

Milestones, Cal Poly Historical Facts

- 1901** Legislation founding the California Polytechnic School signed into law.
- 1902** Leroy Anderson appointed first director of Cal Poly.
- 1903** First classes held with a total enrollment of 15 women and men.
- 1929** Legislation passed limiting enrollment to men only.
- 1933** Julian A. McPhee, Chief of the Bureau of Agricultural Education, appointed Cal Poly President, moving the Bureau headquarters to Cal Poly.
- 1936** Third year of instruction added to make Cal Poly a technical school.
- 1937** Cal Poly renamed California State Polytechnic School by the California State Legislature.
- 1940** State Board of Education authorized granting of Bachelor of Science degrees upon completion of fourth year and changed School to College.
- 1942** In June, the first BS degrees awarded to 24 men.
- 1943 to 1946** During World War II, military training contracts brought two Navy programs to the campus: Naval Flight Preparatory School and Naval Academic Refresher Unit Program. Civilian enrollment down to 80.
- 1947** Legislation passed officially changing all Education Code references to Cal Poly from School to College.
- 1956** Women students again admitted to Cal Poly.
- 1961** On July 1, control over 17 state colleges changed from the State Board of Education to the newly created State Board of Trustees.
- 1966** President McPhee retired after 33 years as Chief Executive Officer.
- 1967** Robert E. Kennedy appointed President by the Board of Trustees.
- 1972** Renamed California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo.
- 1979** Warren J. Baker appointed president by the Board of Trustees.
- 1996** Phase I of the Cal Poly Plan implemented.
- 2001** New Cal Poly Master Plan approved by California State University Board of Trustees.
- 2002** Students approve college-based fees to support education quality.

Source: Dr. Robert E. Kennedy, President Emeritus, Cal Poly

Cal Poly's Mission Statement

As a predominantly undergraduate university serving California, the mission of Cal Poly is to discover, integrate, articulate and apply knowledge. This it does by emphasizing teaching; engaging in research; and by participating in the various communities, local, state, and international, with which it pursues common interests; and where appropriate, providing students with the unique experience of direct involvement with the actual challenges of their disciplines in the United States and abroad.

Cal Poly is dedicated to complete respect for human rights and the development of the full potential of each of its individual members. Further, it is committed to providing an environment where all share in the common responsibility to safeguard each other's rights, encourage a mutual concern for individual growth and appreciate the benefit of a diverse campus community.

Statement of Purpose

When the legislature established Cal Poly in 1901, it acknowledged the need for varied educational opportunities and outlined special goals for this institution. Those special goals were reaffirmed by the Trustees of the California State University and Colleges and the Legislature in 1961 when Cal Poly's enabling act was revised and reenacted.

Certain functions of the California Polytechnic State University are held in common with all State University campuses, while others are unique to Cal Poly. "The primary function is the provision of undergraduate instruction and graduate instruction through the master's degree. (Education Code 66608). In addition to the functions provided by section 66608, the California State Polytechnic University shall be authorized to emphasize the applied fields of agriculture, engineering, business, home economics and other occupational and professional fields." (Education Code 90404)

Cal Poly undergraduate students identify with their major from the beginning of their Cal Poly career. Students select majors at the time they apply for admission and they take courses in their major starting in their first year. This gives them a chance to decide early if they have chosen a field that is appropriate to their interests and abilities. It also helps students associate with faculty and other students in their field, share common interests and learn in a supportive atmosphere.

"Learn by Doing"

"Learn by doing" has been part of Cal Poly's philosophy from the beginning. Cal Poly has evolved from a vocational high school into a major university, but a hands-on approach to teaching still remains. Classes emphasize active learning methods and include a high proportion of lab work and field work. Activities both on and off campus provide opportunities to apply what is learned in the classroom. Cal Poly's core values, as reaffirmed in its Visionary Pragmatism report, include "learning at the center of its endeavors, the importance of continuous learning and the preservation of valuable student/faculty relationships."

Cal Poly emphasizes a complete education which teaches students to think logically, evaluate critically and communicate clearly. Instruction incorporates the ideals of a good work ethic, honesty, and the acceptance of individual differences. The university promotes an effective education which will instill an appreciation for life long learning. Cal Poly is committed to excellence in all areas of education.

University Plans

The Cal Poly Strategic Plan (as amended through 1995)

Cal Poly's Strategic Plan was developed as a means to guide the University over the next several years. Embodying the University's mission statement, it established a direction for achieving the goals and priorities that will direct future planning, resource allocation and decision making. The policies address the following topics: academic programs, faculty scholarship, staff professional growth and achievement, student satisfaction, diversity, governance and collegiality, institutional size and university relations and image. The Strategic Plan is available at <http://president.calpoly.edu/univ/stratplan.html>

Commitment to Visionary Pragmatism (September 29, 1995)

Developed by a faculty committee, the "Commitment to Visionary Pragmatism" report developed a series of statements of the desired characteristics of a Cal Poly graduate. To implement the recommendations in this report, the University engaged in a comprehensive review of its General Education program. The report can be read at <http://president.calpoly.edu/univ/visionary.html>

The Cal Poly Plan

During the 1995-96 academic year, a Steering Committee representing organized campus constituency groups prepared the Cal Poly Plan. According to a set of principles, including broad consultation, modest enrollment growth and accountability for investments and outcomes the Cal Poly Plan (a focused implementation of the Strategic Plan) seeks ways to enhance student learning, decrease student time to degree, enhance the productivity of faculty and staff, promote the more effective use of fixed resources and implement comprehensive assessment and accountability procedures. The Plan is funded through a partnership of the State, University, patrons, and students and their families. By matching a campus-based academic fee with external sources, Cal Poly has sponsored educational initiatives to consolidate curricula, introduce technology-mediated instruction and add sixteen faculty positions.

For additional information, the text of the Cal Poly Plan, a listing and description of the Cal Poly Plan projects and a listing of the faculty supported by Cal Poly Plan funds, visit the Cal Poly Plan website, http://www.calpoly.edu/~inststdy/cp_plan/index.html

Cal Poly Master Plan (March 21, 2001)

Looking toward the 21st century and the growing demand for higher education in the State of California, Cal Poly has applied the results of strategic planning efforts at the divisional and college level to inform its long-term enrollment planning. The campus completed a physical master plan update based on these academic plans and enrollment scenarios. The Campus Planning Committee, consisting of campus and community representatives, oversees implementation of the plan. The California State University Board of Trustees approved the Master Plan and Environmental Impact Report (EIR) on March 21, 2001, after intensive comment from the campus and community. Campus and community members can view the master plan through its website at: http://www.facilities.calpoly.edu/Facilities_Planning/. The same website also contains links to instructional facilities, student housing, and other projects involved in implementing the Master Plan.

University Accreditation

Since 1951, the University has been fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). During 1998 and 1999 the campus was involved in an innovative self study focused on the institution as a “center of learning.” The reaccreditation process culminated in March 2000 with the evaluation team visit to the campus. In July 2000, Cal Poly’s accreditation was reaffirmed by the WASC Commission. The next reviews are scheduled for Spring 2010 and Spring 2011. For more information on the 2000 accreditation, visit the Cal Poly WASC website, <http://www.academics.calpoly.edu/wasc/>

Administrative Organization

Four Administrative Divisions

The University is organized administratively into four divisions: Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Administration and Finance, and University Advancement. The academic division is organized into six colleges each with its own dean and the University Center for Teacher Education. Academic Affairs also includes the Library, Research and Graduate Programs, and Information Technology Services. University organizational charts are available at <http://www.president.calpoly.edu/charts/index.html>

Other Special Programs Support the University Mission

The Alumni Association keeps in touch with many of the 150,000 students who have attended Cal Poly through a variety of alumni functions both educational and social, on and off campus, throughout California and across the nation. (<http://www.alumni.calpoly.edu/>)

The Associated Students, Inc. (ASI) is a non profit, public benefit corporation, run by student officers and a board of directors, using student fees to provide the finest collegiate experience possible. With an eight million dollar annual budget, ASI offers a wide variety of programs and services within three locations on the campus: the University Union, the Recreation Center and the ASI Children’s Center. (<http://www.asi.calpoly.edu/>)

Cal Poly Continuing Education, including the Office of Conference Services, Continuing Education, and Open University, provides a variety of self-supporting programs and services to residents of San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and southern Monterey Counties. (Continuing Education — <http://www.continuing-ed.calpoly.edu/> and Conference Services — http://continuing-ed.calpoly.edu/conf_services.html)

The Cal Poly Foundation is a public benefit, nonprofit corporation, and university auxiliary. It provides the fiscal means, management procedures and key support services that enable the university to provide instructional and support services not normally furnished by the state or would be not otherwise available due to legal, purchasing and other fiscal restrictions. (<http://www.cpfoundation.org>)

The Cal Poly Housing Corporation (CPHC) is also a public benefit, nonprofit corporation, and university auxiliary. Its purpose is to develop, provide and maintain affordable housing and related facilities for faculty, staff, and students, consistent with the teaching, research, and community service mission of the University. (<http://www.cphousingcorp.org>)