

College of San Mateo – Finance Committee

May 14, 2026, 1-2 pm

Building 18, Room 206

Voting Members

Name	Representation/Position	In Attendance
Gerardo Ramirez	Vice President of Administrative Services, Chair	Y
Steven Lehigh	Economics Professor, Executive Committee Member selected by the Academic Senate	Y
Makiko Ueda	Personal Counselor, At-Large selected by the Academic Senate	Y
Edgardo Molina	Administrative Assistant for PRIE, Classified Staff Member selected by Classified Senate (approved by CSEA)	Y
<i>Vacant</i>	<i>Classified Staff Member selected by Classified Senate (approved by CSEA)</i>	-
Moe Thanzin Cho	ASCSM Finance Director, Student Representative	N
Kohya Lu	Ombudsperson/At-Large Member of Management Council	N
Victoria Lin	Chief Business Officer	Y

Guests & Non-Voting Attendees

Name	Representation/Position	In Attendance
Daniel Keller	English Professor, President of Academic Senate	Y
Renee Liang	Detail Executive Assistant, V.P. of Administrative Services Office	Y

Action Items	Lead Responsible	Due Date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ad hoc faculty and classified subcommittee proposal formally deferred to Fall 2026. Finance Committee and Academic Senate to revisit at the start of the Fall semester when broader campus participation is available. Draft a description of the committee's charge, membership composition, and decision-making scope to facilitate launch in Fall 2026. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2026
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance Committee to follow up with the District on whether the Resource Allocation Model accounts for differences in program composition when setting load/productivity targets across colleges. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gerardo Ramirez 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2026
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance Committee to formulate and submit specific questions to the District regarding: (1) the rationale for the 525 FTES load target in a basic aid district; (2) comparability of productivity metrics across the three colleges given differing program mixes; (3) impact of FTEF reductions on FTES and load. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steven Lehigh 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2026

Minutes

Minutes from April 30, 2026 were distributed via email for review. Members were asked to reply with any corrections; otherwise, minutes will be published as approved.

Follow-Up: Ad Hoc Faculty and Classified Subcommittees

The committee revisited the ad hoc subcommittee proposal raised by College President Manuel Alejandro Pérez at the April 30th meeting. The item was carried forward from the prior meeting without a formal vote, and the April minutes reflected it as pending.

The committee clarified that no commitment to form these subcommittees was made at the April 30th meeting. The President's offer was noted and acknowledged, but no formal vote or agreement occurred. Any language in the distributed budget FAQ suggesting these committees

have been or will be formed does not accurately reflect the committee's position and should be clarified.

Committee members confirmed that forming ad hoc subcommittees before the end of the spring semester is not feasible given the limited time remaining. The consensus of the committee is to defer the ad hoc subcommittee concept to Fall 2026, when full membership of the Academic Senate and Classified Senate is available and able to participate meaningfully.

It was suggested that the summer could be used productively to draft a clear description of the committee's charge, membership structure, and decision-making authority — groundwork that would allow the committee to launch effectively in the fall if still desired.

Budget FAQ Update – Distribution and Academic Senate Visit

The committee received an update on the budget FAQ responses that were distributed to the campus community and discussed at the Academic Senate meeting on May 12, 2026.

President Pérez attended the May 12th Academic Senate meeting as planned and presented responses to the four priority questions identified by the Senate, drawn from the larger pool of community questions collected before and during the Flex Day Budget Forum. For questions in the FAQ that fall under District responsibility, the District has indicated it will respond directly on those items.

The committee confirmed this agenda item is considered substantially complete for the spring semester. Outstanding district-level questions will be carried into fall.

Non-Personnel Resource Request Memo

Gerardo provided an update on the Non-Personnel Resource Request process, noting that a memo outlining approved allocations by category was distributed to the campus community on May 8, 2026, and is posted on the Program Review & Assessment website.

A detailed spreadsheet accompanies the memo, listing every submitted request along with approval status and funding source. The spreadsheet is available for download from the Program Review & Assessment website.

Deans and directors of academic and administrative units are expected to communicate results to their respective teams.

Discussion – Budget FAQ Content: FTEF, Load, and Productivity

The committee held a substantive discussion on several issues arising from the distributed budget FAQ document, centered on Faculty Full-Time Equivalent (FTEF), course load/productivity, and their relationship to enrollment and student outcomes.

FTEF Data and Projection Accuracy

- Committee member raised a concern about a reference in the FAQ (approximately page 7) indicating that FTEF would decrease to 388 by fiscal year 2026–27. He noted that fall 2026–27 course planning has only just begun and questioned how such a projection could be reliable.
- Gerardo confirmed this was a typographical error in the document: the figure should have reflected the decline from 464 FTEF to 388 FTEF, representing the lowest point reached in previous fiscal years. The 2026–27 projection language was incorrect.

Impact of FTEF Reductions on Enrollment and Load

- Committee member raised a broader analytical concern: CSM’s spring enrollment was down approximately 10% compared to flat enrollment at the other two district colleges, suggesting that the FTEF reduction strategy may be functioning as a double-edged measure — reducing instructional costs while simultaneously reducing FTES, which affects apportionment and load calculations.
- The committee noted: FTEF reductions may not be achieving the intended budget improvement and may be having a negative effect on student access and campus revenue as spring load was confirmed to be lower than the prior fall semester.
- Gerardo noted that an enrollment strategy initiative is underway, led by Vice President of Student Services, Alex Guiriba, in coordination with the State Chancellor’s Office, to examine the factors contributing to enrollment decline and develop countermeasures.

Productivity Targets and the 525 Load Benchmark

- The FAQ referenced a goal of moving toward the state benchmark of 525 load. Committee raised concern about whether 525 is a realistic, fair, or desirable target for CSM, given the college’s unique program mix. Programs such as nursing, fire science, and many science laboratory courses have externally mandated or facilities-constrained enrollment caps that prevent high-enrollment sections. These programs structurally depress the college’s average load regardless of instructional effort.
- A second concern raised was desirability: even where higher load is achievable (e.g., by increasing class sizes in composition or other humanities courses), committee members noted that CSM has historically prioritized smaller class sizes as a pedagogical value, and that this should be weighed against budget-driven productivity goals.
- Committee member noted that the 525 target is the California community college state benchmark, which applies to colleges funded primarily through state apportionment — not to basic aid districts like SMCCCD, which have additional local revenue. The committee questioned whether a basic aid district with greater resources should hold itself to a state benchmark designed for less-resourced institutions, and whether the additional funds should instead be directed toward sustaining smaller, higher-quality classes as a student benefit.
- The committee agreed to formalize several questions for the District: (1) Is the 525 target appropriate for a basic aid district? (2) Does the RAM account for structural differences in program composition between colleges? (3) Is it accurate or fair to compare CSM’s load to Skyline’s without adjusting for program type?

Productivity Measurement for Non-Instructional Areas

- Committee member raised the question of how productivity is measured for student services and other non-instructional areas, noting that load is a faculty/instruction-specific metric and does not capture the work of counselors, student support staff, or administrative personnel.
- Gerardo noted that at the district level, cross-college comparisons are being used to identify resource discrepancies in administrative and support departments, but that formal productivity benchmarks for non-instructional areas have not yet been established or shared with the colleges.

Impact of Free College on Enrollment Metrics

- Committee member raised an additional question about the impact of the Free College program on drop rates, load calculations, and student outcome data. He noted that the zero-cost model may lead some students to remain enrolled past the point of genuine participation, which affects census-date versus end-of-semester load figures.
- Committee member will work with the PRIE research team to compile available enrollment data and Free College outcome comparisons.
- The committee agreed to formalize a research question around Free College's impact on load, drop rates, and student outcomes for follow-up in the fall.

Fund 3 / Categorical Funding Stability

- Committee member raised a question about Fund 3 (categorical/grant funding), specifically whether certain grant-funded programs are expected to be sustained institutionally if state funding is reduced or discontinued.
- Gerardo explained that Fund 3 revenues are primarily state grants, and that grant amounts and priorities do change over time. Examples given included the Student Equity and Achievement Program (which received COLA for the first time this cycle) and workforce grants, which were reduced when the state shifted priorities. Grant-funded positions are therefore not guaranteed at consistent funding levels.
- The question of how the college plans for the potential sunset of categorical funds and the distinction between temporary and ongoing grant commitments was noted as a topic warranting further discussion in a future meeting.

Next Meeting

The Finance Committee will reconvene in Fall 2026. The date has not yet been set. Agenda items expected to carry forward include: District Resource Allocation Model follow-up questions, ad hoc subcommittee proposal follow-up, district-level FAQ responses, and enrollment/load data review.

