Committee*

- Attended meetings regularly

#### *Student Academic Senate*

- Appointed to Committee on 3/17/21
- Proposed Open-Notes
- Attended meetings regularly

### **University Committee Updates**

#### *Alcohol Advisory Committee*

- Attended meetings regularly
- Looking to replicate the UCD amnesty protocol

#### *NSM Academic Council*

- Attended meetings regularly
- Current focus is on the development of college specific Subcommittees

#### *UEI Bookstore Advisory Council*

- Appointed to Committee on 2/12/21
- Attended meetings regularly

### **Strategic Priority Updates**

#### **2.2.1 Support Wellness, Safety and Sexual Assault Committee**

- sent email to BOD regarding Anti-racism task forces
- attended meetings as scheduled

#### **3.1.3 Encourage activism expression by creating a space where students can be creative.**

Promoted related material

#### **3.2.1 Further outreach to Sacramento community.**

Meeting with Strategic Priority Group

#### **3.4.1 Increase awareness of racial injustices, discrimination, and white fragility**

Requested to join

#### **4.2.2 Publicize awareness of safe zone and ally trainings**

Meeting with Strategic Priority Group

### **Current Project Updates**

#### *NSM Joint Council*

- Stopping by club zoom meetings to introduce and recruit for NSMJC
  - Met with MAPH pres
  - Met with 2 clubs to give presentation on NSMJC

- Also allows for me to visit and get face to face time with active students
- Created NSMJC interest form
  - No new student interests' forms received
- Can we require a club position specifically designed for the ASI joint councils?
  - Doing so would create a central structure of student engagement with the already active student population
- New focus: many students I've met with are unaware of the joint counsel. Because of the short amount of time left in the semester, I have decided to focus my efforts on establishing familiarity so the next director may be able to integrate smoothly

***Biomedical Sciences Alternate Upper Division Elective***

- No new updates

***Adoption of Medical Amnesty Policy***

- Referencing UCD established policies for legislative wording
- Looking to drafting legislation in support

***Support for Open- Notes encouragement***

- Looking into the feasibility of ASI Board taking a position to encourage the adoption an open notes exam format
- Discussed with NSM Dean: Dr. Hammersley
  - Positive support for idea
- Discussed matters with the Student academic Council
  - Conducted a forum to discuss the semantics of the idea
  - Possible areas of conflict:
    - "anti-cheating" standards may have to be rewritten
    - encroaching on academic freedoms of professors
- Rebrand from "policy" to "encouragement"
- Looking to drafting legislation in support

***Academic Survey***

- "what worked and what didn't"
- Looking to survey the student's body on what academic tools Professors have implemented that showed moderate levels of success
- Project started with good intention but few road blocks
  - Should this be done by individual college
  - Teaching tools between colleges are varying
  - What kind of usable information do the professors want to see
  - Would a survey be the best tool?

**Office Hours**

- Reaching out to NSM Clubs Instagram

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- Contacting NSM club leaders
- Continued work on Current Projects listed above
- Met With students
- Updated board reports

## **Meetings, Events, & Presentations**

### **Meetings**

#### **March**

- 1 NSM Dean Lisa Hammersley Meeting
- 2 Pre-Dental Association
- 3 ASI Board Meeting
- 3 Strategic Priority 3.4.1 Meeting
- 5 BOD OH Check In With Sandra
- 9 NSM Academic Council
- 10 ASI Working Board Meeting
- 17 ASI Board Meeting
- 19 SEE ambassador
- 19 MAPH press
- 30 NSM Academic Council

#### **April**

- 5 NSM Dean Lisa Hammersley Meeting
- 7 Student academic Senate
- 12 UEI Bookstore Advisory Council
- 12 Meeting with Student
- 13 NSM Academic Council

### **Extra Thoughts and opinions:**

“Are you always going to keep a calculator on you?”- Ms. V

With COVID forcibly enrolling us all into ZOOM University many teachers have developed new standards for evaluating their students. In an effort to discourage cheating many have decided to allow for open note exams. I believe we at CSUS should continue such a policy as we return to in person classes.

#### **Open Note Exams:**

- Students report significantly less stress
- prioritizes applied knowledge that reflects our future career endeavors
- does not take from the quality of education
- discourages students from “test banking” question

#### **Closed Note Exams:**

- Students report higher stress
- Priorities memorization of Factual knowledge
- encourages “knowledge dumping”