

Associated Students, Inc.
California Polytechnic State University
San Luis Obispo

Resolution #26-04

RESOLUTION ON INSTITUTIONAL GROWTH AND “LEARN BY DOING” ETHOS

- WHEREAS: The ASI Board of Directors serves as the official voice of students at California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly), San Luis Obispo; and
- WHEREAS: Cal Poly was founded in 1901 with the guiding motto “Learn by Doing,” which remains the central philosophy of the institution’s pedagogy and mission today, emphasizing hands-on, experiential education across all academic programs¹; and
- WHEREAS: Cal Poly’s administration, faculty, and students describe *Learn by Doing* as a core educational philosophy that integrates active engagement, real-world projects, undergraduate research, internships, and collaborative problem-solving into the student experience²; and
- WHEREAS: A central component of Cal Poly’s educational model is the Teacher-Scholar Model (TSM), which will allocate three designated Weighted Teaching Units (WTUs) to support tenure-line faculty engagement in undergraduate research, scholarship, and creative activities³; and
- WHEREAS: The TSM was defined and adopted by the Academic Senate in Resolution AS-725-11⁴, citing greater importance of scholarship in the mission of our institution and substantial retention and engagement benefits for both students and faculty; and
- WHEREAS: Cal Poly is among the few institutions within the California State University system experiencing sustained enrollment growth⁵, and its campus master planning efforts project an increase to approximately 22,500 net full-time equivalent students, or roughly 25,000 by headcount, by 2035⁶; and
- WHEREAS: In support of this planned enrollment growth, Cal Poly is undertaking significant capital development projects, including the construction of new residential facilities providing 7,200 additional on-campus beds⁷, as well as academic and student support

1 <https://ucm.calpoly.edu/university-seal-landing>

2 <https://www.calpoly.edu/strategic-plan>

3 <https://content-calpoly-edu.s3.amazonaws.com/academicaffairs/1/images/TSM%202026%20Implementation%20FAQs%20Draft%20Dec%2012%20%281%29.pdf>

4 <https://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1725&context=senateresolutions>

5 <https://tableau.calstate.edu/views/ApplicationsandAdmissionsDashboard-ExecutiveSummary/ExecutiveSummary>

6 <https://masterplan.calpoly.edu/docs/cal-poly-campus-master-plan-2019-06-27.pdf#page=10>

7 <https://masterplan.calpoly.edu/docs/cal-poly-campus-master-plan-2019-06-27.pdf#page=10>

infrastructure such as the Student Success Center, set to open in fall 2027⁸; and

WHEREAS: Cal Poly is the final campus within the California State University system to transition from the quarter system to the semester system, with the first semester term beginning fall 2026, requiring extensive academic and curricular redesign⁹; and

WHEREAS: As part of the quarter-to-semester transition, the university is converting instructional units, including both academic credit units and the associated Weighted Teaching Units (WTUs) assigned to each course¹⁰; and

WHEREAS: Under the Collective Bargaining Agreement, instructional appointments are based on a standard, full-time workload equal to 15 WTUs per academic term, with “overload” defined as any assignment above this level¹¹; and

WHEREAS: In the CSU Course Classification System, standard four-unit lecture courses carry four WTUs of faculty workload¹² which, under the quarter system, typically translates to three courses per term for faculty; and

WHEREAS: Under the semester system, tenure-line faculty will be given three units of Assigned Time each year, making the standard teaching load equivalent to four courses in one semester and three courses in the other (i.e., a “four-three” model), compared to the quarter system that made the standard teaching load equivalent to three courses per quarter¹³; and

WHEREAS: This conversion may also result in a non-equivalent adjustment to faculty office hour expectations, as a full-time lecturer may be required to offer a minimum of three office hours per week under the semester system, a reduction from the existing four-hour requirement under the quarter system¹⁴; and

WHEREAS: AS-1000-26 was not approved or accepted by the University President on February 25, 2026¹⁵, but a similar proposal may soon follow by the Academic Senate; and

WHEREAS: Students have raised concerns that these shifts may lead to fewer and less meaningful opportunities for student-faculty engagement, divert faculty attention and commitment to undergraduate

8 <https://afd.calpoly.edu/facilities/planning-capital-projects/project-news/student-success/>

9 <https://www.calpoly.edu/semester-conversion>

10 https://content-calpoly-edu.s3.amazonaws.com/semesters/1/Conversion-Resources/Semester-Conversion_Unit-Matrix_2022.08.09.pdf

11 <https://www.calstate.edu/csu-system/faculty-staff/labor-and-employee-relations/Documents/unit3-cfa/article12.pdf>

12 <https://academicprograms.calpoly.edu/content/academicpolicies/policies-courses/course-classification>

13 Jacob Sparks, personal communication, February 25, 2026.

14 https://content-calpoly-edu.s3.amazonaws.com/academicsenate/1/Resolutions/2025-2026/AS-1000-26_Resolution-on-UFPP-12.2-Office-Hours_2026.01.13.pdf

15 <https://academicsenate.calpoly.edu/content/resolutions>

research opportunities, and ultimately regress Cal Poly's long-standing commitment to its "Learn by Doing" ethos¹⁶; and

WHEREAS: Faculty have expressed concern that the increase in teaching load resulting from the quarter-to-semester conversion will reduce opportunities for student mentoring and will make it more difficult for faculty to provide the individualized attention that students deserve¹⁷; and

THEREFORE
BE IT
RESOLVED:

The ASI Board of Directors wishes to affirm enrollment growth as a necessary response to increased demand for access to higher education, and recognizes Cal Poly's responsibility as a member of the CSU system to expand educational opportunity by admitting and educating a greater number of students; and

FURTHERMORE
BE IT
RESOLVED:

The Board further expresses concern that rapid or ill-coordinated enrollment growth may produce unintended, negative consequences that go *beyond* increased pressure on campus services, including less face-to-face engagement with faculty; and

FURTHERMORE
BE IT
RESOLVED:

The Board urges the University to continue prioritizing and protecting the Teacher-Scholar Model and undergraduate research opportunities as central components of Cal Poly's academic identity and educational mission; and

FURTHERMORE
BE IT
RESOLVED:

The Board calls upon the University to maintain small class sizes and a low student-to-faculty ratio to preserve Cal Poly's high standard of education and ensure that face-to-face faculty engagement is accessible not only to students participating in undergraduate research, but to the broader student body; and

FURTHERMORE
BE IT
RESOLVED:

The Board affirms that efforts to expand access to faculty engagement must be pursued in a manner that supports sustainable workload practices, recognizing that the student and faculty experience are fundamentally interconnected and one should not be advanced at the expense of the other; and

FURTHERMORE
BE IT
RESOLVED:

The Board recognizes and commends the University's recent commitment to hiring 130 additional faculty members and urges continued prioritization of faculty recruitment and retention efforts

¹⁶ Confirmed by ASI Board of Directors, Meeting #26-08 (Zoom recording, January 21, 2026)

¹⁷ Jacob Sparks, personal communication, February 25, 2026.

through the substantial allocation of resources to expand instructional capacity; and

FURTHERMORE
BE IT

RESOLVED: The Board also commends the University's provision of three units of Assigned Time to tenure-line faculty in recognition of their research and scholarly activities, and firmly opposes the adoption of a "four-four" instructional model or any comparable increase in teaching load that imposes a reduction to Assigned Time; and

FURTHERMORE
BE IT

RESOLVED: The Board believes as Cal Poly navigates the transition to the semester system and implements large-scale strategic initiatives, the University should approach growth with intentionality and transparency to mitigate unintended consequences and uphold our "Learn by Doing" ethos; and

FURTHERMORE
BE IT

RESOLVED: That this resolution be sent to Jeffrey D. Armstrong, University President; Albert A. Liddicoat, Provost; Terrance Harris, Vice President for Strategic Enrollment Management and Student Affairs; Simone Aloisio, Associate Vice Provost for Academic Personnel; Jerusha Greenwood, Chair of the Academic Senate; Rachel Fernflores, Director and Project Manager of Semester Conversion; Marc Swackhamer, Dean of the College of Architecture and Environmental Design; Damon M. Fleming, Dean of the Orfalea College of Business; Brian Horgan, Dean of the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences; Kate Murphy, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts; Dean Wendt, Dean of the Bailey College of Science and Mathematics; and Robert Crockett, Interim Dean of the College of Engineering.

Certified as the true and correct copy,
in witness thereof, I have set my hand
and Seal of the San Luis Obispo Cal
Poly Associated Students, Inc. this 20
day of May 2026.

ADOPTED at the regular meeting of
the Board of Directors at San Luis
Obispo Cal Poly Associated Students,
Inc. this 13 day of May 2026.

Attest:

ASI Secretary

Signed:

ASI Chair of the Board

Signed:

ASI President

Authored By:

Jett Palmer, Bailey College of Science and Mathematics

Stone Ramage, College of Architecture and Environmental Design