



Please read the following note about the consent agenda for the February 24, 2026, Academic Senate meeting.

Department Name Change

Current Name: Department of Sciences and Mathematics

Proposed Name: Department of Oceanography and Natural Sciences (OcNS)

Issues, concerns, and questions should be directed to Dr. Alexander Parker, department chair. If the concern is strong enough, any senator may request an item to be removed from the Consent Agenda **by February 17, 2026**.

Pursuant to AS-829-17, “Items removed from the Academic Senate consent agenda will be placed on the Senate agenda as business items. Personnel policy revisions shall be presented as reports attached to resolutions. The report contains the new university policy and all background or explanatory information about the change in policy. The Academic Senate Faculty Affairs Committee chair (or designee) is responsible for presenting the policy proposal to the Academic Senate Executive Committee and to the Academic Senate. The Academic Senate Chair (or designee) may invite interested parties concerning the policy proposals to be present at the meetings where pulled proposals will be discussed. Items not removed from the consent agenda are considered approved on the meeting date of the consent agenda.”

From: Alex Parker, Interim Chair, Department of Sciences and Mathematics (S&M), Cal Poly Maritime

To: Dean Wendt, Dean, Bailey College of Sciences and Mathematics

Date: September 24, 2025

RE: Request for Department Name Change: Department of Sciences and Mathematics (S&M) to Department of Oceanography and Natural Sciences (OcNS)

With the integration of the California State University Maritime Academy (Cal Maritime) and California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, the organizational structure of Academic Affairs was revised. This included the dissolution of the “Three School Model” at Cal Maritime, and in many cases, the restructuring or dissolution of existing academic departments.

The Department of Sciences and Mathematics (S&M) was retained, in part, due to the essential role it plays in maintaining laboratory and other facilities necessary to support the curriculum. Historically, S&M housed faculty expertise in mathematics, physics, chemistry, and oceanography. Of these disciplines, only oceanography offered a bachelor’s degree program, which was administered within S&M by a faculty program coordinator.

As part of the integration, the mathematics faculty transitioned as a unit to the Department of Mathematics within the Bailey College of Science and Mathematics at Cal Poly. The remaining 10 faculty members, representing the disciplines of chemistry, physics, and oceanography, continue to be housed together as one of the eight departments within the Bailey College.

The request to rename the department addresses two key concerns:

1. To better reflect and support the bachelor’s degree program in oceanography, it is important that oceanography be included in the department’s name.
2. With the integration of mathematics faculty into the existing Bailey College Mathematics Department, our department no longer represents mathematics at Cal Poly.

For these reasons, we propose renaming the department from the Department of Sciences and Mathematics (S&M) to the Department of Oceanography and Natural Sciences (OcNS). This name more accurately represents the current faculty expertise, promotes the identity of the oceanography degree program, and ensures alignment with the department’s ongoing academic mission.



CAL POLY

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Science & Mathematics

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11/19/25

To Whom It May Concern,

The Bailey College of Science and Mathematics fully supports the proposed name change from the Department of Science and Mathematics to the Department of Oceanography and Natural Sciences (OcNS). The new name more accurately represents the department's current faculty expertise and academic focus.

Following the integration of Cal Maritime with Cal Poly, the mathematics faculty transitioned to the Department of Mathematics within the Bailey College of Science and Mathematics. Accordingly, it is appropriate to remove "Mathematics" from the department's name, as mathematicians are now housed within the Bailey Mathematics Department.

Prior to integration, the Oceanography degree program existed independently, although its curriculum was delivered by faculty within the Department of Science and Mathematics. Oceanography is now the department's only degree-granting program, making it central to the department's identity and mission. Including "Oceanography" in the department name enhances visibility and recognition for the degree program and supports student recruitment and retention by making the department's academic offerings clearer and more identifiable.

The proposed name will also strengthen the department's external identity in research collaborations, grant applications, and partnerships with marine and environmental organizations.

This change is organizational rather than structural, requiring no new resources or administrative reorganization, only updates to official materials and systems.

The Bailey College has also taken steps to ensure clear distinction between related programs. The Marine Science major is delivered on the Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo campus as an interdisciplinary program administered by the Department of Biological Sciences. The faculty have worked to differentiate the Marine Science and Oceanography programs through consistent language on college and departmental webpages, ensuring accurate and transparent public representation of each program's distinct focus and strengths.

The college supports this change as a meaningful step in aligning the department's name with its academic mission and disciplinary strengths, and in advancing the visibility of Oceanography within Cal Poly and beyond.

Sincerely,

Dean E. Wendt
Dean, Bailey College of Science and Mathematics
Interim Associate Vice Provost, Office of Research
California Polytechnic State University

Date: November 7, 2025

To: Academic Senate
California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

From: Dinesh Pinisetty
Associate Vice President and Academics Lead
California Polytechnic State University, Solano

Subject: Support for the Resolution to Rename the Department of Sciences and Mathematics to the Department of Oceanography and Natural Sciences

Dear Members of the Academic Senate,

I write in strong support of the resolution to rename the Department of Sciences and Mathematics to the **Department of Oceanography and Natural Sciences (OcNS)**. This proposed change accurately reflects the department's current faculty composition and academic focus following the integration of California State University Maritime Academy (Cal Maritime) with California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo.

The renaming aligns the department's title with its active disciplines—oceanography, chemistry, and physics—and highlights its signature program, the Bachelor of Science in Oceanography, which serves as a distinctive academic pathway within Cal Poly Solano. Including "Oceanography" in the department name recognizes the unique strength and identity of this degree program while "Natural Sciences" provides an inclusive and representative term for the foundational science disciplines that support it.

Beyond disciplinary alignment, the updated name will enhance external visibility and recruitment efforts, providing a clear and marketable identity to prospective students and partners. The title "Oceanography and Natural Sciences" effectively communicates both the applied and interdisciplinary nature of the department's work, supporting Cal Poly's mission of *learn by doing*, polytechnic education. This renaming is a meaningful and timely step in the ongoing academic integration process. It ensures that our academic structures, communications, and outreach reflect the true scope and expertise of our faculty and programs.

I fully endorse this resolution and recommend its approval by the Academic Senate.

Sincerely,



Dinesh Pinisetty
Associate Vice President and Academics Lead
California Polytechnic State University, Solano



November 5, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in support of the proposed resolution to rename the Department of Sciences and Mathematics to the **Department of Oceanography and Natural Sciences (OcNS)**. As the former Chair of the university Curriculum Committee at California State University Maritime Academy, I had the opportunity to work closely with colleagues across the Department of Sciences and Mathematics during and following the integration with Cal Poly San Luis Obispo.

This name change is both timely and appropriate. It reflects the current disciplinary composition of the department and better aligns with its academic focus and degree offerings. With the transition of mathematics faculty to the Department of Mathematics within the Bailey College of Science and Mathematics, the remaining disciplines - oceanography, chemistry, and physics - are well represented under the proposed title. Including “Oceanography” highlights the department’s flagship bachelor’s program, while “Natural Sciences” accurately encompasses the supporting foundational sciences that remain essential to the curriculum.

The proposed name provides greater clarity and coherence within the evolving academic structure and helps ensure that students, faculty, and external partners can readily understand the department’s scope and contributions within Cal Poly’s expanding portfolio of programs. While departmental identities will continue to evolve as programs grow, I view this resolution as a positive and pragmatic step toward ensuring our academic structure reflects current realities and supports future development.

Sincerely,

Ariel Setniker, PhD
Former Chair, Curriculum Committee
Director of Faculty Development
Associate Professor of Mathematics Education
Cal Poly Maritime Academy

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CAL POLY

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February 4, 2026

To Whom It May Concern in the Cal Poly Academic Senate,

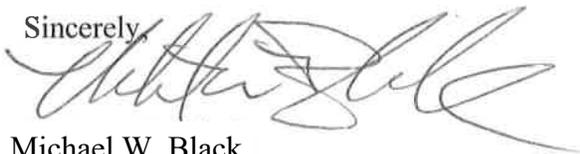
The Department of Biological Sciences at Cal Poly expresses its full support for the proposed name change from the Department of Science and Mathematics to the Department of Oceanography and Natural Sciences (OcNS). We agree that the proposed name more accurately reflects the department's current disciplinary focus, faculty expertise, and academic mission following the integration of Cal Maritime with Cal Poly.

From the perspective of the Department of Biological Sciences, we also appreciate the college's thoughtful attention to distinguishing related but distinct academic programs. The Marine Science major, administered by our department on the San Luis Obispo campus, is an interdisciplinary program with a separate focus and curricular structure from Oceanography. We have worked collaboratively with the Solano campus to ensure consistent and accurate language across departmental materials, supporting transparent public understanding of each program's unique strengths.

The proposed department name will additionally strengthen external engagement by clearly signaling disciplinary expertise in research collaborations, grant activities, and partnerships with marine and environmental organizations. We understand this change to be organizational in nature, requiring no new resources or structural reorganization beyond updates to official materials and systems.

The Department of Biological Sciences supports this proposed name change as a meaningful and constructive step in aligning departmental identity with academic reality, strengthening program visibility, and advancing Oceanography's profile within Cal Poly and the broader scientific community.

Sincerely,



Michael W. Black
Chair of Biological Sciences Dept
Professor of Cell & Molecular Biology
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CAL POLY

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February 7, 2026

Hello,

The Chemistry and Biochemistry Department fully supports the proposed renaming of the Department of Sciences and Mathematics to the Department of Oceanography and Natural Sciences (OcNS). The proposed name best captures the current composition and mission of the department. We have already had several visits between our two departments, and our faculty are pleased at developing this relationship. We look forward to many productive interactions in the future.

Sincerely,

John Hagen
Department Chair
Department of Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry
California Polytechnic State University

February 10, 2026

Dr. Alexander Parker
Interim Chair
Department of Sciences and Mathematics
Cal Poly Maritime Academy

Dr. Matthew Fairbanks
Department of Sciences and Mathematics
Cal Poly Maritime Academy

Dear Drs. Parker and Fairbanks,

Thank you for reaching out to the Physics Department with your request for a letter of faculty consultation and support regarding the proposed name change from the "Department of Sciences and Mathematics" at Cal Poly Maritime to the "Department of Oceanography and Natural Sciences (OcNS)."

Two office staff and sixty-seven faculty of all ranks in the Physics Department at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, which also included physics faculty at Cal Poly Maritime, were surveyed. The results of the consultation are below:

In favor of the name change: 6
No strong opinion about the name change, but no objections: 63
Not in favor of the name change: 0

Thanks again and all the best in this project,



Dr. Jennifer Klay
Chair, Cal Poly Physics Department
email: jklay@calpoly.edu