

Faculty Senate President's Report- March 11, 2026 meeting

1). Faculty Senate Announcements

We received the following from Provost Irwin. It is an FAQ about Banner SaaS.

What is SaaS? Didn't we always have Banner?

We are currently in the middle of a multi-year project to transition to Banner SaaS (Software-as-a-Service).

For SaaS (Software as a Service), the software is hosted in the cloud and accessed via a web browser or app. **Instead of purchasing a license and managing updates ourselves, we subscribe to the service, and the provider handles maintenance, security, and upgrades.**

This moves Banner from an IT asset to an institutional utility, which will lead to modernization and organization across areas, including HR and data management.

Overall, the switch is designed to **replace outdated, fragmented systems with a unified, secure platform for the institution.**

Why are we changing?

Ellucian Banner SaaS was chosen to modernize our technology infrastructure, enhance the user experience for students and staff, and reduce the burden of managing on-premises systems. The transition is driven by the need for improved agility, security, and scalability. **This was chosen at the system level, to be deployed at each CSCU campus. However, individual campuses chose products for their campus.**

What does this mean for faculty?

- Higher availability during peak times
- Real-time data (e.g. for advising, student support)
- Mobile-friendly access and dashboards.
- Stronger security for student records.

Are there new products at Southern?

New products include **Smart Plan** for advising, **Journey** for non-credit offerings, the addition of Insights, for analytics and report writing.

Smart plan

This is what Banner advertises for Smart Plan:

What it does: It is an AI-powered, automated academic planning tool that acts as "Google Maps" for a student's path to graduation.

How it works: It uses institutional data (transcript, credits, grades) to automatically generate, update, and optimize a full course plan from enrollment to completion.

Benefits: It recalculates plans instantly if a course is failed or requirements change, and it allows students to explore "What If" scenarios (e.g., changing majors) to see the impact on time and cost.

Journey is a new product for our campus, chosen to allow registration and management for non-credit programming.

Insights

Note: At this time, we will continue to use Argos for at least the next 2 years, which will allow us to explore Insights to see if it meets our needs.

This is what Banner advertises for Insights:

Virtual Data Lake: It acts as a "data lake" that integrates data from Banner and other non-Ellucian sources, allowing for comprehensive reporting without slowing down the core, transactional Banner database.

Analytics and Dashboards: It provides pre-built ("out-of-the-box") reports, visualizations, and dashboards for various functional areas, including student success, finance, and human resources.

AI-Powered: Ellucian has integrated AI into Insights, offering predictive analytics to identify at-risk students and generative AI-assisted analytics to help users ask questions about their data using natural language.

What if I have other questions?

Any other questions can be directed to myself, CFO Lillian Wanjagi and CIO Tom Armstrong.

2). The Faculty Senate Executive Committee and Faculty Leadership Council (FLC) meetings with administration –

Our meeting on 3/2/26 was aimed exclusively at the Zero Budget Implementation and Impact. Faculty had many questions regarding this process and the tight timeline that was given. President Bulmer explained that this is the first step in building a structure on which decisions can be made. It is a growth process that will be uncomfortable at first as everyone works towards

building a trust and realization that needs will not be the same on a year to year basis. Some years, a department will need more resources than others to run and it is not a situation in which if you give up a line one year, it does not mean it is gone forever. We were told it is a chance to put forward each departments needs and desires. Administration feels that a flat budget does not give everyone a seat at the table. Next year the budgeting process will begin much earlier. They are starting with a zero based budget on the operating expenses for each department. This does not tie directly to scheduling but includes items such as office supplies, accreditation, part-time labor requests. According to President Bulmer, the cost of teaching is hard to predict. There hasn't been an adjunct budget in a long time, but there needs to be. Last year's place holder for adjuncts in the budget fell \$2.7 million dollars short. There needs to be a more accurate accounting of our needs, and we need to offer the classes necessary for our students in a budget-friendly way. They are hoping to give/create tools for chairs to plan accordingly. We are running on a significant deficit, and the BOR is not happy about it. Last year, we overspent financial aid by \$2.5 million dollars.

Early college at Southern is growing by leaps and bounds. Unfortunately, the way the census is currently being reported, we are not receiving credit for our early college scholars. The census hits on week 3 of the semester and high schools are not run on the same schedule as the university. Chancellor Maduko is currently lobbying for the legislature to bear this cost. The office of policy management is currently holding a significant amount of money that has been slated for deferred maintenance costs. Those of us in sagging buildings are hoping the funds are released soon.

3). Contract negotiations

This is just a reminder that contract negotiations are ongoing. It is the first time it is an open negotiation with members allowed to watch. Consider joining the watch party on campus or streaming the negotiations. If you do watch, you are under the same restrictions as a member of the negotiating team, which means you may not talk to a member of the press about what is going on. Be sure to register for the link regardless of whether you are going to the watch party or watching on your own. It helps to ensure an accurate count and demonstrates that an open negotiation is what faculty want.

Please keep an eye out for emails from CSU-AAUP. They are coordinating lobbying efforts and are asking for faculty help in convincing the legislature to invest in Southern.

4). W courses

The committee looking into the current W course program is asking for faculty help. They are seeking faculty feedback on the current writing program. You should have received an email with a link to a short survey. Please fill it out and share your knowledge.

5). Preparing for our upcoming meeting

On Wednesday, we will be joined by Sergio Perez who will be offering an update on DEI activity on campus. Please feel free to bring questions.

We will be discussing the Resolution for Information, Faculty Senate Suggested List for the DEC and Dept Chairpersons' Letters for Promotion & Tenure (P&T) evaluations.