

## BUILDING JUSTICE PODCAST



### **CRISJ Building Justice Podcast**

**Season 3, Episode : The Who, What, and Why of ASI**

**Moderator: Mai Lam**

**Guests: Nataly Andrade-Dominguez and Veronica Boulos**

**Please note:** This transcript may be imperfect. Please contact **Maya Taylor** directly should you have questions, [mayataylor@csus.edu](mailto:mayataylor@csus.edu)

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### **Music lyrics:**

Company under construction, the function, justice for the human family we demand it. Justice, true freedom, equality is a must. Thus, decolonization of the planet. So bust this. People be the power now we're Building Justice. Pulling out divinations, now we're Building Justice. Welcome the planet to the Podcast, "Building Justice," "Building Justice," "Building Justice." Building is to add on, or to do away with.

### **Introduction**

Welcome to Building Justice, a podcast by Sacramento State's Center on Race, Immigration and Social Justice (CRISJ) . We explore critical issues affecting our communities with the hopes of creating a healthier and more just world.

0:44

**Mai:** Your host for today is Mai Lam and I'm joined here today with ASI President and Vice President. If you want to go ahead and introduce yourselves.

0:54

**Nataly:** Hello everyone, my name is Nataly Andrade-Dominguez, serving as ASI President.

**Veronica:** Hello everyone, my name is Veronica Boulos and I serve as the Executive Vice President of ASI

**Mai:** Thank you so much for joining me today. Today the main focus is just to expand student's knowledge on what ASI is and what ASI is doing currently for the critical issues that are impacting our campus. So the first issue at hand, I think, is on the forefront of a lot of students' minds is the financial aid and tuition increase. So, we all know that in the beginning of semester or in summer, even that the CSU Trustees has voted to increase the tuition by 6% annually for next five years. So, to give students perspective, what has ASI Student Government done along with President Wood and other faculty to address the concerns that students having because you know, it could deter a lot of students from continuing on with their college education. So, if either you wanted to be on that question, by all means.

1:56

**Nataly:** Yeah I can take lead. A big part of my role has been actually focusing on the tuition increase since the summer. So this proposal came to the Board of Trustees came from the Board of Trustees back in May. And the California State Student Association, also known as CSSA, is where all the ASI presidents from all 23 campuses gather every month to discuss CSU issues. So basically, any issues that would affect us CSU wide. So we've been meeting, basically every month with the Chancellor's office with the Board of Trustees about this proposal. And as student leaders from all of our campuses, we were, obviously against the tuition increase, but we're trying to give recommendations of what we wanted this proposal to be how we wanted the money to be used, and in what ways at our campuses, can we minimize the effects of the tuition increase.

(2:58) So we did a lot of advocacy work in terms of the original proposal. So for a little bit of context, original proposal did not have an end date. So it wasn't after it wasn't going to be maxed at five years. So it didn't have a date of when it was going to end. We did advocacy work to add a tuition policy now that lives within the CSU policy. So there's a lot of restrictions now about when they can raise tuition, again, how they can raise tuition, why they can raise tuition. And that was a lot of lobbying efforts that came from all this use use ASI student governments. And it wasn't until the September Board of Trustees, Board of Trustees Meeting, when it actually passed, where all the ASI presidents were at the Board of Trustees Meeting, they're giving public comment against the tuition increase.

(3:51) Ultimately, it's still passed. But a lot of our advocacy and lobbying efforts were in reflection of the new tuition proposal. So, there is a 1/3 guarantee that now 1/3 of the money that comes from the tuition increase will go back into financial aid for trying to financial aid reform for Title Nine for basic needs for mental health. So, we did see some of our advocacy reflected within the tuition proposal. Ultimately, it was still raised, which we were like fully against the tuition increase. But in our perspectives, it was better to advocate in areas that we can use our voices to ensure that the student perspective is still there. And so that's what we did kind of CSU wide and what I kind of more led during the summer, but then once on our individual campuses,

once the tuition increase was announced, President Wood met with a lot of us a lot of the board of directors and next morning that it was that that news was released.

(4:54) We met at 7am. And we talked about how can we reduce the impact of the tuition increase at Sac State. So, I don't know, if all students have had the chance to see the video that came out with myself and a few other student leaders on campus about the 10-point plan to reduce the impacts of financial aid of the tuition increase.

(5:16) So, the first one was to launch an awareness campaign focused on tuition increase the tuition increase and financial aid resources. The second one was to establish a tiger team on reducing barriers and financial aid and scholarships. So essentially what the tiger team is, has to do, it basically has a fast turnaround rate where when at the end of December, they have to have a report and what they can do to enhance financial aid and help support students who are dealing with financial aid students. Some of the things that are coming up is adding more financial aid staff. So that's currently in the process, upping our scholarship utilization rate. So helping students apply for scholarships and our state university grant program that we are reforming here at Sac State. Another of the points is to implement a Sac State led lobbying campaign at the state capitol. So essentially, the thought process with that one was to utilize basically that we are in the state capitol, to go to our legislators and ask them for money for student success programs. And we are going to lead hopefully a day where a bunch of us would just go out to the capitol and go lobby for that.

(6:29) The next one is to increase access to information on scholarships on the main website, and Canvas. So this one is currently in the works, where they're going to add the scholarship portal to our main, My Sac State page, where we log into, um, go to Canvas or in our Student Center, the portal is going to be accessed, can be accessed through that. And they are currently also working on adding it to our Canvas page as well. So it's more visible and more central where students will know how to access the scholarship portal. The next one is establishing a basic needs center. And I'm proud to say that the basic needs center will open up next semester. It is a triple size space of what the Food Pantry has right now. And it'll essentially include the Food Pantry, CARES, which is a Crisis Assistance Center, and a new and established clothing closet which all the clothes that is donated will be free for students. So this center will open up next semester. And I'm really proud of the work that we've done with working with President Wood on a new basic needs center. And the last three is removing administrative barriers, increased student employment and increased fundraising for scholarships for students impacted by the tuition increase.

(7:44) So, I know that was a lot. But that was basically what our meeting was about was coming up with this 10 Point Plan. And then we recorded a video and blasted that out to the entire campus community to ensure that students know that President Wood is working hard, and together and collaboratively with ASI with other student leaders to ensure that the impact of the tuition increase is minimal for Sac State Students.

8:13

**Mai:** That is really perfect. You touched base on a lot of topics that we were hoping to cover, especially with financial aid, because that was something that a lot of students were concerned about when they found out by the tuition increase. And then the scholarships, I liked the idea of

you know, putting that onto the Sac State student center login, because now students know more about it. And I, I kind of want to touch on that because I know ASI offers their own scholarships, other departments offer their own scholarships, but I know the application rate isn't the highest necessarily. And there's a lot of you know, of it out there. So which kind of ties into a different topic we wanted to cover was student outreach. If we have a big campus, we got a lot of students here and there's a lot of good stuff here, you know, the Basic Needs Center, which is launching next summer, you said?

9:03

**Nataly:** Next semester, so the spring semester, yes.

9:07

**Mai:** And I know that a lot of students, they do need a lot, they need a lot of resources to support themselves, but they don't know what the campus has to offer. Because I know we have the Food Pantry now. And not a lot people know about that necessarily less are involved with it. So one of the main concerns is that, how do we expand outreach? How do we get students to know more about scholarships about you know, basic resources, counseling, any of that? How do we broaden that so that students know what they have access to? And Veronica, you want to answer that one?

9:42

**Veronica:** Sure. So this has been a question that I think every ASI Board has focused on in the past and will continue to focus on is outreach. And I think right now, we're seeing that a lot of students are going to be really overwhelmed with like, all of the emails they're getting overwhelmed with kind of too much communication, right. So our goal is trying to make sure that we are communicating to students in a more effective way instead of just throwing a lot of information all at them at once. And so we have kind of some mechanisms within the board that we want to use, for example, we, we want to really utilize the fact that the directors have direct communication with our college and a direct communication with their deans. So are all of our college directors are required to meet with their deans once a month, at least once a month, per operating rules. And so our goal is to basically utilize that a little bit more, and they have the ability to send messages within just their college. So we would like them to basically connect more with their deans, and basically utilize that ability to send messages a lot more than they usually would in the past. And that way, they can target their colleges specifically. And instead of, you know, just, you know, students getting a bunch of information randomly from a bunch of different departments and stuff on campus.

(11:12) We also want them to, to communicate more with their constituents. So utilize their office hours more, utilize their committee connections more so different things like that. So we really want the directors to have more of that communication. But we also are working with a lot of higher groups on campus. So with admin, things like that, and making sure that we're within ASI and externally, communicating more effectively. So for example, I serve on our Title IX implementation group on campus. So we have after the closing reports came out, that basically outlined the recommendations for our Title IX and how we can fix them, we created a Title IX implementation group that will implement or work towards implementing those recommendations that were given to us by Cozen O'Connor, the group that made a report or

investigation on all of the CSU campuses. So right now, our main goal was to work on a communication plan of how we can more effectively communicate to students, and especially related specifically to Title IX issues.

(12:27) And so, in that communication plan, we outlined a lot of different forms. And one of them that we would really like to do is using Canvas a lot more effectively. So Canvas is one place that students will always visit all the time consistently, to access all of their classes. And that is under the jurisdiction of faculty right now. And we're hoping to work with them to see if we can get a module on there that is focused on basic needs. That way, when students need to, you know, access information that sometimes is hard to find on campus, they always know that that module will have everything related to basic needs everything related to Title IX, things related to mental health, stuff like that, that, you know, sometimes you have to really go searching through the ASI or searching through the Sac state website to find. That way it's just right there on your canvas, like homepage. In the module, we want to like sort everything by the different types of resources. And I think sometimes there is a disconnection of communication between students and admin or students and faculty. And so, we really want to make sure that faculty are aware of where these resources are, and that all of like, the information is updated on Canvas, because sometimes students feel more comfortable to go to faculty when they're experiencing any issues. And that's kind of a direct relationship that a lot of students have is the student-professor relationship. And if they go to the professor, they go to a mentor, or staff member on campus and ask them for help, we want to make sure that that, you know, that staff member or employee or you know, faculty member knows where the proper resources are to send the student to get the help that they need.

(14:10) Because it's really, it's already hard enough for a student to, you know, get that communication and get that help from the beginning. And we don't want them to, you know, get sent to the wrong place or not know where to go and then they're most likely not going to go again and get held a second time or look for it even more. So, I think that's a goal. It's like we really do want to make sure that the current information we have is updated, that the current employees, staff, faculty, everyone is aware of where all the resources are on campus, and make sure that communication and that training and learning is there. But on top of that, we want to also utilize the current avenues that we have through Canvas, through the board members meeting, the board of directors meeting with their deans and being listened to their sections, more of that personal connection I think needs to be improved because I think that's where students are able to you to kind of get the help that they need better is through a personal connection of, you know, meeting with someone and you know, a warm handoff into, you know, the resource that they need.

(15:08) So, I think those are some techniques that we're really trying to focus on right now. Especially with, you know, so much changing with FAFSA, so much changing with the tuition increase, we want to make sure that students are being able to get the help that they need, so that they don't run into more issues than you know, already, all of the things that are going to be coming at them this upcoming year.

15:37

**Mai:** I think it's a really good point you made about increasing the personal connection between students and professors and faculty, because it can be hard to you know, reach out to faculty,

professors, when you don't know, but then you don't feel comfortable enough to do so. And I know you touch lightly on it with the Title IX, you said it was a Title IX implementation. Can you go into little more detail about that, because I know that there has been a lot of incidents regarding sexual harassment and sexual assault, whether it be on campus, or whether it be in the dorms, and it is an issue for a lot of students, especially those who live in the dorms, or those who attend, like evening classes, or they happen to be alone most of the nights they're here. So how do we or our student leaders or as a faculty, you know, anybody with the presence and authority to do so, how do we make sure that students need for safety and concerns for safety are being addressed? And how do we move forward to implement the measures the tools or training to make sure that people feel are safe and feel safe to attend Sac State?

16:55

**Veronica:** Yeah, that's a really good question. So this group basically is in charge with right now our main goal is to come up with the communication aspect of it. So we were tasked with, you know, having an updated website where students can access and just giving a plan of communication to the president of how we plan to communicate, you know, our process and what we're doing within the committee, but also how we plan to have the campus communicate with the students, all the resources, all the help, the changes to Title IX, things like that. So that was our main goal right now is do working on a communication plan. And then once we have that, we want to kind of work towards looking at the recommendations that were given to us by Cozen. And basically, how can we implement those on campus, and our goal is to come up with the ways and the kind of the, the avenues for us to implement them. And then, you know, work with the president's office to see what is feasible, what can we do, how can we fix those and there are some action items that are more simple, like quick fixes, but there also are going to be things that are going to take, you know, more time to actually implement on campus. So, we are looking at a lot of different things and kind of going even digging, digging deeper into the structure of the, of our university and how everything is structured on campus. And even starting from from the kind of the basics and the, you know, the baseline, you know, bare bones of it. And then we want to kind of build upon that and, and have a more detailed, organized layout of what, what we would like to see in the future regarding Title Nine, specifically and safety.

(18:34) A big part of that is, is listening, and informing students. So, a lot, there's a lot of misinformation around like, what the title nine process is, why certain things maybe cannot be kept confidential. And a lot of it isn't specifically Sac State policies, a lot of it is legally, we have to follow the legal policies of Title IX. So I know sometimes it can feel really frustrating for students when you know you want you have an image in your head of how you want your, your case to go through. And sometimes when that doesn't happen, because of legal constraints or obstacles, it feels that, you know, the university has failed you and and I think that that's kind of our goal is to make sure that we outline, what is the process of, you know, a report going through Title IX. What are the steps for it, what is going to be and being completely transparent, because that's the least that we could do as a university is being completely transparent with students of, you know, what parts are going to be confidential, what parts or is the other person going to have to know when they you know, have a report against them, certain things like that, so that a student doesn't feel that they weren't told the full information from the beginning, and that maybe

they wouldn't have gone through this process if they had known all the information in the beginning.

(19:50) And going through the Title IX process is a very difficult and emotional process sometimes for a lot of students. And so we want to make sure at the very least that they know before they they go through it, they're given the full information, they're given all of their options very clearly. And then that way you know, it that way, you know, we can help them the best way that we can on campus. But I do think that that's a big part of it is really informing them of like, what we are able to do what are like our constraints legally, versus like maybe things on campus that are more constraints that we can we can work on and fix as a group. And so, I think that's a big one. But I also know that Nataly works, is working on with President Wood on the campus safety task force. So that's a big thing that they that they've been working on as well.

(20:46) And so, we have a lot of different groups here on campus that are trying to tackle the same issue of campus safety, and kind of from different avenues, like we're tackling it a little bit from the Title IX avenue and, and kind of, you know, working to fix that process, the whole Title IX process. And then, you know, they're working on a more immediate campus safety, that, you know, to fix things right now, and, and we're kind of, I think, looking at it more long term. So, two different views, which I think is very important right now. Because, of course, campus safety is something that needs to be fixed right now and addressed right now, because it is affecting students right now. But at the same time, it seems there also needs to be more systemic long-term changes to our processes and policy like Title IX and campus safety. So, we're trying to tackle those from two different perspectives. But our main goal is to make sure that at the very least, that we're being transparent with students and very least, that we're listening to what students want us to do and, and communicating with them what is feasible, what isn't maybe necessarily feasible and working with them to kind of, you know, reach a place where students still feel safe, and that we are able to fix what we can. So, it's kind of a it's a long, it's a long process. But I think there's a lot of different groups tackling it right now and taking it very seriously.

22:03

**Mai:** Yeah, and like you said, this system isn't going to change overnight. And it's definitely a from the ground up kind of process. And I know that you know, ASI and Title IX system is being tackled from many different viewpoints. As you said, like, you know, within ASI, there is, I believe, the sexual awareness committee that that's headed and the task force that Nataly's heading, and all that is working towards promoting a safer, a safer environment for all students. And like you said, like it is just the beginning, it's just making sure that students feel heard. They know that they are being, that there is somebody who's listening to them. But like you said, the timeline process is very emotional. It's very taxing. So, what are some of the resources that students can turn to when they're going through this?

22:59

**Veronica:** Yeah, so I think one of the things that people might not utilize as much is, is WEAVE. So, WEAVE is basically our, like confidential advocates on campus, and they handle a lot of things that relate to Title IX that people might not feel as comfortable, kind of, you know, going through the whole investigation process, and their, their main job is to be completely confidential. So, I think, to me, that that's a resource that, you know, sometimes I think how to

word this. So, something we've talked about a little bit with Title IX is that sometimes a lot of students also just also need a healing process. Like, it isn't just about, you know, getting going through an investigation. And sometimes it's a big part of it, too, is the student needs to be able to heal and process what they've experienced. And I think sometimes that's, that's a very important aspect that people don't pay as much attention to. So that's where mental health counselors even, you know, our primary care, urgent care of the Well and WEAVE, like all of these kind of healing, healing resources where the student can kind of go and get kind of the help to process what they might have experienced, I think is very, you know, under unnoticed sometimes. And sometimes it feels like the only way to do it is to go in and, you know, start an investigation with Title IX, and kind of, you know, start a record and all of that, but I do think people do, you need to also think about the fact that they've also experienced something very dramatic, and something that that they do need to process and I think that's where we really does help a lot. So, we have two WEAVE confidential advocates right now on campus. And basically, if students contact them, they are, you know, you can meet with them, you can talk with them, and you can basically, they'll help you through a healing process, processing where what has happened to you and, and it's fully confidential. So I think that that's something that a lot of students worry about when they experience something like this of like, oh my gosh, am I going to, you know, is it going to be blasted am I going to have to tell all of these people like who's going to know, I don't want anyone to know. And that shouldn't hinder your process of, of healing and processing. So I think that's where that eliminates that, that worry. And you're able to just focus on your, on your your healing process and recovery, and without the worry of going to anyone or, you know, of having to potentially have things be public between the person that might have done something to you. So, I think that is one of the resources that is very underutilized.

(26:01) And I think, as well, I think the, you know, obviously, our mental health services on campus need to be improved. And that's something that we've been also trying to advocate for, for a very long time. So, a lot of times students don't feel that they have the proper access to mental health. But students do get, do get counseling, free counseling services on our campus, as well. And I believe it's 10 sessions of free counseling services, if I'm not mistaken. And then the counselor will help refer them to somebody afterwards that they can continue their work with. But I think our main goal is to also work on expanding that in a way and, and try to make sure that students have the proper access to mental health. Because again, I just want to emphasize, I think it's really important that that students have the access to the avenue of Title IX, where they can do an official report, but they also have the access to healing and processing what has happened, what has happened to them.

(27:03) So, it's two different avenues and two different pathways that students have the choice to go down. And Nataly, I don't know, if you want to add anything, we're talking about the resources. And so, I brought up a little bit about WEAVE, and a little bit about mental health, and the Title IX out there as well.

27:21

**Nataly:** I think I just like to say the most important aspect, moving forward with our new president, when it comes to student resources. I know there has been a big fight of students having to advocate for themselves to get those resources of students having to basically carry all the weight and begging their campus administrators to listen to them. And I want to say that I'm



very confident in saying that that battle is not going to be as much of a battle now with our with our new president. Since day one that President Wood has been here he has been very open and active and ensuring that reevaluating the resources we have now and what can we do better, more than what the chancellor's office is expecting, more than what students are expecting, more than what is already lived on our campus when it comes to resources.

(28:22) So, I want to say that we're on the right path when it comes to reforming Title IX, when it comes to more mental health resources, as he is in the process of hiring 7 more counselors for mental health that will match the gap that we are facing right now. Where we have the Title IX implementation team that Veronica spoke on, where our basic needs center is coming, and we're getting more funding for. So, I'm very hopeful that, you know, we are limited in what we have now. But I'm hopeful that under this leadership with our board and with other student leaders who are very active on campus, that we're going to be able to see the resources that we deserve, and that we need within the next couple of years.

29:11

**Mai:** Thank you both for you know, informing me and all the students listening about those resources. The confidential resource, I did not know we had that. And I'm sure a lot of students aren't too aware about it. That's sad, because I feel like a lot of students should know about it. And if they have to, they should turn to it. So, you know, that kind of just ties back into the outreach initiative, but how do we let students know more about this? And I think for the students who are listening who really, you know, feel the same way, as I know that you guys do and many of us do that. What can we do? What more can we do for the students on campus? So, to kind of shift gears a little bit, for students listening that want to get involved, that want to do more than just you know, read about something and learn about something, hear presentation. How do students get involved? What is a steppingstone? Like, like if they want to, you know, be ASI President or Vice President, how did they begin their journey to get to a place where they feel like they are giving back to the campus.

30:23

**Nataly:** I think the first step for that is self-recognition within oneself that you don't have to be this perfect person to be in these positions. I think that is a big misconception of running for student government or being a part of student government or being part of these roles; is that you have to be perfect through and through, that you have to know everything and everyone. That is false. That is the most false narrative that can be written about people, students who are involved. I mean, Veronica and I first joined when we were freshmen and we absolutely knew nothing or no one, or anything about ASI.

(31:07) And, um, I always say this to students: that if you have the dedication, if you have the strength, the love, and want to do this work, then you can do it. You don't have to be this 4.0 student who has the perfect life. We all come from different backgrounds, from not affluent backgrounds, and I think, especially with the campus diversity that we have, it's so important that we have so many different students representing the different students that we have on our campus. And it's just about taking that first step. It's about finding yourself because it's challenging, it's intimidating, it's scary to start getting involved, working with campus administration, with working in committees. It's scary, it's intimidating, you don't know what to expect, or if they'll accept you, but you have to take that first step. It's kind of like pushing

yourself into doing that and continuing that, continuing that work, ensuring that they know that you're serious. Like "Hey, I actually want to keep doing this" and pushing and pushing and continuing to be involved in it. And it's heavy when you have a lot of workload, probably work a job and you have 5-6 classes, it's difficult to try and manage your school life, personal life and your advocacy life because this is really a venue of advocacy.

(32:37) And I think it's just important for students to know that first, that it is okay to be who you are and still be involved. You don't have to be this perfect image that we all think student leaders are or really anyone who's really involved. You bring your own unique background and experiences and make that into the student leader you want to be. And I think that's first and second is really committing. Committing that you are going to stay involved, you are going to join committees, you are going to keep up with them, you are going to fight your way in. It really is a fight in and it's sad to say that it feels like you have to fight your way in, and I want to say confidently that me and Veronica had to fight our way in. We had to fight our way in and stand your ground and continue working to the top, because it's not just like "Alright, I'm gonna be President tomorrow" and that's it. It's really not as easy as it might sound but as long as these students have the dedication and passion, I think that's really the biggest thing to do this. And anyone could do both of our roles it's just about being, um, being someone who has the willingness to want to do it, and know that it's going to be difficult, this position, our positions are really difficult, being a student on top of it. But if they have the strength within themselves to do these roles, they can absolutely do it.

34:00

**Veronica:** I do want to add. Everything that Nataly said is exactly how I believe. Both of us, we both sat on the board last year, um, kind of starting in other positions and working our way up, like Nataly said, we have been serving on committees since our freshman year. And so I think serving on committees is a very nice way to start because you start to kind of learn a little bit about advocacy, a little bit about ASI as an organization advocates specifically, and it helps you kind of create those connections that then help you if you are in a position to get things that you want, that you want to do done. And I think a big thing to it, that I do want to emphasize, that Nataly did, is that, you know, it's, not only is it we want you and it's okay for you to be yourself and it's okay for you to not know every single thing, um, it's also, I think that might make you better at your job, better at being a director, better at being a board member.

(35:14) When you are able to recognize "Maybe this isn't an issue that I know everything about", it isn't our job to know everything about everything, but rather to listen to students and to give students the ability to tell us what they need from us, and I think that's a big part of our job. We're elected by the students to represent the students. So, we need to go beyond just our personal experiences, just our personal lives that kind of allow us to have these points of view, but also speak to students, listen to students and understand what they need from us to represent them. We can't do our jobs properly if we don't know what the student body needs from us and if we don't know what the students, um, need us to advocate for them. So, I think that's a big part of it too. It's just taking a step back from us personally and from our roles personally and allowing our students to come up and kind of tell us what they need from us and listening to them.

(36:17) And I think committees are really, really important, like Nataly said, we have a lot of different types of committees. Specifically, the university ones, a lot of times it's hard to

have a student perspective heard on a larger university level. And so, I think with the university committees, um, a couple students sit on there, so when you sit on a university committee, you represent the entire student perspective and the students in general. On a committee, there is usually faculty or admin, so it is really influential. For most of these committees, the faculty or the admin do really value the student perspective and it does help them do their jobs better, so, I think in those cases we do want to push for students to jump into these positions. Not only does it help you with professional development and personal development, but it also helps you make connections, and it helps you advocate for certain things on a much larger scale. So, for example, we have committees ranging from academic issues on campus, curriculum, campus safety, so a lot of different things. So, not only do we sit on committees as board members, we also appoint students to sit on them and represent their perspectives and represent other student perspectives that board members wouldn't be able to represent. I think that's a big part of it. The committees allow other students that have different experiences than others to come forward and present their views to the committee. So, I think that's a really good part of it.

(37:55) And listening, as I want to emphasize, is really important to the job that we do and we're not going to know every single problem that every student deals with on campus. And even when I was in a director position last year, I didn't know every single problem that my college was experiencing and that's okay. It can seem intimidating sometimes, and it can feel, especially the campaign process, sometimes it can feel too political or it's not something I'm interested in but honestly it is a job that anybody can do, with any type of background. I think it's important that we have people from different backgrounds, it's important that we get the perspective of students that maybe weren't as involved with ASI, and you get a fresh outlook. We get the perspectives of students from lower-income backgrounds, from international students, from people of color, like a lot of different types of experiences that help us do our jobs better and bring all of that to the board and make an informed vote when we vote issues that affect students.

39:10

**Mai:** I think, definitely, that the both of you pointed out that to be involved in student government isn't something that is limited to anybody. It's [for] anybody who cares and anyone who wants to be a part of it should be a part of it. I also want to note for those listening, that you don't have to be a political science major, you don't have to be a criminal justice major, if you are just a Sac State student who cares about the issues going on, as you both would agree, then I would encourage you, we all would encourage you to join a committee or anything that allows you to amplify your voices and to get your point across. This is meant for everybody; it's meant for all students who go here to be able to get administration and faculty to listen. And at the end of the day, it is your education, so I think, as you both point out wonderfully, that it's not you have to know everything about everything to join.

(39:59) I do have to credit Veronica for getting me into ASI, cause I just happened to sit next to her in a class one day and she was like "You should join an ASI committee, here you go!" and now I'm here and I'm involved. So, I thank you for that. I don't think I would have had the courage to join, because I think a lot of students do feel that intimidation, it can seem very political but at the end of the day, like you said, it's about listening to students, it's about keeping that perspective in. So, thank you both for the work you do. I know it's a lot of work, it's taxing, it's draining but, you know, you guys are doing amazing. I'm not biased at all, cause I know you

guys. Just to wrap up on a final note, can you recommend anything, like what committees to join, what clubs to join, if students do want to get involved maybe next semester?

40:56

**Nataly:** I would say that, my personal opinion, the best place to start would be ASI internal committees because they're more friendly. And not that university committees are not friendly, but I think it's way more intimidating of being the only student in a university committee, because typically university committees are just admin, staff, faculty, and one or two students. So, I always think ASI internal committees are more friendly and we have 14 of them they focus on different areas that range from environmental issues to social justice issues to academic issues. These internal committees are just students. So, it's a group of students who have the same interests in these topics and get to work with other board members in their advocacy efforts regarding these issues. You really build a community there because you're all there for the same reason and you make friends. I know me and Veronica have made a bunch of friends in internal committees within itself. And just to get to know other people who are from different colleges, different majors, but you share the same interests.

(42:07) And I think, to me, that's not only a great way to network and meet people but to really see if it's something you're really interested in doing. I know me joining ASI internal committees really shaped the roles that I wanted to run for in ASI. After this last election, this was my third time running and I ran for a director position and everything that I got from wanting to run in ASI came from ASI internal committees because the board members chair those committees, so they always share their experiences how ASI is and they're always saying "You should run, you should run", so I definitely think it's a great place to start and then build up from there. Start with some internal committees and then once you kind of get the hang of it, jump into some university committees or do both at the same time. It's really based off one's comfort level, but I do like to always note that university committees are majority faculty, staff and administration, and depending on which one it is sometimes it might just be admin, sometimes it might just be faculty. So, there's levels of intimidation, some of them you're even sitting in a room with President Wood, so that's even more intimidating. So, it depends on the comfort level of the student, but I always recommend ASI internal committees, totally unbiased, but just because it is way more student friendly.

43:46

**Veronica:** Yeah, I agree. So, I overlook all of our ASI internal committees and basically have board members that chair each one of them. And I think that's also a really good way, like Nataly said, that students can connect with the board members and learn more about being in a board position. But, also, having a board member that chairs them, I think creates a really good mix of, you know, it's a safe environment with fully students but also the board members have connections to go beyond the committee and bring the student feedback to relevant connections that they make.

(44:13) So, for example, I chair our student justice and equity council, which is an internal ASI committee and we're dealing with a lot of social justice issues on campus right now. So, our main goal for this committee, for this semester, is to create a survey, because we realize as a committee, we can't decide for the students what they're experiencing related to social justice and equity, so instead we're going to let the students tell us. So, we're going to create a

survey and release it out to students and have it out for a while. And basically, have it next year, deliverable to admin, or to the relevant people that would deal with social justice and equity issues, and basically tell them “These are what the issues are because we got it directly from the students, they told us what they’re experiencing on campus.” And that way, you know, I can connect with certain people like the Division of Inclusive Excellence, which I have connections with through my position and bring those connections to the committee and be able to, kind of make a more direct motion beyond that, like admin or faculty. I think that’s what the benefit of having board members chair the internal committees, they can kind of be a warm hand off and create a closer connection between the admin and then between the students.

(45:26) And I do wanna shout out some of our other committees, like Nataly said, I do think that internal committees are great place for students to start and move their way up or stay, I’ve always been on internal committees since my freshman year. I have done some university ones, but I always try my best to at least be on a couple internal ones. So, Lobby Corps is chaired by our Legislative Affairs Coordinator, Sidra, and it’s an amazing committee, it’s one of my favorites, I’ve been on it for a couple of years now. You basically get to focus on any issues that affect students at Sac State or CSU students in general, and you advocate for those issues in the legislature, and you work with CSSA, you work with ASI, you know, you get to basically advocate for issues on a much larger scale, besides just here on our campus.

(46:13) I also chair our Student Marketing & Outreach Committee and so right now we’re focusing a lot on marketing the board of directors and making sure students know what the board of directors do because we were elected into these positions to represent students and a lot of times they don’t know half of the things that we do. So, it’s important that were transparent with them, that they’re able to hold us accountable and know what their student representatives are doing. So, that’s a big part of our focus this semester, this year and trying to outreach to students and market what the board of directors are doing, and hopefully increase communication and transparency between the board of directors and the students.

(46:57) And we have a lot of other ones. We have a safety committee, Wellness, Safety and Sexual Assault committee, and then we also have the Student Academic Senate and City Ambassadors and Green Team, which focuses on environmental issues, so we have a range of different committees for different types of issues on campus. Everything that panders to student life, or academics, or anything that affects students on campus: there’s a committee for it, whether it’s university or internal. So, it’s a really good way for students to, kind of, get there foot in the door, to connect with board members to connect with staff, faculty, admin. It’s a really, really good connection and we allow students to advocate for themselves, and advocate for the rest of the students, through these committees. So, it’s really a big avenue to uplift and empower students to advocate for themselves.

47:48

**Mai:** Yeah, I want to echo what Nataly and Veronica are saying, is that, you know, there are options for you, whether it is a full-time commitment or if you are little on time, there is something for you to get involved. And I will echo that internal committees are a great steppingstone to something even higher, if that is what your goal is. So, next spring semester, if any of you are wanting to get involved you still can. So, I would suggest and would encourage you all to take a look into it, read a little bit about it, see what interests you, what you want to do on campus, with your time here and get involved. It’s never too late, you will always build

connections, you will always learn. And Veronica said, you can get them directly, reach out to them. They are there for you, email them, social media, anything. I will say they are very, very nice people, so they will help you out. And with that unfortunately, we are coming to an end of the episode, so Nataly and Veronica, I thank you guys both so much for taking time to come and talk to me and allow students to know a little more about our wonderful student government.

### **Concluding Language**

Thank you for listening. We hope our ongoing conversations spark understandings, empathies, and motivation to join the struggle for a better future for all. {PAUSE.....} You just listened to the 'Building Justice' podcast. The information contained in this podcast, including its title and description represent the views and opinions of the hosts and guests and do not necessarily represent the views or opinions of the Sacramento State, CRISJ and/or the 'Building Justice' podcast committee

### **Outro Music Lyrics**

No more penalties and no more wars. Based on the actions. Now, time for "Building Justice," "Building Justice." Time for building justice, justice.