

Academic Senate

805.756.1258

<http://academicsenate.calpoly.edu/>

Meeting of the Academic Senate

Tuesday, October 6, 2015

UU 220, 3:10 to 5:00pm

I. **Minutes:** none.

II. **Communication(s) and Announcement(s):** Chancellor White's response to Resolution Requesting that Chancellor Tim White Undertake Prompt Review of Cal Poly, SLO Governance (pp. 2-5).

III. **Reports:**

- A. Academic Senate Chair: **Orientation for new senators**
- B. President's Office:
- C. Provost:
- D. Vice President for Student Affairs:
- E. Statewide Senate:
- F. CFA:
- G. ASI:

IV. **Consent Agenda:**

ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED BY ACADEMIC SENATE				
Program Name or Course Number, Title	ASCC recommendation/ Other	Academic Senate	Provost	Term Effective
AERO 529 Turbulence and Flow Control (4), 2 lectures, 2 laboratories	Reviewed; recommended for approval 5/21/15.	On consent agenda for 10/6/15.		
CRP 425 Biking, Walking and the City (4), 4 lectures	Reviewed 4/16/15; additional information requested from the department. Reviewed 5/21/15; additional information requested from the department. Recommended for approval 5/26/15.	On consent agenda for 10/6/15.		
POLS 445 Voting Rights and Representation (4), 4 lectures	Reviewed 5/21/15; additional information requested from the department. Recommended for approval 5/28/15.	On consent agenda for 10/6/15.		

V. **Special Reports:**

Possible Year Long Block Scheduling for First Time Freshmen by Cem Sunata, Registrar (p. 6).

VI. **Business Item(s):**

- A. **Resolution on a Revised Cal Poly Statement on Diversity:** Annie Holmes, Executive Director for the Diversity and Inclusivity Office (pp. 7-13).
- B. **Resolution on Action to Promote Timely Completion of the Graduate Writing Requirement:** Dawn Janke, GWR Academic Senate Task Force chair (pp. 14-20).

VII. **Discussion Item(s):**

VIII. **Adjournment:**

THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

BAKERSFIELD

June 8, 2015

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Dr. Gary Laver, Academic Senate Chair
Academic Senate Executive Committee Members
California Polytechnic State University
San Luis Obispo, California 93407

CHICO

DOMINGUEZ HILLS

EAST BAY

Dear Professor Laver and Colleagues:

FRESNO

I reviewed your June 2, 2015 'Resolution AS-799-15' that requests my prompt review of Cal Poly San Luis Obispo governance. I have reflected on the resolution, and discussed it with President Armstrong. It is noteworthy that the Senate, President and the senior leadership team care deeply about the future of Cal Poly SLO, as do I. I also commend your passion for and commitment to student success, and faculty and staff success, through shared governance.

FULLERTON

HUMBOLDT

LONG BEACH

LOS ANGELES

Your voice has been heard and the concerns are acknowledged. My understanding has been informed in multiple ways, including:

MARITIME ACADEMY

MONTEREY BAY

NORTHRIDGE

POMONA

SACRAMENTO

- Resolution AS-799-15
- Conversations that I and other new members of my senior leadership have benefited from when visiting campus
- The recent 360 degree review of President Armstrong that I conducted for the Board of Trustees; this review benefited by letters from 87 respondents (Cal Poly SLO faculty, staff, students, alumni, community and business leaders)

SAN BERNARDINO

SAN DIEGO

SAN FRANCISCO

SAN JOSE

SAN LUIS OBISPO

President Armstrong began his service as president in 2011, the time when the national recession was continuing to take its toll on the CSU. For several years now it has not been an easy time in public higher education in California, and we still have not recovered the resources we had before the recession. This new environment has changed the way in which we go about designing and executing our future. I acknowledge, understand and appreciate this new reality creates stress within a community of scholars, and I surmise it is part of the reason the resolution was drafted.

SAN MARCOS

SONOMA

STANISLAUS

The aforementioned receipt of 87 letters came from an open invitation for letters and feedback on the president's performance. I received a high volume of unsolicited letters regarding President Armstrong, which is unusual and remarkable, and reflective of a robust and healthy engagement and attention by the

Dr. Gary Laver
June 8, 2015
Page 2

Cal Poly community to the energy and direction of campus leadership. The letters expressed optimism and appreciation along with some concerns from campus (but not external constituents). The concerns articulated were primarily related to pace of change, timely communication, transparency, and the desire to see results from planning.

In late January 2015, the CSU Board of Trustees and I discussed with President Armstrong the vision and plan for Cal Poly, as well as the concerns noted through the review process. We had a thorough, frank and honest discussion. President Armstrong has been responsive to this input, as evidenced in part by the formation of a new Campus Advisory Council on Planning Process and Budget. We discussed several goals going forward, including increasing diversity of the student body and faculty/staff, enhancing the learning and research environment, improving campus climate and student success, and enhancing revenue acquisition through innovative partnerships and strategies.

The trustees and I concluded that President Armstrong has demonstrated strong leadership and management skills at Cal Poly. We understood the challenges he has faced, especially in the recent budget environment, and are pleased with the progress to date. The board and I concur that President Armstrong is an energetic, engaged and caring leader, and that he is providing leadership through a necessary period of priority-setting and change that will ensure the success of this great campus well into the future. He has our unequivocal support.

Indeed, the path forward at Cal Poly will be best served in a shared governance environment (shared leadership as you may know I prefer to describe the concept). Together you can make progress as you focus on student success and the future of Cal Poly. You have *Vision 2020* to help guide the path forward. I know your Academic Senate is committed to these goals, and I know President Armstrong is committed to these goals.

I feel strongly about the merits of shared governance, and I concur with the importance of working together as a campus community to address the issues raised. Such conversations are best done by the campus community, particularly one as accomplished as Cal Poly SLO, and not by an intervention from me.

I wish you well as you wind down this academic year, and I look forward to learning from you next year of the further progress made on these matters.

Sincerely,



Timothy P. White
Chancellor

c: President Jeffrey D. Armstrong

Adopted: June 2, 2015

**ACADEMIC SENATE
of
CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY
San Luis Obispo, CA**

AS-799-15

**RESOLUTION REQUESTING THAT CHANCELLOR TIM WHITE UNDERTAKE A
PROMPT REVIEW OF CAL POLY, SLO GOVERNANCE**

- 1 WHEREAS, The Academic Senate has the right to present to the Chancellor or the Board of
2 Trustees of the CSU any matter pertaining to the conduct and welfare of the
3 University; and
4
- 5 WHEREAS, The Academic Senate of Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo has received widespread
6 expressions of concern from faculty and staff about the efficacy and responsiveness
7 of governance on campus; and
8
- 9 WHEREAS, A series of conflicts over the last few years has highlighted issues related to
10 communication, transparency and shared governance, has opened serious rifts in
11 our shared sense of community, and has contributed to extremely low morale; and
12
- 13 WHEREAS, Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo needs to refocus its attention on its core mission to serve
14 our students and community through teaching, research and service; and
15
- 16 WHEREAS, A fresh look at the Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo situation from outside the campus
17 could help diagnose problems and identify solutions, therefore be it
18
- 19 RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate of Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo requests that Chancellor
20 Tim White undertake a review of the governance at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, and
21 that this review begin fall quarter 2015. We recommend that the review should
22 broadly and confidentially consult with all relevant campus leaders and groups –
23 including faculty, staff, students and all levels of administration. We urge that the
24 Chancellor use the findings of the review to implement any measures needed to
25 improve the meaningful communication and transparency of management and to
26 help restore a strong sense of shared governance to our campus; and be it further
27
- 28 RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate of Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo make this request
29 respectfully, with a desire for a constructive outcome, and with no preconceived
30 vision.

Proposed by: Wyatt Brown, CAFES Senator
Date: May 13, 2015
Revised: May 15, 2015
Revised: May 27, 2015

State of California
Memorandum

-5-

CAL POLY
SAN LUIS OBISPO

To: Gary Laver
Chair, Academic Senate

Date: June 30, 2015

From: Jeffrey D. Armstrong
President



Copies: K. Enz Finken

Subject: Response to Academic Senate Resolution AS-799-15
Resolution Requesting that Chancellor Tim White Undertake a Prompt Review of Cal Poly,
SLO Governance

This memo formally acknowledges receipt of the above-entitled Academic Senate resolution. I appreciate and share the Senate's commitment to shared governance. Additionally, I appreciate Chancellor White's response and look forward to working together with the Senate to enhance transparency and shared governance.

Possible Year Long Block Scheduling Plan for First Time Freshmen

Executive Summary

Since block scheduling started in 2009, the process improved significantly, and overall it became a welcome practice on campus by students, parents, and faculty. We have observed that academic probation rates among first time freshmen during their first quarter went down. Consequently, our office started to receive inquiries from various faculty and parents over the years as to whether it is being considered to expand the block scheduling to the entire first year. Below are some considerations around this possible initiative.

Considerations

1. FTF are block scheduled into their first quarter by the tracks (set of course options) provided by their departments. These include major, support, and general education courses.
2. The proposal to extend freshmen block scheduling to Winter and Spring quarters only include enrolling them into department specified major and/or support courses. General education, concentration, or elective courses would not be considered.
3. Depending on the university and college administrations' preferences, department participation to Winter and Spring block scheduling would be voluntary. We have observed that not every department is interested in this approach.
4. In the new registration rotation system, freshmen level students register last. Providing them their major and/or support courses for Winter and Spring of their freshmen year would possibly be welcomed by these students.
5. Block scheduling assigns students in classes and does not discriminate on time of the day or day of the week the class is offered. Students would still be given a chance to finesse their schedule (add/drop/switch) during their rotation. It should be noted that the less changes students make the more effective the block scheduling process would be.
6. ASI officially endorsed this proposal last Spring quarter.
7. College deans have been introduced to this possible initiative earlier this quarter. Their initial reaction has been favorable.

Cem Sunata

University Registrar

California Polytechnic State University

San Luis Obispo CA 93407-0033

805.756.6012 - office

805.756.7237 - fax

805.503-5220 - cell

csunata@calpoly.edu

Adopted:

**ACADEMIC SENATE
of
CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY
San Luis Obispo, CA**

AS-___-15

RESOLUTION ON CAL POLY STATEMENT ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY

1 WHEREAS, The Academic Senate has approved several resolutions since 1987 regarding the
2 importance of diversity and educational equity; and
3

4 WHEREAS, Among these resolutions includes the “Cal Poly Statement on Diversity,” which
5 was approved in 1998 (AS-506-98/DTF); and
6

7 WHEREAS, In the ensuing years since the Cal Poly Statement on Diversity was approved
8 faculty, staff, and students have worked to gain a deeper understanding of the
9 importance of diversity and educational equity through a myriad of approaches,
10 including the adoption of the Inclusive Excellence Model in 2009 (AS-682-09);
11 and
12

13 WHEREAS, Today at Cal Poly we continue to strive to increase diversity, but in addition, we
14 attend more closely than ever to fostering a culture of inclusivity for every
15 faculty, staff, and student member on this campus; therefore, be it
16

17 RESOLVED: That the Inclusive Excellence Council has developed a new statement on diversity
18 to reflect the inclusivity aspect of our university; and be it further
19

20 RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate approves the attached Cal Poly Statement on Diversity
21 and Inclusivity.

Proposed by: Inclusive Excellence Council
Date: September 29, 2015

Cal Poly Statement on Diversity and Inclusivity*

September 29, 2015

At Cal Poly our primary mission is to educate. We believe that academic freedom, a cornerstone value, is exercised best when there is understanding and respect for our diversity of experiences, identities, and worldviews. Consequently, we create learning environments that allow for meaningful development of self-awareness, knowledge, and skills alongside attention to others who may have experiences, worldviews, and values that are different from our own. In so doing, we encourage our students, faculty, and staff to seek out opportunities to engage with others who are both similar and different from them, thereby increasing their capacity for knowledge, empathy, and conscious participation in local and global communities.

In the spirit of educational equity, and in acknowledgement of the significant ways in which a university education can transform the lives of individuals and communities, we strive to increase the diversity at Cal Poly. As an institution that serves the state of California within a global context, we support the recruitment, retention, and success of talented students, faculty, and staff from across all societies, especially people who are from historically and societally marginalized and underrepresented groups.

Cal Poly is an inclusive community that embraces differences in people and thoughts. By being open to new ideas and showing respect for diverse points of view, we support a climate that allows all students, faculty, and staff to feel nurtured, which in turn facilitates the recruitment and retention of a diverse campus population. We are a culturally invested university whose members take personal responsibility for fostering excellence in our own and others' endeavors. To this end, we support an increased awareness and understanding of how one's own identity facets (such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, social class, and nation of origin) and the combinations of these identities and experiences that may accompany them can affect our different worldviews.

*The definition of diversity is specifically inclusive of, but not limited to, an individual's race/ethnicity, sex/gender, socioeconomic status, cultural heritage, disability, and sexual orientation.

Adopted: June 9, 1998

**ACADEMIC SENATE
Of
CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY
San Luis Obispo, CA**

**AS-506-98/DTF
RESOLUTION ON
THE CAL POLY STATEMENT-ON DIVERSITY**

- RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate at Cal Poly accept and endorse The Cal Poly Statement on Diversity attached; and, be it further
- RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate in partnership with its administration devise plans and strategies to promulgate and implement the diversity and educational objectives outlined in The Cal Poly Statement on Diversity; and, be it further
- RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate recommend to its administration that the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs provide an annual assessment of the previously mentioned partnership's diversity related activities to the Academic Senate.

Proposed by: The Diversity Task Force
Date: April 21, 1998
Revised: June 8, 1998

THE CAL POLY STATEMENT ON DIVERSITY*

At the heart of a university is the responsibility for providing its students with a well-rounded education, an education that fosters their intellectual, personal and social growth. For students preparing to embark upon work and life in the 21st century, a critical element of a well-rounded education is the ability to understand and to function effectively in a diverse and increasingly interdependent global society. As noted in a recent statement from the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), "the argument for the necessity of diversity is perhaps stronger in higher education than in any other context... The ultimate product of universities is education in the broadest sense, including preparation for life in the working world." In this regard, it is in the compelling interest of Cal Poly, the state, and the nation to provide our students with an education that is rich with a diversity of ideas, perspectives, and experiences.

Thus, diversity serves as a fundamental means to enhance both the quality and value of education. It cannot be a mere adjunct to such an education but must be an integral element of the educational experience, infused throughout the community (faculty, students, and staff), the curriculum, and the cocurricular programs of the University.

- As a University whose motto is "to learn by doing," Cal Poly explicitly understands the importance that experience brings to education. When students are exposed personally and directly to faculty, staff, and other students from diverse backgrounds, their stereotypes about "the other" are challenged. As the AAUP statement notes, such personal interaction gives students an understanding of the "range of similarities and differences within and among ... groups" that "no textbook or computer" can provide. For this reason, both the formal and informal classroom (i.e., the rich learning experiences that occur for our students during their cocurricular activities), must be constituted in a way that reinforces the value of encountering and considering diversity.
- Moreover, diversity in the curriculum is a fundamental component of a well-rounded and beneficial education. The perspectives provided by the University are contingent upon the content and purpose of its courses. Since the curriculum is the principal expression of our educational goals and values, it must signal the importance of diversity to the Cal Poly mission, to the institutional culture, and to our teaching and learning environment in clear and unambiguous terms.

Thus, the University community (its students, faculty, and staff), the curriculum, and the co-curricular environment must be dedicated to the principle of ensuring that all of our students routinely encounter diverse people, ideas, and experiences.

Only through intellectual and first-hand personal exposure to diversity in its myriad forms-racial, ethnic, cultural, gender, geographic, socioeconomic, etc.-will students gain the understanding, empathy, and social skills that they will require to be effective, engaged citizens in an increasingly crowded and interrelated global community. The benefit of diversity is universal. Cal Poly's commitment to diversity signals an affirmation of the highest educational goals of this University, including mutual respect, civility, and engaged learning.

*The definition of diversity is specifically inclusive of, but not limited to, an individual's race/ethnicity, sex/gender, socioeconomic status, cultural heritage, disability, and sexual orientation.

State of California
M e m o r a n d u m

To: Myron Hood
Chair, Academic Senate

Date: September 18, 1998

From: Warren J. Baker
President

Copies: Paul J. Zingg
Harvey Greenwald
Linda Dalton

Subject: AS-505-98/DTF, Resolution on the Academic Value of Diversity
AS-506-98/DTF, Resolution on *The Cal Poly Statement on Diversity*

I am pleased to accept Resolutions AS-505-98/DTF and AS-506-98/DTF.

The Academic Senate is to be applauded for its clear affirmation of the educational values of diversity and its recognition that diversity strengthens our community and prepares our students more fully for effective citizenry, responsible careers and engaged lives.

Both resolutions underscore the University's values that are imbedded in our Mission Statement and Strategic Plan. The voice of the Senate in these matters will strengthen the University's ability to continue its efforts to foster greater diversity among our students, faculty and staff.. Clearly aligning Cal Poly with the important statements on diversity that the nation's principal educational associations have made signals our commitment and resolve.

I look forward to working with the Senate and our entire University community in achieving the promise within these resolutions.

Adopted: May 26 2009

**ACADEMIC SENATE
of
CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY
San Luis Obispo, CA**

AS-682-09

**RESOLUTION ON
MAKING EXCELLENCE INCLUSIVE AT CAL POLY**

1 WHEREAS, The Academic Senate has a 30-plus year history of espousing the principles of Making
2 Excellence Inclusive as a learning-community imperative – most recently in the Senate’s
3 Fall ’08 retreat and (AS-663-08) *Resolution on Diversity Learning Objectives*; and
4

5 WHEREAS, “Build an Inclusive Community” is one of seven goals of the Cal Poly Strategic Plan; and
6

7 WHEREAS, A learning environment that supports attention to diversity is a standard of accreditation
8 as promulgated by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges; and
9

10 WHEREAS, The Academic Senate has affirmed the academic value of diversity (AS-505-98);
11 therefore be it
12

13 RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate support Making Excellence Inclusive as a goal and organizing
14 principle of the Cal Poly learning community; and, be it further
15

16 RESOLVED: That resources for the professional development of faculty in Making Excellence
17 Inclusive be established, sustained, and identified by the University, colleges, and other
18 instructionally-related entities as part of their inventory of efforts to promote Inclusive
19 Excellence; and, be it further
20

21 RESOLVED: That faculty efforts in Making Excellence Inclusive be recognized as a substantive
22 component of voluntary service in the Retention, Promotion, and Tenure (RPT)
23 evaluation process.

Proposed by: Academic Senate Executive Committee
Date: March 30 2009
Revised: April 28 2009
Revised: May 20 2009
Revised: May 26 2009

State of California

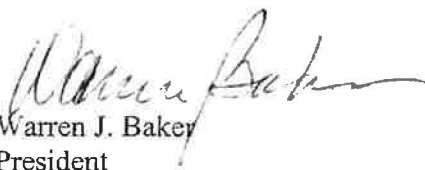
M e m o r a n d u m

CAL POLY

SAN LUIS OBISPO
CA 93407

To: John Soares
Chair, Academic Senate

Date: June 22, 2009

From: 
Warren J. Baker
President

Copies: R. Fernflores, R. Koob,
D. Conn, P. Bailey,
D. Christy, L. Halisky,
T. Jones, B. Konopak,
M. Noori, D. Wehner,
M. Suess

Subject: Response to Academic Senate Resolution AS-682-09
Resolution on Making Excellence Inclusive at Cal Poly

This is to formally acknowledge receipt and approval of the above-referenced Academic Senate resolution.

Please express my appreciation to the Academic Senate members for their work on this issue.

Adopted:

ACADEMIC SENATE
of
CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY
San Luis Obispo, CA

AS-__-15

**RESOLUTION ON ACTION TO PROMOTE TIMELY COMPLETION
OF THE GRADUATE WRITING REQUIREMENT**

- 1 WHEREAS, Cal Poly has established the Graduation Writing Requirement (GWR) to comply with CSU
2 Executive Order 665 (EO 665) which requires that "Certification of writing competence shall be
3 made available to students as they enter the junior year"; and
4
- 5 WHEREAS, EO 665 further states, "Students should complete the requirement before the senior year"; and
6
- 7 WHEREAS, In its most recent review of Cal Poly, WASC recommended the university have its
8 undergraduate students "satisfy the GWR as juniors, i.e., as soon as possible after completing
9 ninety units, so that they can receive additional writing instruction if necessary"; and
10
- 11 WHEREAS, Cal Poly's Academic Senate adopted a Resolution on the Graduate Writing Requirement in
12 October 2000 to "encourage students to attempt the GWR early in their junior year"; and
13
- 14 WHEREAS, The Academic Senate of the CSU adopted a similar resolution in January 2004 stating that
15 "Each campus should develop a process that ensures students attempt the assessment in their
16 junior year"; and
17
- 18 WHEREAS, Despite all of the above rhetoric, a GWR Task Force established by Cal Poly's Academic
19 Senate during the 2014–2015 academic year found that currently 84% of test-takers are seniors,
20 approximately 100 of whom anxiously attempt to pass during their last *week* at Cal Poly; and
21
- 22 WHEREAS, The Task Force's *Report* shows generally that current GWR campus practices meet neither the
23 requirement of EO 665 nor the recommendation of our most recent WASC review nor the goals
24 expressed in the Cal Poly and CSU Academic Senate resolutions concerning the timely
25 completion of the GWR; therefore be it
26
- 27 RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate accept the GWR Task Force's *Report*, which addresses the current,
28 unsatisfactory situation as well as the actions Cal Poly can take to correct it; and be it further
29
- 30 RESOLVED: That the Writing & Rhetoric Center, the Office of the Registrar, and the English Department
31 now begin implementation of the first five of the six action items listed in the *Report's*
32 recommendation; and be it further
33
- 34 RESOLVED: That the third in the Task Force's list of three additional recommendations also be implemented:
35 "...by the curriculum cycle for the 2017–2019 catalog programs/departments develop a

concrete action plan so that their students take the GWR during junior year...”; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Office of the Registrar incorporate requirements for the development of the above action plan in its instructions to campus academic programs leading up to revision of the 2017–2019 *Cal Poly Catalog*; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Writing & Rhetoric Center oversee completion of these action plans and serve as a contact for this effort and that the Writing & Rhetoric Center report to the Academic Senate in Spring 2016 on the progress of these efforts.

Proposed by: Academic Senate Executive Committee

Date: September 30, 2015

**Report on the Timing During which Students Attempt to Complete the GWR
Prepared by the GWR Academic Senate Task Force**

Members:

Helen Bailey: Associate Registrar, Office of the Registrar

Clare Battista: Lecturer, Economics, OCOB

Leanne Berning: Professor, Dairy Science, CAFES

Kaila Bussert: Foundational Experiences Librarian, Robert E. Kennedy Library

Don Choi: Associate Professor, Architecture, CAED

Bruno Giberti: Faculty Coordinator, Office of Academic Programs and Planning

Brenda Helmbrecht: Director of Writing and GE Chair, CLA

Dawn Janke: GWR Coordinator and Writing & Rhetoric Center Director, Task Force Chair

Elena Keeling: Professor, Biological Sciences, CSM

Matt Luskey: Writing Instruction Specialist, Center for Teaching, Learning & Technology

Kathryn Rummell: Chair, Department of English, CLA

Debra Valencia-Laver: Associate Dean, CLA

Charge:

To ensure that students satisfy the Graduation Writing Requirement (GWR) in order to comply with CSU Executive Order 665, which states: "Certification of writing competence shall be made available to students as they enter the junior year. Students should complete the requirement before the senior year." The most recent Cal Poly WASC report also recommends that the university, "Require Cal Poly undergraduates to satisfy the GWR as juniors, i.e., as soon as possible after completing ninety units, so that they can receive additional writing instruction if necessary before attempting the senior project."

Current Practice:

Students can attempt to fulfill the GWR after completing ninety units; students must complete the GWR in order to graduate. Students may select one of two pathways to fulfill the requirement:

- 1) Earn a passing score on a Writing Proficiency Exam (WPE);
- 2) Earn a passing grade on an in-class, timed essay exam and earn a C or better in a GWR-approved upper-division English course.

If students fail to satisfy the GWR after two or more attempts, they may opt to fulfill the requirement via a third pathway:

- 3) Earn a passing score on a GWR Portfolio submitted upon completion of ENGL 150.

Background:

- More than 1,000 students take the WPE on the second Saturday of fall, winter, and spring quarters.
- 84% of test-takers are seniors.
- 76% of test-takers pass upon the first attempt.
- The pass rate increases to 97% after the second attempt.

- About 100 or more students take (or re-take) the WPE during finals week of their final quarter on campus.

Problem:

The group of students that waits until their senior year to attempt completion of the GWR through the WPE is clearly anxious. Some test-takers are so nervous during the exam that they freeze: they write one or two lines, close the exam booklet, and give up. The majority, nonetheless nervous, manages to complete the exam, yet many are not relieved of stress until they learn of their passing score. Those who take the exam during their final quarter and have jobs pending particularly fear that they will not be employed if they do not pass the exam. Of those that do not pass, some come into the Writing & Rhetoric Center office in tears or enraged because they must re-take the exam during final exam week.

In order to accommodate these students, the Writing & Rhetoric Center office coordinator counsels them, sets them up with one-to-one feedback from a tutor and/or offers consultation with the WPE coordinator, and works with each of them individually to provide support to pass the exam. In addition, the office coordinator schedules as many as four different exam times and locations during finals week, scrambles to hire exam proctors with the three hours available in their schedule to sit with the exam-takers (because we allow graduating seniors an extra hour to take the exam in hopes of decreasing their test anxiety), and tasks WPE faculty readers with additional assessment needs during their already full grading schedules. During the assessment of the final exam batch of WPEs, readers may feel pressure to pass student essays because they are fully aware that students' degree completion is riding upon doing so.

About 10 to 12 students each year are denied graduation because they do not satisfy the GWR through the WPE. Although these are small numbers, these students move on from Cal Poly without their degree, with some contacting the Writing & Rhetoric Center office years later with a request to return to take the exam. After being away from school for an extended period of time, these former students struggle to meet the requirement and often opt to complete the quarter-long GWR Portfolio Program. They must then hire and pay for a personal tutor instead of having the benefit of working with the Cal Poly tutors and resources to meet the requirement.

In all, when students choose to take the exam during their last year on campus, and especially during the quarter they hope to graduate, the university is not afforded an opportunity to utilize the GWR as a pedagogical tool, one that helps students determine whether they would benefit from additional writing instruction to meet the level of expected writing proficiency for successful completion of senior-level capstone coursework.

Rather than being viewed as a hoop that students must jump through in order to earn their degree or as a barrier to graduation for those who wait to the last minute to attempt to satisfy the requirement but do not, the GWR should be viewed more accurately as a diagnostic exam for the higher-level writing to be encountered in capstone courses. The task force members believe that this perspective on the GWR more closely mirrors the intention behind EO 665.

Considerations:

Two senate resolutions were passed in the early 2000s that address the timing of GWR completion on campuses:

- 1) Cal Poly's AS-550-00/CC Resolution on the Graduation Writing Requirement, adopted on October 24, 2000, resolved the following: to "encourage students to attempt the GWR early in their junior year;"
- 2) AS-2627-03/AA of the CSU Senate, adopted January 22-23, 2004, accepted the recommendations of a 2002 CSU report of campus GWR policies that states, "Each campus should develop a process that ensures student attempt the assessment in their junior year."

To ensure assessment in the junior year, a number of CSU campuses institute registration holds for students that do not fulfill the GWR by the end of their junior year, including CSULA, CSULB, Cal Poly Pomona, Sac State, Northridge, and Dominguez Hills. As a for instance, at Dominguez Hills students receive a letter from advising, which indicates that they have not met the requirement; they receive a hold on their registration; and they must meet with an advisor and sign a contract that states that they will register for the next exam before the hold is released.

The task force considered the option of placing a hold on registration but believes that students will view a hold as a punitive measure, and the task force would like to avoid "mini crises" that may result from such an approach. The task force also understands that a registration hold will be cumbersome to enforce. Finally, a hold on registration may become a barrier to graduation, which the task force determined to be an unproductive approach to this issue.

As well, the task force considered recommending that the senate resolve that all departments require students to complete the GWR as a prerequisite for senior project/capstone work and that the Office of the Registrar builds the prerequisite into the system to block students from enrolling in senior project coursework until the requirement is fulfilled. The task force believes that this type of prerequisite might be difficult to enforce and may become cumbersome, especially if departments simply decide to override the requirement by providing students with permission numbers. And, the task force understands that this solution has already been attempted, i.e. that there were several departments that built this into their programs but removed it from the "hard" prerequisites once the Registrar's Office more strictly enforced prerequisites.

Task Force Recommendation:

In an effort to comply with EO 665 and subsequent senate resolutions, the GWR Academic Senate Task Force recommends that the following actions be implemented to incentivize students to attempt to fulfill the GWR during their junior year:

1. The Writing & Rhetoric Center will coordinate with the Office of the Registrar to revise the catalog language to reflect the recommendation that students complete the requirement during the junior year (90-135 units in a 180-unit program).

2. The Writing & Rhetoric Center will collaborate with the Office of the Registrar to revise the language on curriculum flow charts to reflect the recommendation that students complete the requirement during the junior year.
3. The Writing & Rhetoric Center will partner with constituents across campus to improve outreach to students who have earned ninety units and encourage them to complete the requirement during their junior year.
4. The Office of the Registrar will update PASS so students can search for GWR-approved English classes. (Students can currently search PASS for USCP classes, but they cannot search for GWR classes.)
5. The English Department will reserve for juniors some seats and/or sections in GWR-approved English classes. The number of seats/sections will be determined by the department in collaboration with the Writing & Rhetoric Center and the College of Liberal Arts.
6. The Writing & Rhetoric Center will coordinate with the Office of the Registrar to attempt to program the Milestone Effective Date in PeopleSoft so that students earn their graduating senior registration rotation for their final quarter by completing the GWR two or more quarters prior to their graduation quarter.

Further, the task force considered the following three approaches to addressing this issue:

1. Require that by the curriculum cycle for the 2017-2019 catalog programs/departments identify at least one upper-level capstone course (such as a senior project course or another course that involves senior-level writing) for which the prerequisite would be completion of the GWR and are thereby compliant with the Executive Order.
2. Encourage that by the curriculum cycle for the 2017-2019 catalog programs/departments identify at least one upper-level capstone course (such as a senior project course or another course that involves senior-level writing) for which the prerequisite would be completion of the GWR and are thereby compliant with the Executive Order.
3. Require that by the curriculum cycle for the 2017-2019 catalog programs/departments develop a concrete action plan so that their students take the GWR during junior year and are thereby compliant with the Executive Order. Programs/departments may design a plan that works best for their students. The GWR Academic Senate Task Force recommends that the action plan consist of identifying at least one upper-level capstone course (such as a senior project course or another course that involves senior-level writing) for which the prerequisite would be completion of the GWR. Other options include: increased advising, department holds on registration, and/or revised flow charts.

As well as recommending that action items 1-6 be implemented in order to address this issue,

on April 2, 2015, the task force voted, and the majority of members supports promoting option three as an additional approach to regulating a change to the time during which students attempt to complete the GWR on campus.

The task force also recommended that the Writing & Rhetoric Center in collaboration with the Office of the Registrar be granted oversight over monitoring completion of the above once the senate determines the best approach(es) to attending to the charge.

We recognize the challenges of shifting the WPE to junior year, but we believe that doing so is imperative in order to comply with EO 665 and avoid unnecessary stress to both the students that take the exam at the last minute and the faculty and staff that support them.