



CSSA
CAL STATE STUDENT
— ASSOCIATION —

Strategic Plan
Educate. Empower. Influence.



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Greetings,

Thank you for taking interest in the Cal State Student Association (CSSA)—the nonpartisan, nonprofit association that serves as the single recognized voice of the over 480,000 California State University (CSU) students. It is my pleasure to present CSSA's *Strategic Plan 2018: Educate. Empower. Influence*. This document represents years of hard work and the collective efforts of student leaders and professional staff to produce a vision for the organization that will guide the strategic activities of the organization for years to come in serving California State University (CSU) students.

The political landscape of higher education is constantly evolving, often producing significant changes in policy that directly impact the CSU student experience. Additionally, the composition of the CSSA Board of Directors is also constantly evolving with the ebbs and flows of student leadership at the campus level. As a result, a strategic plan that provides strong, broad direction for the future with the flexibility for the CSSA Board of Directors to adapt to the unpredictable changes in CSU system policy and public higher education policy from year-to-year is critical to CSSA being able to fulfill its mission to improve the lives of CSU students.

The ultimate purpose of *Strategic Plan 2018* is to pursue the mission of improving the lives of CSU students by advocating for student needs and engaging students in systemwide, state, and federal higher education policy making, while being guided by values that compel us to lead compassionately, responsibly, and transparently. In the years to come, the organization aspires to **Educate** by serving as the leading resource on issues affecting CSU students, to **Empower** by elevating the student voice and providing opportunities for students to take an active role in higher education advocacy, and to **Influence** by proactively leading policy change in higher education. We believe that by developing and executing strategies that support these aspirations, we will improve the lives of CSU students and do it with empathy and care for the communities we serve and to which we belong.

In service,



C. Rob Shorette II, Ph.D.

MISSION & VALUES



As the officially recognized voice of the over 480,000 California State University (CSU) students at the 23 CSU campuses across the state, **the mission of the Cal State Student Association (CSSA) is to improve the lives of CSU students by advocating for student needs and engaging students in systemwide, state, and federal higher education policy making.**

In order to achieve its mission, CSSA believes that the following values must serve as the foundation for all decision-making and strategic activities:

Educational Equity. CSSA will pursue its mission guided by the belief that the CSU and systems that influence outcomes for CSU students must be justly organized to remove barriers to success for underserved and marginalized communities.

Servant Leadership. CSSA will pursue its mission guided by the belief that our purpose in our leadership roles is to serve the communities to which we belong with empathy and care.

Stewardship. CSSA will pursue its mission through the responsible, transparent, and prudent management of human and financial resources entrusted to us by CSU students through the Student Involvement & Representation Fee (SIRF).

THE CAL STATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION

In 1958, a group of Associated Student Body presidents founded the “Student Presidents Association,” later named the Cal State Student Association. The association was formally recognized by the CSU Board of Trustees in 1963, three years after the formation of the CSU system and two months after the statewide Academic Senate held its very first meeting. While the organization was an integral part of the CSU system from its early inception, CSSA continued to advocate for more representation systemwide and increased involvement in state politics over the next several decades. These efforts resulted in major wins for students, including a lobbyist for the organization’s advocacy, two student trustees on the CSU Board of Trustees, student representation on CSU systemwide committees, and an official report of the CSSA president at the CSU Board of Trustees meetings. These accomplishments have helped establish student representation and advocacy at the highest levels of the CSU system and state government.

As the organization did during its creation, CSSA continues to believe in and rely on the democratic processes of the student governments at each of the 23 CSU campuses to create the CSSA board of directors. The student body on each campus democratically elects their student government leaders, and those leaders are authorized to serve as CSSA board members to officially represent their campus—ensuring that the voice of students from all 23 campuses are present in CSSA board decisions.

CSSA has continued to represent students through the channels previously set up by our predecessors and has been able to expand upon those efforts and develop new opportunities for student involvement and representation over the past several years. CSSA transitioned its financial model from a dues-paying system, where individual Associated Students organizations paid dues based on the number of students on their campus, to the implementation of the Student Involvement and Representation Fee (SIRF)—an optional \$2 fee assessed to each CSU student twice a year. This transition in funding created financial stability and has allowed for an increase in student programming, staff support, and student representation and advocacy across the state and nation.

With a new decade approaching, CSSA recognizes the tremendous amount of effort student leaders and professional staff will need to take in order to build upon the solid foundation our predecessors established. It is through the implementation of this strategic plan that CSSA will strive to ensure that our successors inherit an organization that continues to possess the capacity to create positive change in the lives of CSU students.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Systemwide & Legislative Affairs

Internal CSU system policies, and state and federal public policies often determine how inclusive, accessible, and affordable an education is for CSU students. As a result, CSSA proactively pursues student-centered policy solutions, and promotes student participation in important higher education policy- and decision-making processes.

Internal Affairs



Board of Directors. Twenty-three student leaders, democratically elected by each campus' student body, comprise the CSSA Board of Directors--which is the body responsible for establishing the organization's policy priorities, ensuring prudent use of all assets, and aligning the activities of the organization with the mission.



Professional Staff. A team of full-time staff manage the day-to-day operations of the organization. In tandem with the elected student officers, professional staff serve as content experts, execute the collective vision of the board, and ensure that the use of CSSA's human and financial resources promote efficiency and effectiveness.

ASPIRATIONS

*The Cal State Student Association will implement the 2018 strategic plan and pursue its mission to improve the lives of California State University students by **educating, empowering, and influencing.***

EDUCATE



The Cal State Student Association will serve as the leading resource on issues affecting California State University students.

The Cal State Student Association will pursue its mission and achieve its aspiration to EDUCATE by pursuing the following *strategic goals*:

1. Equip system, state, and national stakeholders with information to make sound, student-centered policy decisions.
2. Equip students with the tools to advocate for themselves using evidence-driven approaches.
3. Promote opportunities for CSSA student leaders and professional staff to serve as experts on CSU student issues.

EMPOWER



The Cal State Student Association will elevate and strengthen the student voice in higher education policy discussions, and provide opportunities for students to take an active role in higher education advocacy.

The Cal State Student Association will pursue its mission and achieve its aspiration to EMPOWER by pursuing the following *strategic goals*:

1. Identify and secure opportunities for students to contribute to influential higher education policy bodies.
2. Strategically partner with stakeholders in order to broaden the organization's reach and amplify the student voice.
3. Promote inclusion by highlighting the important role of diversity and the unique experiences of students from different backgrounds.
4. Ensure that CSSA student leaders possess the support, knowledge, skills, and confidence to effectively execute the business of the board, and are equipped with the tools to engage students on their local campuses in CSSA's efforts.

INFLUENCE



The Cal State Student Association will proactively lead change in higher education policy to ensure that systems that influence outcomes for CSU students are supporting the holistic needs of students.

The Cal State Student Association will pursue its mission and achieve its aspiration to INFLUENCE by pursuing the following *strategic goals*:

1. Leverage student perspectives to bring critical issues facing students to the forefront of policy making.
2. Innovate student-centered solutions to systemic issues and strategize the best approach integrate those solutions into policy change.
3. Amplify the voices of other advocates and build coalitions across stakeholder groups to advance CSSA policy priorities.



Strategic Plan 2018

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