

Approved by the UCLA Alumni Association Board of Directors (March 14, 2026)

**UCLA Alumni Association
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
December 13, 2025**

Present

Board of Directors: Paco Retana, Cathy Choi, Sonia Das, Devon Dickau, Samantha D’Souza, Stephanie Ellis-Smith, Cinthia Flores, Yolanda Gorman, Coretta Harris, Ed Lew, Chris MacLaughlin, Joe Pham, Lea Rasmusson, Brian Rosenbaum, Natalie Samarjian, Matthew Saucedo, Joe Vardner, Diana Zschaschel

Staff: George Brown, Julia Brown, Estelle Frandenberg, Megan Friedlander, Denise Pacheco, Andrea Sork, Grace Vertanessian, Katie Ward, Jenn Wells

Presenters: Melissa Harman

Absent (Board of Directors): Dean Florez, Manaf Mansure, Corey Matthews, Juana Sanchez, Rhea Turteltaub

Welcome & Consent Agenda

- President Paco Retana called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. The hybrid meeting was recorded to assist with capturing minutes. Materials were made available on the Alumni Board Box. Denise Pacheco, Senior Director, Diversity Programs & Initiatives, provided the land acknowledgement. Retana acknowledged board members and staff partners with birthdays in November, December, January and February.
- Retana asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the September 27, 2025 Board meeting. Motion made, seconded, and approved unanimously.

FY25 Alumni Association Audit

- Melissa Harman of Baker & Tilly reviewed the scope of service for the annual financial statement audit for the year ending June 30, 2025. Harman reported a clean, unmodified opinion for the audited financial statements for fiscal year 2024-2025. Harman reviewed the responsibilities under U.S. generally accepted auditing standards and noted that the planned audit scope and timing proceeded as anticipated, with no deviations and no indications of fraud.
- Retana asked for a motion to approve the audited financial statements for 2024-2025. Motion made, seconded, and approved unanimously.

Retreat Takeaways

- Retana shared his takeaways and reflections on the September Board Retreat, noting that the mission of the Alumni Association centers on community and importance of connection between alumni and the university. The Board continues to focus on the second pillar of the strategic path: reimagining alumni engagement. Retana emphasized that this work is ongoing and expressed appreciation for the Board’s patience and grace. He reiterated the Board’s role in co-creating work that demonstrates the importance, impact, and value of alumni to the university. Retana also noted that the Association is in a period of transition and encouraged members to remain focused, grounded, flexible, and adaptable. Retana concluded by expressing his gratitude to the Board.

Alumni Affairs Update

- Yolanda Gorman, Interim Chief Executive Officer/Interim Associate Vice Chancellor Alumni Affairs, shared reflections on her transition into her role and on the September retreat to give further context to the ongoing conversations about reimagining alumni engagement and elevating this work across the university. Gorman provided an update on the team's efforts to operationalize the strategic path. As a part of reimagining engagement, she emphasized the importance of cultivating meaningful alumni relationships in order seek support. The "back-to-the-future" exercise, completed by both the Board and Team Alumni, made it clear that personalized engagement will help build the conditions needed to foster alumni reciprocity on a larger scale, volunteerism, advocacy, and giving. Takeaways from this exercise will help inform a shared vision moving forward.
- Gorman presented the UCLA university-alum engagement model, outlining the relationship of alumni to the university and how alumni engage with the university (through the model of community, experience, impact, belonging, reciprocity, and sustainment). She noted its alignment with the Chancellor's One UCLA vision and the UCLA strategic plan. Gorman also shared that she will be presenting the model across campus to support shared understanding of the UCLA's relationship with its alumni and their involvement in its future.
- Jenn Wells, Chief of Staff, Alumni Affairs, and Katie Ward, Chief Strategy Officer, Alumni Affairs, co-led a brainstorming and partner exercise based on the engagement model. Board members were first asked to reflect on what comes to mind when thinking about UCLA as a place of excellence. They then interviewed a partner about how UCLA contributed to their journey, which experiences shaped them, and how those experiences continue to influence their lives. Board members shared reflections on UCLA's impact and how it helped shape their paths. Board members were also asked to consider times when they felt valued, seen, and supported by an organization, and to reflect on how those experiences influenced their engagement through volunteering, philanthropy, and advocacy. Ward highlighted the role of reciprocity in stewardship which helps strengthen the relationship between UCLA and its alumni.
- Gorman concluded by outlining the role of the Board and presenting a slide detailing current asks of Board members. She highlighted key ways the Board can support and add value to the university's alumni engagement efforts. Board members discussed their advisory role and how these asks can help guide their work and inform how they collectively leverage their expertise.

Committee Discussion

- To allow for continued full group discussion, the Board did not break into committee groups. Members shared further reflections on the engagement model, the role and positionality of Board members, and opportunities to help engage alumni to strengthen understanding and support across campus.

Committee Updates

- Cinthia Flores, President-Elect and Committee Chair, reviewed the timeline for the director re-election and new candidate processes occurring from January through June. She provided an overview of current and available Board seats and discussed considerations guiding recruitment, including desired qualifications and candidate qualities. A word cloud reflecting survey results was displayed. Committee members also discussed opportunities to engage alumni who previously applied but were not selected and how to encourage potential engagement beyond board service.
- Diana Zschaschel, a member of the Civic Engagement Taskforce, highlighted UC Day and encouraged board members, especially those who haven't participated before, to attend this year.
- Strategic Partnership Committee Co-Chairs Samantha D'Souza and Devon Dickau shared that planned work using Alumni Weekend as a partnership case study is paused due to the event not taking place this year. D'Souza provided context about challenges related to the JMI contract, and Gorman clarified that the contract has not been fully severed. The committee is now working with

staff to determine where its support and efforts can be most effective. Discussions have included reviewing the Association's assets and evaluations to better understand potential commercial opportunities. Dickau added that the committee's goals shared at the end of last year for 2025-2026 remain unchanged.

- Devon Dickau, Diversity Advisory Committee Chair, reviewed the framing the committee has used with the DPI networks over the past six months to guide how DAC representatives can support the engagement model. Dickau then outlined DAC's goals and priorities for 2025-2026 and shared that DAC leaders hope to hold another Network Leaders Retreat this year. He also highlighted examples of programming under consideration to address the needs of their networks.
- Matt Saucedo, Strategic Path Workgroup Chair, reported that the workgroup had their kick-off meeting and engaged members in focus areas where they can leverage their expertise to support strategic path projects.

Meeting adjourned by Retana

- The board meeting adjourned at 1:37 p.m.