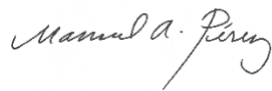


May 12, 2026

Greetings, CSM Community,

The following document is a consolidation of 12 Questions / Themes compiled by Finance Committee from over 100 budget related questions, in preparation for CSM April 16 Flex Day Budget Workshop, submitted by Academic Senate, Classified Senate, E-mail to VPAS, and discussions at Finance Committee. Responses are organized from the most to least inquiries. Some questions have been categorized for District response (at the bottom of the document). List of original 100+ questions can be found at the following [link](#).

In community.



Dr. Manuel Alejandro Pérez

President, College of San Mateo



1. Origins and Oversight

A. How did CSM arrive at its current budget deficit, and why is it the only college in the District facing this scale of financial challenge?

Abbreviated Response:

CSM's current budget deficit developed over several years as expenses continued to rise despite an eight-year decline in enrollment and decreasing instructional productivity. Major contributors include staffing increases, cost of living adjustments (COLA) and step increases, the shifting of priority programs from one-time funds into the college general fund (Fund 1), the expiration of significant one-time HEERF funding during the pandemic, and reliance on carry-over funding from Fund 1 to support college-wide deficits at fiscal close. CSM is uniquely impacted within the District because it maintained higher instructional costs and overall staffing, a lower average number of students per class or lower productivity (which increases cost per student served), and relied more heavily on redirected funds from long-term vacant position savings to support ongoing operations.

Detailed Response:

Multiple factors contributed to CSM's budget deficit. A few of the high-level contributors were significant growth in staffing over time, increase in instructional expenses associated with class size and adjunct faculty, an over-reliance on categorical and special program funding for non-instructional expenses such as college staff and priority projects, and the depletion of one-time funds without a plan for institutionalization.

Staffing and carry-over funding. From 2021 through 2026, various factors accelerated expense growth without a corresponding increase in ongoing funding. For example, the number of approved positions by CSM administration during the annual resource request process varied significantly year-over-year. Positions were funded by a combination of strategies including the College General Fund (Fund 1) as well as categorical, grant, and special one-time funding (Fund 3) across all position types (administration, faculty, staff). The annual announcements from the Office of the President indicated the following for each of the fiscal years: FY2021-22, 13 positions (12.5 FTEs); FY2022-23, 28 positions (27.48 FTEs); FY2023-24, 12 positions (12 FTEs); FY2024-25, 15 positions (15 FTEs); FY2025-26, 8 positions (6.96 FTEs); FY2026-27, 2 positions (2 FTEs). The largest increase in overall positions funded at the college in the last 5 years occurred between 2021-22 with 13 positions and 2022-23 with 28 approved positions (see resource table). It is important to note that positions funded with categorical, grant,



or one-time funds can still potentially impact the overall budget of the college depending on a variety of factors (e.g., grant-funded CSEA positions). The addition of personnel from all funds at the college is compounded by cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) for every personnel line alongside rising compensation costs from COLA and step increases that consistently outpaced revenue growth.

Another important factor in understanding CSM's current budget deficit is the ratio of filled and vacant positions in Fund 1. The general spread of Fund 1 FTEs at the college fluctuated slightly from year to year. However, the largest shift in this trend occurred between 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 when CSM grew by 15 FTEs, from 277.38 FTEs to 292.70 FTEs. While the number of Fund 1 FTEs increased, so did the number of vacant or unfilled positions. During this time, the number of vacant positions increased from 27.76 vacant positions (21-22) to 45.47 vacant positions (22-23) and maintained 45.60 vacant positions in the subsequent year (23-24). In terms of funding, this increase in vacant positions at the college account for a jump from approximately \$2.5m in Fund 1 in 2021-22 to \$4m in 2022-23 and another \$4.5m in 2023-24. The annual announcements from College presidents varied in detail and format, so it is unclear how many of the approved positions were new positions and how many were approved as replacement of existing vacant positions without further audit and analysis.

Over several years, CSM utilized savings from these long-term vacant positions to support other expenses related to ongoing personnel, special projects, and priorities. In Fall 2024, the Chancellor's Cabinet took the corrective measure to defund the backlog of vacant positions that had no recruitment efforts for more than 24 months, effective July 1, 2025. To ease the burden of this change, the District augmented the budget with ongoing funds at each site so that those funds could be transparently used for the purpose intended—the prioritized needs at each of the campuses. Before defunding the aged-out positions, a few requests were granted to keep some crucial positions, and those have now been filled or are in active recruitment.

For CSM, fourteen positions were defunded. CSM retained the budget allocations for new positions with recruitment activity within the prior two years, including two exceptional cases that were in active hiring for longer than 2 years. CSM's allocation was ultimately reduced by \$1.9 million. Consequently, carry-over funding from unfilled positions were no longer available to sustain existing college commitments. This District budget adjustment exposed underlying structural imbalances in the college's use of carry-over funding from Board-approved personnel positions, which had not been broadly communicated to the campus prior to Fall 2024.

Instructional and Non-Instructional Expenses. For approximately eight to ten years, enrollment has gradually decreased over time. During the same time, new faculty and classified



positions were approved, overload increased, and adjunct faculty expenses increased at a higher rate than revenue. In this same time period, CSM also maintained a lower average number of students per class and currently remains the lowest in the District, resulting in the highest cost of instruction per student. CSM did experience a bit of COVID recovery enrollment growth, but the balance of additional course sections generally outpaced the potential recovery in enrollment during this time. Currently, enrollment has since flattened and is forecasting decline. These structural conditions made CSM particularly vulnerable as revenues failed to keep pace with ongoing expenditures.

Non-instructional expenses related to state-funded initiatives also played a role in CSM's current budget. This was true with the Student Equity & Achievement Program (SEAP) spending patterns related to counseling overload expenditures. For context, it is important to acknowledge the broader transition that occurred when the former Student Equity, Basic Skills Initiative (BSI), and Student Success and Support Program (SSSP) funding streams were consolidated into the SEAP beginning in 2018–2019. Although the funding streams were formally consolidated at the state level during the 2018–2019 academic year, the college had not yet completed a comprehensive local process to reassess and realign SEAP allocations and spending priorities with the updated framework. That work began during the 2023–2024 academic year and was completed in Fall 2025 through collaborative conversations and planning with SEAP campus partners, including the Counseling Department.

During the years between the state consolidation and the completion of this local prioritization process, many expenditures continued to follow historical allocation patterns and practices connected to the former Equity, BSI, and especially SSSP structures. This included select counseling-related allocations and overload expenditures that had historically been associated with SSSP-supported student services work.

Because the college was still in the process of developing a more updated and integrated SEAP allocation framework in coordination with Counseling SEAP planning and broader Fund 1 discussions, some expenditures continued under legacy practices that did not always align with the newer consolidated SEAP structure or current budget realities. Over time, this contributed to budget pressures in certain areas where historical spending practices had continued under prior allocation assumptions, including some counseling overload expenditures.

Over the past two academic years, Counseling and other SEAP partners have played an important role in helping reassess historical spending patterns, clarify institutional priorities, and build a more intentional and sustainable SEAP prioritization process that better aligns with the updated SEAP framework and the college's current equity goals.



Institutionalization of Board Priority Programs. Another contributor to the college deficit was the shift of several District and college-supported priority programs – such as Promise Scholars Program, Dual Enrollment, and ZTC/OER – into Fund 1. These specific programs were initially funded by the District in 2020-2021 as strategic Board priorities. Colleges were directed to institutionalize all program positions and operating costs into Fund 1 over a 3-year period. Unfortunately, this directive was not executed during previous CSM administrations. The list of college-approved personnel from these District priorities were not included in annual announcements of college-approved personnel and were not institutionalized. Between fiscal years 2023 and 2026, approximately \$3.4 million in strategic priority program expenses moved into Fund 1 to align with Board priorities which further exacerbated CSM’s budget deficit. While these programs continued to serve students, the funding realignment impacted Fund 1.

Special One-time Funding. Finally, the sunseting of the COVID-19 pandemic-era Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) removed a critical temporary revenue source. From 2019 - 2020 through 2024 - 2025, CSM received an additional \$9.4 million in Fund 3 revenue, which directly addressed critical resources for the campus such as important training for quality online teaching and learning and technology resources such as laptops and wifi hotspots. One highly successful resource funded by HEERF was transportation for students. However, HEERF was a limited resource and students had benefitted greatly from the new transportation resources. CSM administration received IPC support to activate a working group to understand ridership data and propose a new strategy that would address dwindling resources for transportation. In FY2024-25, CSM spent \$37,252.58 (Fund 1) on shuttle services, \$221,870.68 (HEERF funds) on shuttle services, and \$601,846.68 (HEERF funds) on LYFT program for a total of \$860,969.94 on student transportation services. The use of Fund 1 for transportation resources for students is not an allowable expense, and so the use of Lyft resources was terminated. CSM shuttle routes were adjusted to support the elimination of this resource for Fall 2025 and Spring 2026. With the expiration of these one-time funds, combined with structural cost issues, CSM faced a unique one-time budget challenge that uncovered the need for sustainable resources to address student access at a scale not currently experienced by the other colleges in the District.

Leadership Transitions. Oversight challenges were a high-level contributor to CSM’s current budget. Between 2020 and 2025, CSM experienced vacancies or interim leadership in the offices of the President, all three offices of the vice president (Administrative Services, Instruction, Student Services), College Business Officer, Director of Community Relations and Marketing, and Dean of Planning, Research, Innovation and Effectiveness (PRIE). These transitions affected decisions related to hiring new and replacement positions, consistent data-informed allocation of FTE faculty and schedule optimization, and sustained communication about budget decisions.



The combination of leadership turnover and reliance on temporary and carry-over funding masked underlying structural issues, many of which became fully visible only after staffing stabilized and one-time resources ended.

Bridge Funding. The SMCCCD Board of Trustees is currently considering a bond extension for capital improvement projects across the District. This potential bond is intended to lift overall budget pressures caused by the need to set aside funds for mandatory scheduled maintenance and emergency capital improvements. The bond extension, if moved forward and approved by voters, could result in increased allocations to the colleges and District Office. CSM has contributed just under \$10M to the Districtwide share. The Board of Trustees recently approved CSM's request to access \$1M from this set aside funding for the beach volleyball courts that are currently under construction.

Resources:

[History of Approved Personnel, 2021 - 2027](#)

[SMCCCD Approved Budget, 2025 - 2026](#)

[CSM Finance Committee – Archived Forum and Budget Presentations](#)

B. What oversight mechanisms, both at the District and campus level, are now in place to prevent similar situations in the future?

Abbreviated Response:

New oversight mechanisms include stabilized leadership, regular and transparent budget reviews, reinstated governance through the Finance Committee, and strengthened business controls that directly affect Fund 1 expenditures. In addition, instructional productivity is being actively managed through the adoption of the SMCCCD course cancellation guidelines that went into effect in Fall 2025 and reductions to instructional FTEF allocations to ensure fiscal prudence. Finally, the District Office has hired an internal auditor to ensure compliance and sound processes and workflows to create clear accountability and early intervention to prevent similar financial issues.



Detailed Response:

Both District and campus-level oversight have been strengthened through significant leadership stabilization. Over the past five years, key positions in the Business Office—including the Chief Business Officer (CBO) and Business Operations Analyst—as well as multiple Executive Cabinet roles – including the President, Vice President of Administrative Services (VPAS), Vice President of Instruction (VPI), Vice President of Student Services (VPSS), Dean of PRIE, and Director of Community Relations & Marketing - were vacant or filled by interim staff. All Business Office positions are now filled, and all Executive Cabinet positions are scheduled to have permanent incumbents by July 2026, restoring professional capacity, continuity, and decision-making accountability.

At the campus level, financial monitoring and transparency have increased substantially. Beginning in FY2024-25, the Vice President of Administrative Services (VPA) and College Business Officer (CBO) initiated regular budget meetings with each division. These meetings provide clear budget reporting, explicit targets, and shared strategies for expense reduction, allowing divisions to understand their financial position and respond proactively rather than reactively.

Governance and shared oversight have also been reinforced through the reinstatement of regular Finance Committee meetings in FY2024-25. Faculty, classified staff, managers, and students all have representatives appointed to the Finance Committee, which in turn reports through the Institutional Planning Council (IPC). This reestablished forum provides ongoing review of financial conditions, fosters campus-wide awareness, and creates an additional layer of accountability for budget decisions before financial issues escalate.

Operational controls within the Business Office have been tightened to prevent overspending and improve compliance. Processes were re-established for ProCard usage, conference travel pre-approvals, event planning, and the priority use of appropriate professional development funding sources. Clear limits were also placed on categorical funding such as the Student Equity & Achievement Program (SEAP) to avoid over-expenditures, with these controls having a direct and positive impact on Fund 1 expenditures.

Instructional productivity is now being actively managed as a key fiscal oversight strategy. The college is committed to improving our productivity, moving toward the state benchmark of 525 load. This has resulted in a reduction of instructional FTEFs over time, decreasing from 464 FTEF in FY2024-25 to 388 FTEF by FY2026-27. This planned adjustment aligns staffing levels



more closely with enrollment, improves productivity, and addresses one of the structural drivers that contributed to CSM's earlier financial challenges.

As to the District, the Chancellor is fully apprised of CSM's excess spending and is sympathetic to the situation. The Chancellor will be bringing to the Board of Trustees a request to approve coverage of CSM's budget deficit for a reasonable time until this issue is resolved. However, the Chancellor has given a clear directive to CSM's president to work to close the gap and align its site allocation and categorical/grants awards with its expenses, which will take some time. The Chancellor also has asked the CSM President to align with Skyline's load efficiencies, which, when carried out, will allow CSM to build and keep carryover as is the case with Skyline. In addition, the Board's consideration of a bond extension for capital improvement is intended to lift overall budget pressures caused by the necessity to set aside funds for mandatory scheduled maintenance and emergency capital improvements. The bond extension, if moved forward, could result in increased allocations to the sites. Finally, the District Office has strengthened its financial oversight by hiring an internal auditor whose role is to independently review fiscal practices, ensure compliance with policies and regulations, and assess whether financial controls are operating as intended. This position is designed to examine processes and workflows across the District and colleges, identify risks or weaknesses early, and recommend corrective actions before issues escalate. By establishing clear lines of accountability and providing regular, objective assessments of financial operations, the internal auditor supports more transparent decision-making and creates an early-warning system that helps prevent the recurrence of similar financial challenges in the future.

Resources:

[Chancellor's Budget Memo \(Fall 2025\)](#)

[CSM Finance Committee – Archived Forum and Budget Presentations](#)

2. Transparency and Communication

Faculty and staff have expressed uncertainty about how the budget situation developed, especially given recent district transitions and leadership changes. How is the college improving transparency, sharing detailed spending data, and keeping faculty informed about decisions that affect students and programs?



Abbreviated Response:

The college is improving transparency by rebuilding core budget oversight, sharing detailed spending data widely, and establishing consistent, clearly defined channels for decision-making and communication. Faculty and staff now receive regular budget updates through forums, committees, division meetings, and recurring leadership communications. These efforts are designed to provide early notice, clear explanations, and ongoing opportunities for feedback as decisions affecting students and programs are developed.

Detailed Response:

The college has taken deliberate steps to rebuild trust and transparency by restoring stable budget oversight structures at both the operational and governance levels. This includes reinstating the Finance Committee and filling four critical fiscal support roles in the Business Office: VPAS, CBO, VPA Executive Assistant, and Business Office Administrative Assistant. Together, these changes strengthen internal controls, ensure continuity in financial monitoring, and reestablish clear responsibility for budget development and communication.

To address uncertainty about how resources are allocated and spent, the college has expanded how budget information is shared with faculty, staff, and students. In Fall 2024 with support from IPC, administration was asked to share more information about the College budget through college-wide forums during which administration shared a review and forecast of college budgets and finance through charts, graphs, and detailed spending data. In light of feedback received during the Fall 2025 forums, the administration will now also share more of this information through division meetings at least once per semester. In Spring and Summer 2026, the College President has also proposed convening one ad-hoc sub-committee of the Finance Committee for faculty and a separate ad-hoc sub-committee for classified staff. The goal of these ad-hoc committees will be to review current efforts to balance the budget and collect ideas on new or different ideas to address future interventions and strategies. These mechanisms will allow faculty and staff to see how financial decisions connect directly to planning in instruction, student services, and student-facing programs, rather than learning about impacts after decisions are finalized.

Clarity and accountability have also been improved by defining and standardizing how feedback and decisions flow through the institution. Input moves from constituency groups to Institutional Planning Council (IPC), then to Cabinet and the President, while instructional schedule decisions follow a parallel path from Deans to the VPI, Cabinet, and President. Communication is



expected to return to faculty and staff through Deans, who are responsible for gathering feedback, sharing updates, and contextualizing decisions within their divisions.

The college's goal is to ensure communication happens earlier and more consistently as budget impacts become known. This is supported by an extensive and predictable cadence of engagement, including open budget forums in February 2025, September 2025, and December 2025; Flex Day presentations in August 2025; Cabinet roundtables (8) hosted at each Flex Day across AY2024–25 and AY2025–26; twice-monthly IPC finance updates; and 18 Finance Committee meetings across two academic years. These structured spaces allow questions to be raised, data to be reviewed, and concerns to be acknowledged in real time.

In addition, faculty and staff engagement is reinforced through at least two division level budget meetings per semester with deans, directors, and division assistants and weekly executive leadership office hours. Combined with recurring VPAS communications, these practices create multiple, overlapping opportunities for information sharing and dialogue. Collectively, these measures are intended to keep faculty and staff informed, reduce uncertainty, and ensure that decisions affecting students and programs are both transparent and understood.

Resources:

[CSM Finance Committee – Archived Forum and Budget Presentations](#)

5. CSM Coastside and Construction Impacts

A. What are the annual operating costs of CSM Coastside, including staffing, facilities, and program delivery, and how does this investment fit into the college's overall financial plan?

Abbreviated Response:

CSM Coastside's annual operating costs are relatively modest, totaling approximately \$75,000 in FY2024–25 and \$112,000 in FY2025–26, primarily for facility rental fees and basic operational expenses. Staffing and instructional costs are absorbed within existing main-campus budgets, with no additional FTEF or administrative allocations. This approach integrates Coastside into the college's broader financial plan without creating new structural costs.



Detailed Response:

CSM Coastside operates with a relatively small annual operating budget focused primarily on facilities and basic operational needs. In FY2024–25, operating costs were approximately \$75,000, increasing to about \$112,000 in FY2025–26. These expenses cover items such as facility rent, utilities, janitorial services, events, copier usage, and office supplies, rather than staffing or instructional costs.

Administrative staffing costs for Coastside are not separate from the college’s core budget. Services such as Admissions and Records, Financial Aid, and other administrative and student support functions are funded through their home departments on the main campus. Coverage at the Coastside location is managed through rotating staff assignments, allowing continued service delivery without incurring additional expenses.

Instructional costs are handled similarly. Faculty teaching at CSM Coastside are supported through their home academic divisions, and no additional FTEF allocations were created specifically for Coastside courses. This ensures instructional offerings are maintained while avoiding permanent cost increases tied to a single site.

Looking ahead, leadership oversight for CSM Coastside will transition to the new Dean of Strategic Partnerships & Workforce Development (SPWD), whose position is funded through Strong Workforce resources. In addition, strategic enrollment management planning for Coastside will be supported through a 2026-27 California Community College Chancellor’s Office award for Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM). This year-long planning process will engage faculty, staff, and management in developing a data-informed and community-engaged enrollment strategy to inform future course offerings, partnerships, and support models for sustainability and to meet the unique needs of our disproportionately impacted community along the Coastside.

Resources:

[CSM Coastside Landing Page](#)

6B. What steps has campus leadership taken to advocate for additional resources to support students, faculty, and programs?



Abbreviated Response:

Campus leadership has actively advocated to preserve funding for critical positions, to maintain stability through a longer budget realignment timeline, and to protect instructional quality and student completion. These efforts include retaining funding for some inactive position lines, requesting special one-time funding for CSM Coastside, and requesting a 5 – 7 year timeline for budget stabilization to reduce negative impacts student access, persistence and completion. Leadership has also tied advocacy to maintaining sufficient course offerings to support timely completion, especially for summer 2026.

Detailed Response:

Campus leadership has taken several concrete steps to advocate for additional resources and flexibility to protect educational quality and student success. In Fall 2024, CSM leadership successfully advocated to maintain its Fund 1 budget allocation for a subset of position lines that had been unfilled and inactive between 2022 and 2024. As a result, funding from 14 positions was returned to the District, while CSM retained funding for 2 position lines deemed critical for successful hiring and campus needs.

College leadership has also advocated for a reevaluation of the original budget realignment timeline. Based on feedback shared with the Vice Presidents of Instruction and Student Services, as well as input from campus constituencies, the President has formally proposed an amendment to the plan from a three-year timeline to a five to seven-year timeline in order to continue making progress toward fiscal alignment while minimizing deep and immediate impacts on instructional quality, services, and student program completion. This proposal would allow the college more time to meaningfully engage with faculty, staff, and administration in building out a long-term budget strategic plan. Additionally, this request includes an explicit provision that would immediately reduce a percentage of current budget reductions that explicitly impact the course schedule for the 2026 summer term. Additional elements of this advocacy include a request for 3-year pilot funding for CSM Coastside operational budget and a request to access year-to-year savings from vacant personnel position lines to support end-of-year budget balance.

Generally, CSM leadership has articulated to the Chancellor that a longer timeline will allow the college to balance its budget without continued District support, reducing the risk of abrupt cuts that could disrupt students' educational pathways. This approach emphasizes sustainability rather than short-term fixes, recognizing that enrollment, staffing, and program structures take time to



adjust responsibly. This request would require review and approval by the SMCCCD Board of Trustees during one of their regularly-scheduled meetings, as early as June 2026.

If approved, the extended timeline would also allow CSM to advocate for increasing the number of course sections to better align with student demand. This would help ensure coherent course sequences and support completion of degrees and certificate programs within a two-year timeframe. Taken together, these actions demonstrate a coordinated effort by campus leadership to advocate for resources and flexibility in ways that center students while addressing long-term fiscal realities.

7. Decision-making and Participation

A. How are decisions about cuts to classes, programs, and positions being made?

Abbreviated Response:

Decisions about cuts to classes, programs, and positions are primarily driven by enrollment trends, district policy, and budget constraints. The implementation of a stricter course cancellation policy has reduced low-enrolled classes, while divisional FTEF allocations limit how many courses can be offered. Although course offerings are adjusted based on demand and available resources, academic programs are generally preserved, with formal review processes in place before any discontinuation. Staffing decisions are handled administratively and remain separate from the academic planning process.

Detailed Response:

Decisions regarding cuts to classes, programs, and positions are being made through a combination of policy changes, enrollment-based analysis, and resource constraints. A central factor shaping these decisions is the implementation of the SMCCCD District course cancellation policy in Fall 2025, which increased minimum enrollment thresholds and reduced the number of low-enrolled courses that had previously been sustained during the pandemic. This policy shift reflects a broader institutional effort to align course offerings more closely with actual student demand and to reduce inefficiencies in course scheduling.

In addition to enrollment considerations, the college is operating within division-level Full-Time Equivalent Faculty (FTEF) allocations. These allocations are intended to support long-term



stability across the institution, and they rely heavily on the expertise of faculty and academic leaders to determine how best to use instructional capacity. Within this structure, schedule creation and maintenance is the responsibility of Division Deans. Each dean consults with their division and/or departments about the schedule, balancing student demand, program pathways, pedagogical priorities, and the resources available within their division.

While course-level decisions are more directly shaped by enrollment trends and FTEF limits, program-level decisions are approached more cautiously. Academic programs have generally been maintained, with the college making efforts to continue offering even low-enrolled courses when they are essential for program completion. Any consideration of program discontinuation involves a formal review process led by the Academic Senate, ensuring that such decisions are not made solely on financial grounds.

Decisions related to positions and staffing are handled separately through administrative and Human Resources processes. These decisions are confidential and are not part of the same participatory structures that guide academic planning. Overall, the process reflects a balance between district policy mandates, institutional financial constraints, and efforts to preserve core academic functions.

Resources:

[SMCCCD Board Policy 6.04 Minimum Class Size Guidelines](#)

B. What criteria are being used, and how are faculty being meaningfully involved in these decisions to ensure instruction is prioritized?

Abbreviated Response:

Decisions about course offerings are guided by criteria that prioritize student completion, access, and alignment with institutional initiatives. Schedules are designed to ensure programs can be completed within two years in most cases, offer multiple modalities, and avoid conflicts in required courses. Faculty are involved through collaboration with deans in schedule development and through the Academic Senate's role in program viability review. This structure allows faculty input to shape instructional decisions while maintaining a focus on sustaining programs and supporting student success.



Detailed Response:

The criteria used to guide decisions about course offerings and program sustainability are grounded in a combination of student success priorities, institutional goals, and operational considerations. A primary guiding principle is ensuring that all degree and certificate programs can be completed within a two-year cycle, which shapes how courses are scheduled and prioritized. This focus on program completion is complemented by efforts to provide multiple access pathways, including both in-person and online modalities, to meet the diverse needs of students.

Course scheduling is also designed to support key institutional initiatives such as Learning Communities, the Promise Program, Dual Enrollment, and Coastside programming. Additional criteria include minimizing scheduling conflicts for required courses and offering a range of class times to improve accessibility. Enrollment trends, course sequencing requirements, and overall program needs further inform which courses are prioritized in the schedule.

Faculty are meaningfully involved in this process through collaboration with deans during schedule development. While deans hold responsibility for constructing the final schedule, faculty input helps shape decisions about course offerings, timing, and modality. This collaborative approach allows instructional expertise to inform administrative decision-making, even within the constraints imposed by budget limitations and FTEF allocations.

At the program level, faculty involvement is more formalized through the Academic Senate, which plays a central role in program viability analysis. Before any academic program is discontinued, the Senate evaluates relevant data, including program review outcomes, enrollment patterns, and alignment with workforce needs. This ensures that decisions about program continuation or discontinuation are grounded in both quantitative data and faculty governance processes.

At the same time, the college has demonstrated a commitment to prioritizing instruction by maintaining academic programs and, in some cases, supporting low-enrolled courses when they are necessary for student completion. While personnel decisions remain outside of faculty purview and are handled confidentially, the overall framework for academic decision-making reflects an effort to incorporate faculty voice while maintaining a focus on instructional quality and student outcomes.

In light of recent feedback during budget forums, the administration will now also share more ideas, feedback and decision-making about the budget directly through division meetings at least



once per semester. In Spring and Summer 2026, the College President will also convene one ad-hoc sub-committee of the Finance Committee for faculty and a separate ad-hoc sub-committee for classified staff. The goal of these ad-hoc committees will be to create additional meaningful opportunities for the College President to engage directly with faculty and classified staff about ideas and feedback that may not have emerged from the Senates, from prior forums, and from Division meetings. The goal of these ad-hoc groups will be to review current efforts to balance the budget and collect ideas on new or different ideas to address future interventions and strategies. These will result in recommendations through our participatory governance structures and to the President. These mechanisms will allow faculty and staff to see how financial decisions connect directly to planning in instruction, student services, and student-facing programs, rather than learning about impacts after decisions are finalized.

Resources:

[SMCCCD Board Policy 6.04 Minimum Class Size Guidelines](#)

8. Equity in Cuts

Many instructional programs that have not overspent are being reduced first, while non-instructional accounts contributed to the deficit. How is the college ensuring that reductions are fair, strategic, and do not disproportionately affect students or faculty who were not responsible for past spending patterns?

Abbreviated Response:

Reductions in expenses have occurred across all areas of the college, including management, administrative, student services, instructional, and non-instructional units. Within this broader context, non-instructional areas such as counseling have experienced significant impacts. The College is working to ensure that budget reductions are implemented in a fair and strategic manner by distributing them across instructional, student-facing, administrative, and operational areas. Throughout the institution, cost-saving efforts such as consolidating events, streamlining processes, and adjusting service models are intended to balance the overall impact of reductions and help preserve the core functions that support students, faculty, and staff.



Detailed Response:

The current budget reductions have affected departments and units across the entire College, including instructional programs, student support services, administrative functions, and other operational areas. These adjustments reflect the institution's need to align overall expenditures with available resources rather than concentrating reductions in any one part of the organization. Across the College, faculty, classified professionals, and administrators are working together to identify strategies such as exchange-time and comp-time options that help manage overtime and overload costs while maintaining essential services for students and the campus community. For example, counseling hours were reduced by 58%, with paid summer hours reduced by 66%, over the last two academic years. In response, counselors and staff have collaborated with the dean to identify division resources and approaches that help manage overload and overtime costs while continuing to support students as effectively as possible.

To ensure that reductions are implemented in a fair and strategic manner, the College is applying an equity-minded approach that distributes impacts across the entire institution—including instructional programs, student-facing services, administrative functions, and operational areas. The goal is to protect the core work of the College while avoiding disproportionate burdens on any single group of employees or students. As part of this effort, many non-instructional and administrative units have also taken on reductions through measures such as consolidating events, reducing the scale and frequency of programming, and streamlining overlapping or duplicative services. These adjustments include combining major campus events, rethinking delivery models, and identifying efficiencies that maintain access while lowering overall costs (efficiencies and consolidation of programs with similar outcomes such as Back to School Bash, CSM Block Party, Connect to College, Welcome Week, etc.).

Structural adjustments across multiple areas have also contributed to institutional savings. For example, holding several vacant positions unfilled—such as roles in Counseling, the Promise Program, and other student- and service-oriented units—has generated more than \$233,000 in annual savings. Importantly, these savings were achieved without displacing current employees, including positions such as the Full-Time Career Counselor, Career Services Program Services Coordinator, Welcome Center and Assessment Center Office Assistant, General Counselors, and the Promise Program Services Coordinator. This approach reflects the College's commitment to preserving existing jobs wherever possible while still meeting fiscal realities.

Collectively, these strategies are designed to minimize disproportionate impacts on students, faculty, and staff, while maintaining the College's commitment to access, equity, and student success. By distributing reductions across the institution and engaging employees in identifying



solutions, the College aims to navigate current budget constraints in a way that supports long-term stability and upholds its mission.

9B. What other revenue options are being considered?

Abbreviated Response:

The College is focusing on alternative revenue strategies, including expanding facility rentals, pursuing grants and external partnerships, and increasing philanthropic support through the Foundation. These approaches are intended to strengthen financial stability without compromising student access or equity goals.

Detailed Response:

Instead of relying on student fees, the College is pursuing a range of alternative revenue opportunities to improve financial sustainability. The College is also actively seeking additional grant funding and developing external partnerships to bring in new resources. Collaboration with the College Foundation is being strengthened to increase philanthropic contributions. Together, these strategies are designed to diversify revenue streams while aligning with the College’s commitment to equity and maintaining access for students.

In addition to these efforts, the College is evaluating how to better leverage its physical and intellectual assets in ways that support both community needs and institutional priorities. This includes exploring opportunities for expanded community education offerings, professional development programs for local employers, and mission-aligned partnerships that generate revenue while enhancing the College’s visibility and impact. These initiatives are being developed with careful attention to ensuring that they do not displace existing programs or limit student access to essential facilities.

The College is also working to strengthen its long-term financial planning by improving coordination between instructional, administrative, and auxiliary units. This includes assessing the full cost of operating facilities, identifying underutilized spaces that could support additional rentals or programming, and developing clearer processes for evaluating the financial return of new initiatives. By building a more integrated approach to resource development, the College aims to create a sustainable framework that supports innovation while reducing reliance on volatile revenue sources.



These revenue-generation strategies are also being paired with ongoing efforts to engage faculty, classified professionals, and administrators in identifying opportunities that align with the College's mission and values. This collaborative approach ensures that new revenue streams do not compromise academic integrity, student access, or the College's commitment to equity. Instead, the goal is to strengthen the institution's financial foundation in ways that expand opportunities for students and reinforce the College's role as a community anchor.

Finally, CSM is working directly with the District to work within our internal controls for facility-related revenue. Currently, colleges are only authorized to allow temporary uses of facilities for a semester at a time. Longer, sustained rental agreements require District support and/or Board approval. Some recent and potential partners in this revenue-generating exploration include PG&E and the University of San Francisco.

9C. How will these measures support sustainability without harming students?

Abbreviated Response:

These measures support long-term financial sustainability by increasing revenue through external sources rather than student fees. By prioritizing grants, partnerships, rentals, and philanthropy, the College maintains affordability and avoids creating financial barriers that could negatively impact student access, enrollment, and success.

Detailed Response:

The College's approach to revenue generation is intentionally designed to balance financial sustainability with its commitment to student access and equity. Rather than relying on tuition increases or new fees that could place additional financial strain on students, the College is prioritizing revenue sources that do not directly impact the cost of attendance.

By expanding external funding streams such as grants, partnerships, and philanthropic contributions the College will strengthen its financial position while preserving affordability for students. This approach will help maintain enrollment momentum, particularly among students who are most sensitive to cost barriers and will reduce the institution's reliance on volatile or one-time funding sources.

In the coming years, the College will broaden its pursuit of competitive grants at the federal, state, and regional levels, with an emphasis on initiatives that support student success, workforce



development, and equity-centered innovation. Strengthening internal grant-development capacity and cultivating long-term relationships with funding agencies will allow the College to pursue larger, multi-year awards that provide both financial stability and programmatic growth. These efforts will also create opportunities for faculty and staff to engage in externally funded projects that enhance teaching, learning, and community engagement.

Philanthropic development will play an increasingly important role. The College will work closely with the Foundation to expand donor engagement, cultivate new funding opportunities, and build a more robust pipeline of philanthropic support. This includes strengthening alumni outreach, developing targeted fundraising campaigns, and aligning donor interests with institutional priorities such as scholarships, basic needs support, and innovative academic programs. As these efforts mature, philanthropic contributions will provide a more stable and diversified source of revenue that supports long-term institutional resilience.

Together, these strategies will position the College to diversify its revenue streams in ways that align with its mission, values, and equity commitments. By reducing dependence on student fees and expanding external funding, the College will be better equipped to maintain affordability, protect access, and invest in the programs and services that matter most to students, faculty, and the community.

In this way, revenue strategies are aligned with student success goals, ensuring that efforts to address the budget deficit do not inadvertently reduce access, persistence, or completion. The focus remains on building a sustainable financial model that supports both institutional stability and equitable student outcomes.

10. Looking Forward

A. What is the long-term plan to restore financial health at CSM, maintain essential programs, and ensure a stable, equitable, and transparent budget process that supports both students and faculty going forward?

Abbreviated Response:

CSM Administration will work with Chancellor Moreno to propose a longer timeline for ongoing budget support to the College as we make progress toward aligning our expenses with our current revenue. This proposal will require review and approval from the Board of Trustees. In order to ensure a more stable, equitable and transparent budget process for



students, faculty, and staff, the CSM administration is committed to sustaining existing building more meaningful opportunities to engage faculty and staff in solution-finding and identifying strategies for the College budget deficit. The College will continue its regular IPC updates, Finance Committee meetings and Budget Forum schedule, and enhance the transparency through Division meeting visits in addition to College and Division-wide email announcements of upcoming changes.

Detailed Response:

The College is committed to align its budget in a prompt, prudent, and responsible manner that includes enhanced transparency and meaningful consultation with students, faculty, staff, and managers. Since Fall 2024, CSM has officially reinstated regular meetings of the College Finance Committee as a standing committee of IPC, which includes representation from all constituencies. IPC Tri-Chairs are working directly the College President to review and strengthen participatory governance processes at the College, including regular review of council and committee membership, reminders to representatives about their roles and responsibilities, and exploring more meaningful ways to engage constituencies.

In addition to the regular Budget Forums for the College, the CSM Administration will now also incorporate presentations every semester to each of the Divisions. The goal of these visits will be to explain current budget updates and consult collegially with faculty, staff, and management in building future strategies and insights. The Vice Presidents and/or College President will also incorporate area wide updates to their respective divisions and departments as needed and at least once per semester.

As a short-term measure to ensure shared awareness of the current budget as well as facilitate ideas and strategies to address gaps, deficits, and emerging needs, the College President has proposed to lead two ad-hoc workgroups through the Finance Committee. The goal of these ad-hoc workgroups would be to collect meaningful feedback in dialogue between the College President and faculty and the College President and classified staff, respectively.

The long-term plan is to fully align the CSM budget within approximately 5 years which incorporates time to ensure instructional continuity and eliminate barriers to student access, success, and completion.



11. Workforce and Employment Impacts

Will we have layoffs, force retirements, further reduction to student worker budgets, and/or part-time faculty budgets? How will we assess impact on staff workload and direct impact on student services?

Abbreviated Response:

No. The College and District are working closely to support the college's current budget deficit. CSM does have a budget deficit. CSM has overspent its allocation and categorical/grant revenue over time. Layoffs are not under consideration at this time. Efficiency is the goal, which will have the greatest impact on the budget. This plan does not include the broad elimination of program staff, faculty, or administration with layoffs. Each of the union collective bargaining agreements include contractual provisions that would require advance notice of layoffs. The unions have not been engaged in this matter. Individual personnel vacancies will continue to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis for potential re-hire through Cabinet.

Detailed Response:

There is no plan to lay off full-time staff or faculty at CSM. As individual positions become vacant through resignation, retirement, or transfer, Cabinet will review each position individually as part of our current practice. That review is grounded in college and program-level data about such things as demonstrated need, workload with part-time and full-time staffing, service provision, and input from both local-level managers and departments including faculty and staff. No vacancy is automatically replaced without moving through this internal process, which is about ensuring sustained alignment with student and program needs and requirements, meaningful feedback, and alignment with College and District goals and priorities.

The college must ensure that all expenses stay within our annual resource allocation, and that responsibility creates important responsibility for regular review and alignment between staffing models, operational budgets, and college goals. Part-time faculty budgets and student worker budgets are identified as areas that have been directly impacted in an effort to address budget deficit, improve efficiencies, and reduce overspending without further impacting student completion and layoffs. The college is committed to protecting permanent faculty and staff positions from layoffs while continuing to explore every available option to preserve funding for part-time faculty and student workers within the constraints of its annual budget allocation.



12. Student, Program, and Institutional Impacts Longterm

How can we ensure that cancellation of instructional class sections, particularly one-section-only offerings, is not impacting students' ability to complete program?

Abbreviated Response:

The College is committed to ensuring student completion and actively designs course schedules that allow students to complete their degree and certificate programs within a two-year timeframe. Deans monitor course offering sequences and, when necessary, allow low-enrolled courses to run, if they are required for student completion and no other offerings meet the requirements. When a course is cancelled for low enrollment, students are supported by deans and counseling to redirect them to other available sections or to courses that meet the same requirements as the cancelled course.

Detailed Response:

CSM is committed to supporting students throughout their academic journey and to completion of their academic goals. This includes providing onboarding that introduces students to their program of study with a Student Educational Plan, which outlines the courses required for their program. In addition, the college has invested in creating guided pathways through our program mapper tool, which outline a course offering sequence of all course requirements for degrees/certificates offered by the college. Finally, degree works offers students a real time tool to track their progress, see remaining course requirements, and see the impact of changes to their programs of study or transfer institutions. All of these tools are aligned to ensure that students understand and can manage their course-taking at the college.

The College and District have been working to streamline completion pathways and minimize the amount of excess units that students take before completing their academic goals or transferring to a 4-year institution. To ensure that students have access to the courses that they need, division deans work with college faculty to build 2-year course offering models based on Associate degree and Certificate of Achievement/Certificate of Specialization requirements. Course schedules are built to include regular access to foundational "required" courses and "optional" courses are often scheduled on a regular rotation. For courses that are required for a program of study, special exemptions can be made to low enrollment thresholds to ensure that students can continue their pathways without disruption.

To further enhance our student-centered scheduling process, the Division of Planning, Research, Innovation & Effectiveness (PRIE) is developing a completability dashboard that will track



course offering patterns by program and modality across semesters and academic years. This searchable tool will allow greater visibility into any gaps that exist and will allow data-informed decision-making across the college regarding course offerings, schedule building, and low-enrolled course cancellation. The dashboard is intended to help the College better understand how scheduling practices impact students' ability to progress and complete, while giving deans and departments a shared evidence base for future schedule development and planning.

SMCCCD Responses

The following subset of questions from the full list of 12 Questions / Themes compiled by Finance Committee have been shared with Chancellor Melissa Moreno for District response. As a reminder, the full list of original 100+ questions can be found at the following [link](#).

3. Understanding the Budget Context

A. Can the District provide a clear explanation of the factors that contributed to CSM's current financial position, including historical spending trends and budgetary challenges over the past several years, so that faculty and staff can fully understand the situation?

4. Free College Costs

A. What is the actual financial impact of "Free College" in lost tuition revenue, and how has the college or District offset this?

B. How has the program affected course offerings, enrollment patterns, and student study plans?

5. CSM Coastside and Construction Impacts

B. How are ongoing and upcoming construction projects, including student housing, affecting the budget and campus operations?

6. District Support and Advocacy

A. To what extent has the District provided financial support to stabilize CSM?



9. Revenue Opportunities

A. Could reinstating tuition for certain courses or charging for parking help mitigate the deficit?

