



MEMORANDUM

TO: Alyson Engel
Chair of the ASI Board of Directors

DATE: June 5, 2026

FROM: Jett Palmer
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Integration Ad Hoc Committee

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SUBJECT: ASI Cal Maritime Integration Ad Hoc Committee – Project Closeout

BACKGROUND

The California State University Board of Trustees voted on November 20, 2024, to approve the CSU Chancellor's recommendation to integrate Cal Poly and Cal Maritime Academy, ensuring the preservation of essential maritime academic and merchant marine licensure programs. Effective July 1, 2025, the two institutions began operating as a single university under the Cal Poly name, with the first Cal Poly Maritime Academy and Cal Poly Solano Campus students enrolling as Cal Poly students in fall 2026 (ASI Board of Directors, Bill #25-01).

On April 2, 2025, the 2024-25 ASI Board of Directors voted to establish an ad hoc committee to advise on the integration with Associated Students of the California Maritime Academy (ASCMA). The committee was to include student representation from both campuses, continuing until July 1, 2026, or until all related matters were resolved. The central goal of the committee was to create a unified student governance structure under a single organization. During the transition, both ASI organizations would remain separate legal entities to represent their respective student bodies. The ad hoc committee would serve as a bridge between the two organizations, ensuring collaboration and continuity until Maritime students were fully enrolled, matriculated, and fee-paying Cal Poly students in fall 2026 (ASI Board of Directors, Ad Hoc Committee Proposal).

In addition, the 2025-26 Bridge Plan established how ASCMA and ASI would collaborate throughout the academic year. A key outcome of the plan was the formation of the ad hoc committee to coordinate the operational planning and strengthen student leadership engagement.

The ASI Cal Maritime Integration Ad Hoc Committee met on 25 occasions over the course of one year. It included student representation from both ASI and ASCMA.

The committee produced three key deliverables:

1. A Shared Governance Model, used as a vision-setting framework for student governance under one, unified organization;
2. A set of Responsibility Guides, detailing the expectations and scholarship offerings for three newly created titles;
3. A packet of revisions to the ASI Bylaws, fully operationalizing the integration of ASCMA into ASI Student Government and other ASI program areas.

The committee actively reported to several stakeholder groups, including the ASI Board of Directors, the ASCMA Board of Directors, the Cal Poly administration, and the Cal Maritime administration.

Throughout its operation, the committee received internal briefings on integration progress by ASI staff and advised on various strategic implementations across program areas.

INITIAL SCOPE

The committee charges outlined five phases of the integration, centered on the Transition Plan, an internal document used to communicate strategic objectives to the Cal Poly administration.

- **Phase 1:** Build relationships with the other campus, conduct research, and educate ad hoc members about the other campus's operations, culture, and structure. Make recommendations, including a Transition Plan statement and any required corporate document changes.
- **Phase 2:** Monitor progress on the Transition Plan, recommend a shared governance model with updated bylaws and policies, and assess/report to the ASI Board on Transition Plan developments.
- **Phase 3:** Monitor progress on the Transition Plan, recommend board actions relating to programs and services, and assess/report to the ASI Board on Transition Plan developments.
- **Phase 4:** Monitor progress on the Transition Plan, recommend steps for the transfer of ASCMA assets and liabilities, and assess/report to the ASI Board on Transition Plan developments.
- **Phase 5:** Assess completion steps of the Transition Plan and related documentation and recommend board resolutions to approve the ASCMA/ASI integration agreement.

The Transition Plan provided additional scoping for the ad hoc committee, including that the ad hoc committee would serve as the primary body for developing and recommending actions to the ASCMA and ASI governing boards. The Plan detailed four key project touchstones, representing scheduled events in which the administration and other stakeholders would be briefed and solicited, and seven total tasks.

- **Task 1:** Transition Plan Approval (Touchtone)
- **Task 2:** Mutual Expression of Merger Intent (Touchstone)
- **Task 3:** Integrated Student Governance Framework
- **Task 4:** Revision of ASI Corporate Documents
- **Task 5:** ASCMA Asset and Liability Inventory

- **Task 6:** Agreement of Merger (Touchstone)
- **Task 7:** Updated ASI Operating/Lease Agreement (Touchstone)

The Transition Plan made an assumption about the legal pathway of the integration that was later challenged. When it was determined that dissolution was more feasible than a statutory merger with ASCMA, the scope of the integration and corresponding committee tasks shifted.

CHANGES TO SCOPE

While Phase 1 remained largely the same, Phase 2 was partitioned into the development of three, key deliverables: a Shared Governance Model, a set of Responsibility Guides for Maritime Academy positions within ASI Student Government, and a packet of modifications to the ASI Bylaws that fully operationalized the former. The committee actively monitored integration progress on an organizational level, receiving regular reports from staff on items that were pertinent to, but beyond the scope of, the committee. These reports happened in parallel with the key deliverables and, thus, did not constitute a sequential “Phase.”

Similarly, the Tasks outlined in the Transition Plan were updated. Tasks 1 - 2 were deemed moot due to the strategic pivot away from a formal merger. Tasks 3 - 5 remained the same, with Task 5 conducted by staff outside of the committee. Task 6 was refitted to a dissolution process facilitated by ASCMA students and staff, and Task 7 will be carried out in the fall term by staff, the ASI Board of Directors, and the University Union Advisory Board.

EXECUTION

Deliverable 1: Shared Governance Model

The committee first teleconferenced on April 17, 2025, to set ground rules before students of the Maritime Academy departed for a summer semester-at-sea.

In September 2025, members of the committee and staff met in Vallejo to learn and share about the offerings and culture of each campus. Members built rapport and participated in team building exercises. The committee began envisioning a unified student governance framework, negotiating roles and responsibilities, naming schemes, and implementation strategies. The Chair presented members with three integrated governance frameworks created by students, staff, and consultants, that served as the basis for a novel framework developed by the committee. This framework would be iteratively refined throughout the course of several meetings, with a proposal recommended by the committee on October 7, 2025.

The Shared Governance Model proposed the establishment of the ASI Maritime Academy Council (AMAC) to represent the voice of Maritime students and serve as a recommending body of the ASI Board of Directors. The model outlines new student leader roles that will serve on the Council, on the ASI Board of Directors and standing committees, and the University Union Advisory Board.

The model was endorsed by the ASCMA Board of Directors on October 20, 2025, and amended and approved by the ASI Board of Directors on October 29, 2025. This document then served as a foundation for the recommended edits to the ASI Bylaws.

Main Challenge: Insufficient education and communication led some committee members to leverage parliamentary procedure into delaying a vote on the Shared Governance Model.

Resolution: A bipartisan Chair was critical to resolving the appearance of a lack of options when divisive items are subject to a vote. Briefings with individual committee members gave them confidence in the integrity of the process and functioned as productive outlets for brokering cross-campus negotiation.

Deliverable 2: Responsibility Guides

On January 16, 2026, the committee recommended a set of Responsibility Guides for three newly created titles including the Chair of the AMAC, the Vice Chair of the AMAC, and the general members (councilmembers) of the AMAC.

The Responsibility Guides outlined role-specific duties, typical involvement levels, legal responsibilities, and support resources associated with each established position.

Main Challenge: Allocating the ASI Fee or Student Body Center Fee to student leader scholarship packages requires a referendum of the general student body. The committee determined that a referendum would be resource intensive and unlikely to result in a desired outcome.

Resolution: ASI staff requested support from campus partners to fund student leader scholarships at the Maritime Academy starting in the 2026-27 academic year. The Cal Poly administration and integration team offered financial support for one year and agreed to explore other avenues to fund the scholarships in perpetuity.

Deliverable 3: ASI Bylaws Amendments

While the Shared Governance Model charted the course for operationalizing the integration with ASCMA and the Responsibility Guides imagined the functional roles of the new student leader positions, the official establishment of ancillary bodies and subordinate leadership must be facilitated via the corporation's bylaws.

With support from legal counsel and ASI staff, the committee drafted a bill, summary of changes, and redlined document that summarized proposed changes to the ASI Bylaws. The suggested revisions primarily standardize language, clarify governance authority, and update terminology, while reinforcing that decision-making authority rests with the ASI Board of Directors. A major focus is establishing the AMAC as an advisory body, adding Maritime Academy representation across committees and the ASI Board, and defining related roles, elections, and responsibilities. A section was added to address the formal plan for ASCMA dissolution by June 30, 2026, and the welcoming of Cal Poly Maritime Academy students as ASI Members starting July 1, 2026.

On April 2, 2026, the committee recommended Bill #26-01: ASI Bylaws Amendment – Operationalizing the Integration with ASCMA to the ASI Board of Directors. On May 27, 2026, the ASI Board of Directors amended and approved this bill.

Main Challenge: Aligning new policy with existing policy proved an immense challenge. This process stress-tested the existing ASI Bylaws, revealing inconsistencies and inefficiencies in the company policy. It also demanded robust justification of new policy, naming schemes, and otherwise, to ensure internal consistency and functionality.

Resolutions: A rigorous evaluation process among legal counsel, students, and ASI staff created new provisions, terminology, and naming conventions to ensure coherence with established frameworks and create a foundation for future organizational needs.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Student Government Functional Integration Team (FIT), composed of key ASI staff, is operationalizing the recommendations of the ad hoc committee by aligning staffing models to support the new governance structure, standardizing processes, and clearing pathways for all student voices to make an impact within ASI. The team has conducted analyses to determine what changes need to be employed to support the AMAC as an ancillary body of the Board of Directors. This transition will ensure that Maritime student perspectives are integrated into institutional decision-making and programming while maintaining consistency with existing ASI governance practices.

To support successful implementation, the FIT is advancing a structured onboarding and training strategy that will prepare elected student leaders from both campuses for the first integrated academic year under one ASI. This includes coordinated leadership transitions, guided recruitment, asynchronous summer training, and ongoing development opportunities that integrate AMAC leaders into existing ASI systems and culture.

The implementation will be three-fold: establishing governance and workflow clarity through the AMAC, embedding consistent processes and necessary adaptations for integration, and ensuring long-term sustainability through intentional training, communication, and assessment.

CONCLUSION

Over the course of one year, the ASI Cal Maritime Integration Ad Hoc Committee acted as a key decision-making authority, building professional relationships, trust, and rapport with partners at the Cal Poly Maritime Academy. The intentional approach engaged members from the beginning of the integration, encouraging them to view dissent not as obstruction, but due diligence. This attention to detail became a core tenant of the project as new policies and procedures coalesced with existing ones. The three key deliverables of the committee, the Shared Governance Model, Responsibility Guides, and Bill #26-01, were the result of early problem disaggregation, occasional rescoping, and measured execution. The committee relied on sustained communication outside of regular meetings as a key strategic approach. Progress was actively shared with stakeholder groups to support continuity and transparency at a broader organizational level.

The dissolution of this committee marks a pivotal moment for ASI, which has created functional governance infrastructure and demonstrated a replicable model for collaborative, institutional change.

Attachments:

1. Final Shared Governance Model

2. Final Responsibility Guide – Chair of the AMAC
3. Final Responsibility Guide – Vice Chair of the AMAC
4. Final Responsibility Guide – Member of the AMAC
5. Bill #26-01
6. Summary of Changes to Amend ASI Bylaws