

May 4, 2026

To: Dr. Jessica Lavariega Monforti, Provost & Vice President of Academic Affairs

From: Rosa Bravo, Director of Business Operations for Academic Planning and Budgeting

CC: Neomi E. Basquez, Budget Analyst for Academic Planning and Budgeting

Subject: IRA Committee Recommendations FY26-27

Dear Provost,

Following two deliberation meetings held on April 17 and May 1, 2026, the IRA Committee conducted a comprehensive review of 41 applications. Initial discussions focused on understanding the impact of existing block-funded programs and establishing a consistent evaluation framework using a standardized scoring methodology.

All proposals were evaluated using the established IRA guidelines and [scoring rubric](#), with final recommendations confirmed through a formal deliberation and consensus process. Committee activities were conducted in alignment with the established [Annual Timeline](#).

As deliberations progressed, the committee adopted a dynamic and iterative approach to funding decisions, continually refining recommendations in response to the remaining available balance. Discussions reflected a range of perspectives, including strong advocacy for certain higher-cost proposals informed by committee members' prior direct experience with those programs. The committee also considered application quality, student reach, and alignment with program objectives in shaping its recommendations.

The committee ultimately employed a balanced funding strategy that integrated multiple approaches, including:

- Prioritizing lower-cost, high-impact initiatives to maximize overall student reach
- Utilizing partial funding to support a broader distribution of programs
- Selectively allocating resources to higher-cost proposals where significant student benefit and alignment with IRA priorities were demonstrated

Throughout the process, the committee remained guided by principles of equity, fiscal stewardship, and alignment with IRA's mission to support experiential learning. The committee also recognized that IRA funding often serves as one component within a broader portfolio of funding sources and encouraged consideration of alternative or supplemental funding where appropriate.

Committee Observations and Recommendations for Future Cycles:

During deliberations, the committee identified opportunities to strengthen application clarity and sustainability:

1. Indicate whether this is a first-time IRA request.
2. If not, provide prior IRA funding history.
3. Identify additional or alternative funding sources.

4. Include a risk-vetted approach for student-based or field activities.
5. Provide a minimally viable budget alongside the full request.

These recommendations aim to improve transparency, support informed decision-making, and ensure equitable use of limited resources.

Summary of Recommendations

- Total Funding Recommendation: \$150,000
- Number of Proposals Recommended: 38

List of Recommendations:

Application	Application Title	Applicant	Department	Total Request	Committee Recommendation	Average Z-Score
4316	Kahoot Information Library Instruction Funding	Breeann Austin	Library	\$180.00	\$180.00	1.410355
4135	Model United Nations	Andrea Grove	Public and Global Affairs	\$31,508.10	\$25,748.10	1.314935
4367	6th Annual Startup Day Channel Islands	Maria Ballesteros-Sola	Business	\$4,210.00	\$4,210.00	1.124095
4375	Ecology & the Environment Guest Lecture Series	Rudolf von May	Biology	\$1,600.00	\$1,600.00	1.028675
4344	CSU Health Policy Conference	Juan Ramon Betancourt	Health Science	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00	1.028675
4393	Humpback Whales in a Changing Seascape: Research, Recovery, and Resilience	Clare Steele	ESRM	\$49,257.00	\$20,000.00	0.837835
4357	2026 National Learning Stories Conference	Annie White	Early Childhood Studies	\$8,400.00	\$7,000.00	0.837835
4332	Día de los Niños/Children's Day	Mari Riojas Cortez	Early Childhood Studies	\$6,871.00	\$6,871.00	0.837835
4361	Global Leadership in Early Childhood: Learning Stories and Bicultural Practice from New Zealand	Annie White	Early Childhood Studies	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	0.646995
4355	Conversations in Black - Speaker Series	Eva Vines	Black Studies	\$650.00	\$650.00	0.646995
4336	Authors of Diverse Children's Books: Guest Speaker Series [2026-2027]	Nicole Amato	Teacher Education	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	0.551575
4334	Farmworker Immersion Program	Pilar Pacheco	Center for Community Engagement	\$7,100.00	\$7,100.00	0.551575

Application	Application Title	Applicant	Department	Total Request	Committee Recommendation	Average Z-Score
4305	Plot-A-Thon: All-Year Data Visualization Festival, 2026-2027	SoHui Lee	Writing & Multiliteracy Center	\$31,766.00	\$15,000.00	0.551575
4297	Guest Speakers on Environmental Law & Policy	Dan Reineman	ESRM	\$562.00	\$562.00	0.551575
4370	ESRM Spring Seminar Series 2027	Timnit Kefela Araya	ESRM	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	0.456155
4359	2027 Spring Islands Living Learning Community -Day Trip to the Santa Barbara Museum, Sea Center, and SB Zoo	Susan Kuzminsky	Anthropology	\$3,047.00	\$2,210.00	0.456155
4342	The Island Fox: the Literary Journal of CSUCI	Stacey Anderson	English	\$4,900.00	\$4,900.00	0.456155
4371	Regenerative Farming on Land and Sea - Field Trips	Hillary Erf Tejada	ESRM	\$1,650.00	\$1,650.00	0.360734
4354	Art/Design/Print Lecture and Workshop - The Little Friends of Printmaking	Jasmine Delgado	ART	\$900.00	\$900.00	0.360734
4337	Credential Program: Professional Speaker/Activity Series (2026-2027)	Talya Drescher	SOE Teacher Education Department	\$2,125.00	\$2,125.00	0.360734
4298	Interdisciplinary Human-Ecological Experiential Opportunities: Carrizo Plain National Monument and Bitter Creek National Refuge	Jaime Matera	Anthropology	\$5,841.00	\$5,841.00	0.360734
4362	Intro to Engineering Field Trip: Educational Visit to Haas Automation	Bahareh Abbasi	Computer Science & Engineering	\$4,000.00	\$3,000.00	0.265314
4294	CI Ceramics Visiting Artists	Marianne McGrath	ART	\$3,000.00	\$1,500.00	0.169894
4345	A Talk with Scholars: Latinx Comics Studies, Critical and Creative Crossings [Virtual Speaker Series, 2026-2027]	Nicole Amato	Teacher Education	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	0.169894

Application	Application Title	Applicant	Department	Total Request	Committee Recommendation	Average Z-Score
4460	On-the-ground Student Experience with Federal Land Managers to Discuss National Natural Resources Conservation and Management	Russell Galipeau	ESRM	\$2,445.50	\$2,445.50	0.074474
4293	AgriTech Field Experience at Taylor Farms. Funding specific to lodging and fees	Vedang Chauhan	Computer Science and Engineering	\$15,000.00	\$4,000.00	-0.020946
4369	Synthesizing Art History. Funding specific to on-campus tier	Theresa Avila	Art	\$16,158.00	\$2,000.00	-0.116366
4347	Architectural History workshop	Colleen Delaney	Anthropology	\$800.00	\$800.00	-0.307206
4341	Community Conversations: Leadership and Civic Engagement Opportunities in Ventura County	Georgina Guzman	Center for Community Engagement	\$1,999.00	\$1,999.00	-0.307206
4348	CSUCI Galleries support funding	Marianne McGrath	ART & ARTH	\$10,000.00	\$6,000.00	-0.402626
4333	Advancing Access, Excellence, and Belonging in STEM: 2026 SACNAS National Diversity in STEM Conference	Caryl Ann Becerra	Biology	\$53,905.00	\$5,008.40	-0.402626
4377	Small Matching Grants for Campus Sustainability Projects	Hillary Erf Tejada	ESRM	\$600.00	\$600.00	-0.498046
4331	Enriching Cross-Cultural Understanding, Belonging, and Student Engagement Through Campus-Wide AAPI Events	Nien-Tsu Chen	Communication	\$3,263.00	\$500.00	-0.879727
4295	2027 NCECA Conference	Marianne McGrath	ART	\$13,620.00	\$500.00	-1.261407
4310	English Speaker Series. Funding for Two Speakers and Printing	Taryn Hakala	English	\$2,200.00	\$1,100.00	-1.356827
4364	Native American Heritage Month Even with Ventura County Indian Education Consortium	Bridget Groat	Chicano Studies	\$4,000.00	\$500.00	-2.311028
4296	Environmental Community Building	Dan Reineman	ESRM	\$4,999.00	\$500.00	-2.311028
4358	Mucha Michele Day 2027	Nicholas Centino	Chicana/o Studies	\$5,000.00	\$500.00	-3.169809
				Total Awarded	\$150,000	

Implementation Note:

For all partially funded proposals, award notifications will clearly specify the approved budget components and any excluded line items, if specified by the Committee. This is intended to ensure transparency and support appropriate implementation aligned.

IRA Block Funding Note

Block-funded programs were invited to participate in the IRA deliberations and present on their impact for the 2025–2026 academic year. These presentations highlighted the interconnected role of block-funded areas in supporting student success and academic excellence across the university.

Collectively, these programs provide foundational, high-impact support through academic tutoring, writing and multiliteracy development, experiential and field-based learning, performing arts engagement, and student research opportunities. Together, they create a comprehensive ecosystem that enhances student retention, fosters interdisciplinary learning, and promotes career readiness through hands-on and applied experiences.

An AI-generated summary of these presentations, including visual materials provided by the respective programs is available [via the following link](#).

As part of a Provost-led effort to advance the student success framework, a new block-funded area for Global Experiences is being introduced. Overseen by the Office of the Vice Provost, this initiative expands access to immersive, instructionally related global learning and strengthens the portfolio of high-impact student experiences.

Fiscal Year Allocations Note:

Based on current enrollment projections available at the time of review, the following allocations are anticipated. These figures may be subject to change following Fall and Spring census updates, as revised enrollment projections and shifting institutional priorities are incorporated.

Budget Line Item	Amount
Annual Award Cycle	\$150,000
AY26-27 DAA Block-fund	\$396,214
Contingency (Includes 10% Reserves)	\$125,000
Student Assistant Salaries	\$6,180

Committee Members Signatures:

JC Dennise Arriaza, Student, IRA Chair

Trent Ruiz, Staff

Karen Martinez, Student

Joshua Gold, Faculty

Promise Walters, Student

Lily Anne Tamai, Faculty

Nathalia Raygoza, Student

Elliana Escalera, Student

Provost Review:

Dr. Jessica Lavariega Monforti,
Provost & Vice President of Academic Affairs

2026–2027 IRA Funding Cycle: Fairness, Impact, and Student Enrichment

2026–2027 Cycle At-a-Glance

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**Proposals
Reviewed**

Committee evaluated unique applications across disciplines and student life initiatives.

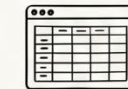
\$150,000
Available Budget

Focus on maximizing student impact through funding of highly-ranked projects.

**High Demand
for Enrichment**

Total funding requested significantly exceeded available resources, requiring competitive ranking.

Deliberation Timeline



**April 17, 2026:
Initial Rankings**

Initial review of black funding presentations, budget overviews, and InfoReady scores.

**May 1, 2026:
Final Recommendations**

Committee consensus on funding allocations, prioritizing high-impact experiential learning.



Core Themes & Success Factors

Key Funding Themes

- Student Travel
- Academic Field Trips
- Special Guest Speakers
- High-Level Experiential Learning

What Distinguished Strong Proposals

- Clear student impact, strong academic alignment, well-justified budgets, measurable learning outcomes

High-Impact Examples

- Model United Nations
- Environmental Law guest lecture series
- AgriTech visit to Taylor Farms

The Z-Score: Ensuring Fairness

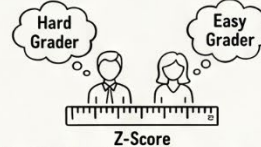
$$Z = \frac{x - \mu}{\sigma}$$

x = raw score μ = mean σ = standard deviation

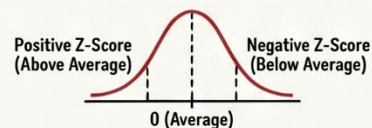


What is a Z-Score?

Measures how many standard deviations an application's score is from the average.



Why We Use It: Standardizes results to account for different scoring habits, ensuring a level playing field.



Interpreting the Results: Z-score of 0 is average; positive scores indicate above-average rankings, negative scores fall below average.