



CAL POLY

Office of the President

Cal Poly community,

Many of you have heard about potential plans for the future of West Campus. As part of our ongoing evaluation of university lands and facilities, we are exploring opportunities to reimagine a portion of West Campus in ways that strengthen Cal Poly's educational mission, expand Learn by Doing opportunities across disciplines, and provide the services our community needs, including housing and access to basic needs.

The area under consideration is approximately 30 acres on the south side of Highland Drive. Located where the campus and city meet, it presents a unique opportunity to create a welcoming western gateway to Cal Poly.

Since early 2025, we have engaged students, faculty, staff, alumni, agricultural experts and other stakeholders about a potential project. Their input has helped shape our thinking, and additional engagement will continue in the months ahead. We expect to decide by November 2026 whether to move forward with a development concept. Specific uses and timelines, if approved, would be determined through further planning and consultation.

Key Considerations

Any future development must address important issues, including protecting Cal Poly's agricultural mission and the concerns of the CAFES and agriculture community about the disruption of Class I agricultural land. The university manages more than 2,800 acres of working agricultural land adjacent to campus and we are committed to ensuring

every acre of Class I agricultural land developed has equivalent replacement acreage nearby. Of the 30-acre site under consideration for development, we have already identified a path to restore 18 acres to Class I agricultural status, and we will not disrupt existing Class I land until suitable replacement acreage is available.

Most importantly, CAFES students will continue to have immediate access to the land and facilities needed for education, applied research and hands-on learning. Our commitment is not simply to preserve acreage but to ensure an exceptional Learn by Doing experience for future generations of agriculture students.

The recently acquired Brughelli Ranch will expand opportunities for research and other uses, but it is not being considered replacement land for any on-campus agricultural acreage.

Potential Project Timing and Uses

Any project of this scale would unfold over many years, with no significant development anticipated before 2030. Discussions remain preliminary, and any future decisions will be informed by stakeholder input, careful planning and financial feasibility, and appropriate environmental approval.

Central to any development will be the long-planned CAFES Farm Store with surrounding outdoor spaces to support a range of hands-on learning opportunities, such as U-pick crops, kitchen and demonstration gardens and agricultural events. This creates a permanent and visible agricultural presence at this important campus gateway and ensures Cal Poly's agricultural heritage remains integral to its future. It also ensures enhanced Learn by Doing opportunities for CAFES students.

Just as importantly, any future development would create significant new Learn by Doing opportunities for students across disciplines. Concepts being evaluated include space for industry research and internships, a hotel and conference center, childcare and potentially senior living. These are simply ideas under discussion, but they are the types of

facilities that would become living laboratories for students in hospitality, business, architecture, engineering, construction management, psychology, communications, recreation, health sciences and other disciplines, creating new opportunities for experiential learning that simply do not exist today.

Planned open space would include orchards, agricultural crops, and green space including the existing trail system. Basic necessities such as a grocery store also would be prioritized. Other considerations include additional student, faculty, staff and alumni housing.

These concepts draw on successful models at other universities, creating a mixed-use environment where agriculture, research, industry and daily life intersect.

Continuing the Conversation

This work has been discussed for several years and is rooted in a simple question: How can we enhance Learn by Doing to serve current and future generations of students while offering vital services and amenities, and future revenue needed for student success.

As Cal Poly marks 125 years of impact, agriculture remains central to our identity and future. At the same time, we must continue finding innovative ways to support student success, expand experiential learning and meet evolving community needs.

To support transparency and engagement, we have launched a [West Campus web portal](#). The site will serve as a central resource for project updates, frequently asked questions, background information and other materials.

Projects of this scale require thoughtful dialogue and broad community input before moving to formal approval processes. I look forward to continuing these conversations and working together to identify a path forward that advances our educational mission while honoring Cal Poly's values and legacy.

Thank you for your engagement, your perspectives and your continued commitment to Cal Poly.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey D. Armstrong
President

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