Introduction
The Service Learning Program provides consultation support and resources in support of academic service learning that is integrated into coursework, advances academic learning outcomes, and utilizes reflection as a key pedagogical tool—to prepare students for lifelong engagement with the local and global community in order to transform our world.

In the spring of 2014 a representative group of key stakeholders, made up of community partners along with Cal Poly students, faculty, staff, alumni, and administrators participated in a series of conversations aimed at developing a strategic plan in response to a carefully crafted guiding question, “How can service learning support Cal Poly’s comprehensive polytechnic nature and commitment to student success; learn by doing; and excellence through continuous improvement?” This strategic plan is a living document guided by evidence obtained from scholarship and practice of service learning at Cal Poly and beyond.

A Brief History
In 2007, a group of faculty, staff, students, and community partners created a Strategic Plan for Service Learning at Cal Poly. The plan focused on several priorities including increasing community partnerships, increasing access to the university as a resource for the community, integrating service learning with university learning objectives, and institutionalizing service learning. Since then, the university has had a large degree of institutional change, including a new President, Provost, Vice President for Student Affairs, Deans, and Faculty Liaison for Service Learning, as well as the WASC review. Currently, Service Learning is supported by the Service Learning Faculty Liaison (Academic Affairs) and the Service Learning Coordinator in the Center for Community Engagement (Student Affairs) who are poised to lead the development of service learning to foster teaching, scholarship, and service in a Learn by Doing environment in which students, staff, and faculty are partners in discovery. The history of the Service Learning Program and the development of Learn by Doing Good highlight the change that can come through a deep and persistent commitment to the effective practice and promotion of community engagement.

The Service Learning Program’s Vision: What are we striving to achieve?
In 2022, Service Learning is an integral part of the Cal Poly culture where university and community partners collaborate to prepare students for lifelong engagement with the local and global community in order to effectively change the status quo.

The Service Learning Program’s Mission: What do we do?
The Service Learning Program builds partnerships between Cal Poly and the community to support the mission of the university; enhance the community; and integrate community engagement into the Cal Poly culture.

The Current Campus & Community Context
Cal Poly’s commitment to developing actively engaged students is strong. There is widespread enthusiasm for service learning among faculty from a variety of disciplines; in fact, many new faculty members are interested in incorporating service learning into their coursework. San Luis Obispo County has in excess of 1100 operational non-profits offering a number of service opportunities allowing for academically appropriate service learning opportunities. Employers are looking for culturally competent students and service learning prepares students by providing hands-on experiences with people and issues that represent cultural differences and commonalities. Cal Poly’s diverse stakeholders understand how high quality service learning provides lasting and sustainable support of real community issues and showcases the many ways in which Cal Poly students care.
Barriers to the Vision
The following key barriers to the program’s vision, were identified:

- The 10-week quarter system provides short timeframes for service/engagement;
- There are many demands on people’s time including students, faculty and staff;
- Attracting faculty requires time for planning and relationship building;
- Key stakeholders (e.g., students, community partners, faculty, campus leadership, etc.) are on “different pages”, having different expectations, definitions, values, levels of preparedness, etc.;
- Non-profit organizations are at different stages of preparedness to partner with the university; and
- There is pressure to maintain the status quo.

Strategic Directions & Goals
To address the barriers listed above, six strategic directions were identified to advance toward the vision:

1. **Promote Cal Poly's Service Learning Work**
   a. Highlight the purpose and scope of the Service Learning Program.
   b. Emphasize the benefits of service learning for all stakeholders.
   c. Honor and recognize Cal Poly’s service learning champions.
   d. Develop incentives for students and faculty engaged in service learning.

2. **Integrate Service Learning into Academic Programs**
   a. Identify ways in which service learning addresses university, diversity, and sustainability learning outcomes.
   b. Introduce faculty, staff and campus leaders to models of service learning that promote other High Impact Practices (HIPS) such as interdisciplinary study and project-based learning.

3. **Enhance Service Learning Educational Resources**
   a. Develop educational resources for faculty and community partners to promote best practices.
   b. Cultivate and share professional development opportunities with faculty and staff.
   c. Develop service-learning opportunities that extend beyond one academic term.

4. **Expand Cal Poly's Service Learning Network**
   a. Build and sustain service learning collaborations between new community partners and faculty.
   b. Share leadership for service learning.

5. **Support Scholarship of Service Learning**
   a. Support faculty in incorporating service learning into research proposals.
   b. Support faculty in gathering qualitative and quantitative data for identifying and addressing research questions surrounding service learning.

6. **Strengthen the Infrastructure of the Service Learning Program**
   a. Actively utilize the new strategic plan; monitor progress toward vision in relation to goals.
   b. Design job descriptions and work flow of professional and student staff to sustain individual and team effectiveness.
   c. Systematize the collection of aspects of service learning (e.g., hours, reflection, etc.).

Conclusion
Cal Poly's Service Learning Program is dedicated to the development of academic activities consistent with the university’s philosophy of learning by doing. The program will continue to work in partnership with others committed to a similar vision while demonstrating how high quality service learning provides sustainable support of real community issues and showcases the many ways in which Cal Poly students contribute and care.