CAL POLY Academic Senate

Academic Senate Executive Committee Meeting
Tuesday, May 5, 2026 | 3:10 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
01-409 and https://calpoly.zoom.us/j/89375014164

AGENDA

1. **Call to Order** [Greenwood]

2. **Approval of Minutes** [Greenwood]
   - **2.1.** Executive Committee Meeting Minutes from April 21, 2026 ..... pp. 2-5

3. **Communications and Announcements** [Greenwood]

4. **Written Reports**
   - **4.1. Academic Senate Chair** [Greenwood]
   - **4.2. President's Office** [Haft] ..... p. 6
   - **4.3. Provost** [Liddicoat] ..... pp. 7-8
   - **4.4. Statewide Senate** [Frame, Rein, & Stegner; Inoue & Senk] ..... (none)
   - **4.5. CFA SLO & Solano** [Kawamura, Sinha] ..... pp. 9-11
   - **4.6. ASI** [Cabeliza, Engel] ..... p. 12

5. **Discussion Items**
   - **5.1. AY 2027-2028 Calendar Feedback** | Kris Jankovitz, Instruction Committee Chair
   - **5.2. Flock Cameras at Cal Poly** | George Hughes, Associate Vice President, Public Safety
   - **5.3. GEGB Chair Recommendation for AY 2026-2030** | Jerusha Greenwood, Academic Senate Chair

6. **Business Items**
   - **6.1. Appointment of Cindy Wang as OCOB Senator for AY 2026-2028**
   - **6.2. Appointment of Lisa Anderson as OCOB Senator for AY 2026-2028**
   - **6.3. Faculty Appointments to Academic Senate Committees** ..... pp. 13-14
   - **6.4. Resolution on Student Perceptions of Learning Experience** ..... pp. 15-109
     John Pan, Ad Hoc Committee Chair
   - **6.5. Resolution on Academic Dishonesty: Cheating and Plagiarism** ..... pp. 110-114
     Ava Wright, Ad Hoc Committee Chair
   - **6.6. Resolution to Establish the Cal Poly Maritime Academy Council**..... pp. 115-118
     Jerusha Greenwood, Academic Senate Chair
   - **6.7. Resolution on Supporting an Academic Component for a Living Green Residential Community at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo**..... pp. 119-123
     Anastasia Telesetsky, Academic Senate Chair

7. **Adjournment** [Greenwood]

CAL POLY Academic Senate

Academic Senate Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 21, 2026 | 3:10 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

ATTENDEES

Executive Committee Members

Brian Ayash OCOB Caucus Chair**; Marc Cabeliza** ASI President**; Alyson Engel** ASI Board of Directors Chair; **Samuel Frame** Vice Chair & CSU Statewide Senator; **Jerusha Greenwood** Academic Senate Chair; **Thomas Gutierrez** Immediate Past Senate Chair; **Kara Hitchcock** PCS Caucus Chair; **Sean Hurley** CAFES Caucus Chair; **Taiyo Inoue** CSU Statewide Senator; ~~**Lisa Kawamura** CFA-SLO Chapter President~~; **Al Liddicoat** Provost and Executive Vice President; **Elizabeth McNie** Solano Campus Representative; **Steffen Peuker** CENG Caucus Chair; **Steve Rein** CSU Statewide Senator; ~~**Andrew Schaffner** BCSM Caucus Chair;~~ **Sarah Senk** CSU Statewide Senator; **Dustin Stegner** CSU Statewide Senator; **Ava Wright** CLA Caucus Chair; **Vacant:** CAED Caucus Chair

Guests

Elizabeth Adan; Simone Aloisio; Paul Anderson; PJ Crocker; Rachel Fernflores; Daniel Grassian; Kris Jankovitz; Jean Lee; Cheryl May; Andrew Morris; Zora Sowinska; Shannon Sullivan-Danser

MINUTES

1. **Call to Order**: Jerusha Greenwood, Academic Senate Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:10 pm.

2. **Approval of Minutes**
   2.1. The Executive Committee Meeting Minutes from April 7, 2026, were approved.

3. **Communications and Announcements**: Jerusha Greenwood, Academic Senate Chair, reminded Executive Committee members about the upcoming AI Symposium on Thursday, May 7th, and encouraged them to circulate this information.

4. **Written Reports**
   4.1. Academic Senate Chair: Jerusha Greenwood, Academic Senate Chair, reported that the Academic Senate WTU assigned time request was approved.
   4.2. President's Office: Jennifer Haft, President Armstrong's Chief of Staff, submitted a written report.
   4.3. Provost: Al Liddicoat, Provost, submitted a written report.

4.4. Statewide Senate: Dustin Stegner, SLO Statewide Senator, reported that the Academic Affairs Committee has drafted a letter for the Chancellor's Office and Board of Trustees in regard to the proposed amendment to Title V about three undergraduate degrees: the Bachelor of Education, Bachelor of Applied Studies, and Bachelor of Professional Studies. These three new degree proposals have a minimum requirement of 90 units, as opposed to the typical 120-unit requirement for semesters. Academic Affairs supports the degrees themselves in their increased accessibility; however, the committee does not endorse labeling them as bachelor's degrees. The Board of Trustees will make the final decision on this matter. Steve Rein, SLO Statewide Senator, reported updates from the Assembly Higher Education Committee, including that AB 2301, Assemblymember Esmeralda Soria's nursing bill, will be moving forward and is likely to once again pass; however, contrasting its former attempt, the governor is much less likely to veto the bill. AB 2963 (CSU Doctoral Degrees) from Assemblymember David Alvarez has been dramatically modified and will no longer be tied to doctoral degrees, but instead to Cal Maritime; Senator Rein recommended closely investigating AB 2693 and its amendments.

4.5. CFA SLO & Solano: None.

4.6. ASI: Alyson Engel, ASI Board of Directors Chair, reported that the ASI presidential election is currently happening, with the voting period open from Tuesday to Thursday. The results will be announced at noon on Thursday. Last week, students and faculty traveled to DC for CSU Hill Week to discuss pertinent issues with California representatives, including Pell Grant expansion and AI use. Across their last few workshops, ASI welcomed student body members to discuss course evaluations and Kenneth Brown, Faculty Affairs Committee Chair, to receive student input on the committee's resolution on office hours.

5. Discussion Items

5.1. Academic Senate and Executive Committee Semester Meeting Schedule for AY 2026-2027: Jerusha Greenwood, Academic Senate Chair, and Samuel Frame, Academic Senate Vice Chair, introduced this discussion item. Shannon Sullivan-Danser, Academic Senate Analyst, highlighted the conflicts with UU 220 and alternating the schedule accordingly. Sean Hurley, CAFES Caucus Chair, proposed swapping the dates for Executive Committee and Academic Senate. Chair Greenwood clarified that she and Shannon reviewed UU 220 availability for that swap, and those dates were already

reserved for ASI events. Hurley advocated for keeping in person meetings to increase engagement. Thomas Gutierrez, Immediate Past Senate Chair, concurred with Hurley while acknowledging the practicality of the solution and suggesting that Vice Chair Frame, as the incoming Academic Senate Chair, have the final decision. Dustin Stegner, Statewide Senator, mentioned the difficulty of finding an alternate location and spoke for moving meetings online. Steve Rein, SLO Statewide Senator, circled back to the idea of swapping meetings or pushing them a week in advance, but stated that Zoom would be preferable to simply cancelling meetings. Chair Greenwood mentioned the possibility of moving one Senate meeting to Cal Maritime. Senator Rein expressed his enthusiasm for this prospect and questioned the mode of transportation possible. Sarah Senk, CSU Statewide Senator, posed the possibility of coordinating this meeting with an event. M/S/P to authorize Samuel Frame, Academic Senate Vice Chair, to have final approval over the calendar.

6. Business Items

6.1. Faculty Appointments to Academic Senate Committees: M/S/P to approve the following slate of Faculty Appointments to Academic Senate Committees.

Steve Rein (BCSM)	*Budget and Long-Range Planning Committee (2026-2028)*
Sarah Bridger (CLA)	*Budget and Long-Range Planning Committee (2026-2028)*
Adam Bordeman (OCOB)	*Budget and Long-Range Planning Committee (2026-2028)*
Jane Lehr (CLA)	*Distinguished Scholarship Awards Committee (2026-2028)*

6.2. Resolution on Revised Academic Assessment Council Membership: Jean Lee, Academic Assessment Council Chair, introduced this resolution, which would supersede AS-909-21 and revise the membership of the council appropriately, including incorporating more representation for Cal Poly Solano faculty. M/S/P to agendize the Resolution on Revised Academic Assessment Council Membership.

6.3. Resolution on Proposed New Degree Program: Bachelor of Arts in Women's, Gender, and Queer Studies: Elizabeth Adan, Department Chair, introduced this resolution, which would establish a new degree program of Bachelor in WGQS to meet student interest, emphasizing the incorporation of Learn by Doing and important integration of Critical Disability Studies. M/S/P to agendize the Resolution on Proposed New Degree Program: Bachelor of Arts in Women's, Gender, and Queer Studies.

6.4. Resolution on New Bachelor of Science Degree Program in Data Science: Paul Anderson, Department of Computer Science and Software Engineering, introduced this resolution, which would establish a new degree program to meet student interest and prepare graduates for high-impact careers and advanced study in a data-driven world. M/S/P to agendize the Resolution on New Bachelor of Science Degree Program in Data Science.

6.5. Resolution on the Modification of the Academic Senate Constitution and Bylaws: Jerusha Greenwood, Academic Senate Chair, introduced this resolution, which would update the Senate bylaws in accordance with the quarter to semester transition and integration with Cal Maritime. This resolution will return at the next Executive Committee meeting.

7. Adjournment: Jerusha Greenwood, Academic Senate Chair, adjourned the meeting at 4:59 p.m.

Minutes submitted by

Zora Sowinska

2026.05.05 Academic Senate Executive Committee – Update from the Office of the President

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Provide input on Grand Avenue Improvements

In early 2025, the city of San Luis Obispo introduced several low-cost safety improvements on Grand Avenue between Slack and Monterey Streets. They have been monitoring the results to understand what's working, what needs to change and what should be removed.

As part of that process, the city is seeking community input:

Take the Online Survey before June 10, 2026: Visit www.slocity.org/OpenCityHall.

Attend the Active Transportation Committee (ATC) Meeting:

- City Hall Council Hearing Room, 990 Palm Street
- The final meeting is being scheduled for either May 20, 2026 or May 21, 2026 at 6 p.m. We will share an update about the date when it is available.

Cal Poly does not control the next steps in this process, but your input can help influence the final decisions.

TAKE THE SURVEY

Cal Poly Maritime Commencement

Thank you to those of you who traveled to the Solano Campus to celebrate the final Cal Maritime Academy graduating class of 2026. We recognized the accomplishments of 150 undergraduate and 20 graduate students, many of whom also earned their Merchant Mariner Credentials, and 14 who were commissioned into the U.S. Navy Reserve.

We were also pleased to confer an Honorary Doctor of Science upon Captain Kate McCue ('00, Business Administration). This marked the first honorary degree awarded by Cal Maritime to a woman. It was especially fitting to recognize Captain McCue, a trailblazer in the maritime industry and the first American woman to captain a mega-cruise ship, as well as the first to command an all-female crew. She continues to redefine leadership at sea while serving as a powerful advocate for women and underrepresented groups in STEM.

Reminder: Cal Poly AI Symposium – May 6–7, 2026
The Office of the Provost and the Noyce School of Applied Computing will host the **Cal Poly AI Symposium May 6–7, 2026**. This symposium will convene leaders from higher education, industry, and the public sector to examine how artificial intelligence is shaping teaching and learning, the future workforce, and the broader societal landscape.

The symposium will take place over two days. May 6 will focus on smaller working sessions and networking opportunities designed to support dialogue and idea exchange. May 7 will feature a full-day program including keynote presentations, panels, and concurrent sessions. The program will include keynote speakers and panels featuring industry leaders, academic experts from institutions across higher education, and Cal Poly faculty, staff, and students. Sessions will explore topics such as AI in teaching and learning, workforce readiness, and the ethical and societal implications of emerging technologies.

Artificial intelligence represents a significant and disruptive change in higher education and beyond. This symposium is intended to create space for faculty, staff, students, and external partners to engage in shared learning, exchange ideas, and begin identifying opportunities for collaboration. Registration and additional information: https://provost.calpoly.edu/aisymposium2026

Instructional Materials Accessibility: Title II Update
Faculty across both campuses have made meaningful progress in improving the accessibility of course materials, advancing equitable access to learning for all students. This work remains central to Cal Poly's responsibilities as a public institution under Title II, which requires that all digital instructional materials be accessible across platforms, including Canvas and externally shared content.

The Department of Justice has issued an Interim Final Rule (IFR) on Title II accessibility requirements, accompanied by a 60-day public comment period. The compliance timeline for large public entities, including CSU campuses, has been extended by one year to April 24, 2027. This extension reflects implementation considerations and provides additional time to build on the strong progress already underway in a thoughtful and consistent manner. The Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology (CTLT) continues to support faculty through resources, tools, workshops, and consultations to advance accessibility across instructional materials.

Nominations Open: 2026 Provost's Leadership Award for Partnership in Philanthropy
Nominations are now open for the 2026 Provost's Leadership Award for Partnership in Philanthropy. The award recognizes current or former faculty members who have made significant contributions to advancing Cal Poly's mission through fundraising and development efforts. The recipient will be honored at Fall Convocation. Faculty and staff are encouraged to nominate colleagues who have played a key role in philanthropic partnerships. The nomination deadline is **Friday, May 22, at 5 p.m. PST**. Additional details and the nomination form are available on the Office of the Provost's website.

Faculty Leadership Opportunities in Academic Assessment and Program Support

Academic Programs and Planning (APP) is advancing its work in academic assessment, program development, and policy coordination through the recruiting for two faculty leadership roles:

Faculty Academic Assessment Director (Full-Time Assignment)

APP is establishing a Faculty Academic Assessment Director position to provide institutional leadership in the assessment of student learning at both the program and university levels. This role will coordinate assessment across all 106 degree programs, lead campuswide efforts tied to core competencies and General Education, and oversee administration of national instruments such as NSSE and BCSSE.

The Director will also:

- Guide departments in developing and implementing learning outcomes and assessment plans
- Lead the Academic Assessment Council
- Partner with CTLT to support faculty development in assessment practices
- Synthesize and communicate assessment findings for institutional planning and accreditation

This is a full-time faculty assignment (100% assigned time) for an initial two-year term beginning August 2026, with potential renewal.

Tenured faculty with experience in academic assessment are encouraged to consider applying or to nominate qualified colleagues. Applications (letter of interest and CV) should be submitted to **moconn04@calpoly.edu**. Review of applications will begin May 18, 2026, and continue until the position is filled.

APP Faculty Fellow (Part-Time Assignment)

APP is also recruiting a Faculty Fellow to support key areas of academic program planning and policy work. The Fellow will contribute to:

- Program development and review processes
- Curricular review and academic policy implementation
- Instructionally Related Activities (IRA) oversight
- Transfer initiatives, including ADTs and TMCs
- CSU and university-level strategic initiatives

This is a part-time assignment (12 WTUs during the academic year plus summer support), designed to strengthen faculty engagement in institutional academic planning and governance processes.

Tenure-line faculty with interest or experience in curriculum, program review, or academic policy are encouraged to apply or share this opportunity with colleagues. Applications (letter of interest and CV) should be submitted to **moconn04@calpoly.edu**. Review will begin May 18, 2026, and remain open until filled.

CFA-SLO CHAPTER PRESIDENT'S REPORT 1/3
TO THE ACADEMIC SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, CAL POLY SLO
Lisa Kawamura
May 5, 2026

Level 1: Librarians and Lib Guides
CFA and Librarians met with management to discuss the LibGuides that have been taken down from the Kennedy Library website.

We are awaiting a decision.

While the Librarians brought this to our attention and to a grievance, we know that this has affected many faculty throughout our university. We see this as a violation of our academic freedom and we hope you will contact us if you have any questions concerning your access to the LibGuides that have gone missing or if you see your academic freedom has been violated by similar censorship of your academic freedom.

Level 1: Librarians and Workload
CFA and Librarians met with management to discuss their ability to work remotely and the amount of time that librarians are required to be in Kennedy Library. Teaching and work spaces have changed/varied greatly since the COVID-19 pandemic. We believe this is an issue of self-governance as well as the heavy hand of management trying to force librarians back into the library building even though much of their job does not require them to be on site. This, return to the physical library has resulted in an increase in workload for librarians who have been requested to do much of their work in a virtual setting.

We are awaiting a decision.

If you feel like your return to campus has unfairly changed, please contact CFA-SLO.

Meet and Confer: Quarter-to-Semester (Q2S)
CFA met with management to discuss some of the issues related to the Q2S transition. There are many issues that were discussed including, clarification on appointment for 44/45 lecturers, decreases in assigned time, payroll, definition/workload re: WTUs, Year Round Operations (YRO), Teacher-Scholar Model (TSM) and summer schedule and appointment.

Bargaining
CFA met with management on 4/30. We will meet with management almost every week in May and throughout the summer.

You can find all of the proposals (CFA and management) here.

You can access CFA's Bargaining full website here.

CFA-SLO CHAPTER PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2/3
TO THE ACADEMIC SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, CAL POLY SLO
Lisa Kawamura
May 5, 2026

Bargaining (continued)
As I have stated before, CFA membership is *critical.* If you are a member, great, please get someone you know to join. If you are *not* a member, JOIN TODAY! This is, by far, the most PROGRESSIVE contract proposals I have seen in my 28 years at Cal Poly SLO. If you expect ANY of these wins, WE MUST HAVE STRONG MEMBERSHIP. Management's team is all full of "no" and they are not inclined to give faculty anything other than the 3% bonus check that will be taxed, not add to your base or retirement. That's it. Period. AND they want to put FERP as the first to be laid off, they do not think you deserve a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA), they do not think you deserve Academic Freedom or provisions over Artificial Intelligence.

Use this link to join CFA TODAY.

CFA President Margarita Berta-Avila to visit Cal Poly SLO
Our CFA Unionwide President, Margarita Berta-Avila will be visiting us for our End of the Year lunch celebration on Tuesday, June 9, 2026.

Members, please join us to meet with President Berta-Avila and have some lunch to celebrate the end of our last year of the quarter system…or not…management is insisting we keep the term "quarters' in the Collective Bargaining Agreement…so *why* are we switching to semesters and trying to do YRO in 3, 12-week terms???

Flock Cameras at Cal Poly
Many of you are aware about the issues related to the contract that Cal Poly SLO has with Flock cameras on campus. SQE students attended the Town Hall on Flock use at Cal Poly SLO and *these were their takeaways*:

- Flock is necessary for public safety and is solving cases. He uses the hypothetical example of a student getting hurt without ppl being caught because Flock isn't there
- He checked with his "experts" (probably Flock marketing ppl) and thinks (or does not care) there is no danger of information sharing.
- The entire CSU approved it, so we should push for legislation instead of asking Cal Poly to cancel their contract.
- When asked about a townhall, he said that this was a mere public safety decision that didn't need public approval. When pressed for a future townhall he said that it was for safety.
- When asked about diversity, he said that safety is first before diversity?
- When asked about privacy he said that surveillance is a part of daily live and told us not to go to New York. When asked further, he said that it was an ideological debate. When pressed further, he said we were putting words in his mouth

CFA-SLO CHAPTER PRESIDENT'S REPORT 3/3
TO THE ACADEMIC SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, CAL POLY SLO
Lisa Kawamura
May 5, 2026

Flock Cameras (continued)

- When asked about immigration concern, he said it was a symptom of division in the country
- When asked about more privacy concerns, he said he would not listen to the "sensitivities" of "6,000 or even 10,000 people". He only listens to "public safety data."
- When called disingenuous in a question, he said he had the best interests of everyone in mind and attacked the person who asked the question
- When asked about lawsuits, he said that everything is in a lawsuit

CAL POLY

ASI Report
Academic Senate Executive Committee Meeting
April 28, 2026

Upcoming Legislation

- Several resolutions are on their way to the ASI Board of Directors, on topics including:
  - Institutional Growth and "Learn By Doing" Ethos
  - Cal Poly's Micromobility Policy
  - Expanded Market Distribution of Cal Poly Creamery Products
  - Course Registration Efficiency and Timely Four-Year Graduation
  - ALPR Camera Surveillance on Campus
  - Student Access to Faculty Office Hours
- Please feel free to ask questions about any of these, and we will keep the Senate updated as the resolutions make their way through the Board!

Maritime Integration

- The Cal Poly Maritime Academy recently elected three student leaders for next year – the Chair, Vice Chair, and Student Director of the ASI Maritime Academy Council. This branch will work closely with members of our SLO campus ASI in the years to come.

ASI Elections

- Congratulations to our second elected Officer, ASI President, Tanner Schinderle. Tanner is currently a 3nd year Political Science Major who has spent the last academic year serving as President Cabeliza's Chief of Staff.
- The "Apply Now" phase of ASI Recruitment is currently underway – please send students our way who may be interested in applying for the ASI Executive Cabinet (any major) or to represent CENG, OCOB, CAED, or BCSM on the University Union Advisory Board!

FACULTY STATEMENTS OF INTEREST
Academic Senate Committees

BUDGET AND LONG-RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE

CAED Representative (AY 2026-2028)

Joseph Cleary, Associate Professor in Construction Management (Tenured); 8 years at Cal Poly

I am interested in serving on the Budget and Long-Range Planning Committee to support transparent, strategic resource allocation during a pivotal period for Cal Poly. As an Associate Professor in Construction Management, Director of the California Center for Construction Education, and a member of the Cal Poly Partners Board of Directors, I bring experience aligning budgets with long-term institutional and industry-focused goals. My prior service as a Faculty Fellow for CAED (interim Associate Dean), along with roles on the Academic Senate and its Executive Committee, has grounded me in shared governance and policy development. I currently serve on the University Research Advisory Council and the Academic Assessment Council, where I contribute to university-level planning and evaluation tied to strategic priorities. I am particularly interested in advancing collaboration, improving budget transparency, and supporting long-range planning efforts related to the Cal Maritime integration, teaching scholar model implementation, and year-round operations.

Andy Pollin, Lecturer in Construction Management; 2.5 years at Cal Poly

I am interested in serving on the Budget and Long-Range Planning Committee because the committee's work aligns with my professional background, teaching, and service at Cal Poly. My 25-year career in industry has focused on real estate investment, development, capital planning, feasibility analysis, project finance, and long-range decision-making. In that work, I have evaluated budgets, risks, phasing, stakeholder priorities, and the long-term consequences of major capital and development decisions.

At Cal Poly, I teach courses in real property development, housing, cost analysis, and construction management. I also work with students, faculty, industry professionals, and campus partners on applied projects, including engagement with Cal Poly's Facilities

Management and Development on student housing and capital improvement projects. These experiences give me a practical understanding of how budget decisions, facilities planning, enrollment growth, housing needs, and academic priorities intersect.

I would welcome the opportunity to contribute my experience in finance, capital planning, real estate development, and long-range decision-making to the committee's work. My goal would be to bring a practical, analytical, and faculty-centered perspective, with a focus on transparent budget and long-range planning decisions, connecting financial choices to academic priorities, and supporting plans that are realistic, measurable, and aligned with Cal Poly's Learn by Doing mission.

DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

Solano Representative (AY 2026-2027)

Ian Wallace, Full-time SSP AR-III & Temporary Counselor Faculty in Counseling & Psychological Services; 13 years at Cal Maritime

At Maritime, I was chair of our DEI Council (previously named the Unity Council) for 5 years and served as a member for 2 additional years. I also have led multiple diversity-related projects focusing on gender, race, class, intersectionality, etc. My leadership at CAPS is also strongly focused on DEI.

Adopted: XX/XX/2026

ACADEMIC SENATE

of

CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY

San Luis Obispo, CA

AS-XXX-26

RESOLUTION ON STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNING EXPERIENCE

WHEREAS, In 2013, the Academic Senate adopted AS-759-13, *Resolution on Student Evaluations*, establishing the current university-wide student evaluation questions: (1) "Overall, this instructor was educationally effective" and (2) "Overall, this course was educationally effective"; and

WHEREAS, The value of responses to the two required questions on the student evaluation instruments has come into question as research establishes that items framed as evaluations of teaching effectiveness are susceptible to bias and do not validly measure what they claim to measure (Stark, 2026). This research calls into question the reliability and validity of the responses; and

WHEREAS, The University Faculty Personnel Policies document chapter 8.4 was thus updated and established instrument requirements (8.4.2), Criteria for Conducting Student Evaluation (8.4.3), Procedure for Conducting Student Evaluation (8.4.4), and Student Evaluation Results (8.4.5); and

WHEREAS, Student evaluation instruments as defined in Section 8.4 of the University Faculty Personnel Policies, commonly known as "course evaluations" or "student opinion surveys" shall be referred to throughout this document as "student evaluations of teaching"; and

WHEREAS, Use of online student evaluations commenced in Spring 2015 and has continued since. Student response rates have ranged from a high of 66% in Fall 2016 to a low of 35% in Spring 2020 and have remained in the 40% range since Fall 2021 across the University; and

WHEREAS, Low response rates for the student evaluation instrument compound the existing measurement concerns by introducing non-response bias, further limiting the interpretability of the results; and

WHEREAS, According to the Collective Bargaining Agreement, CBA 2022-2025, "written or electronic student course evaluations of faculty instructional effectiveness... shall be required for all faculty unit employees who teach;" and

WHEREAS "During the time of periodic evaluation and performance review of a faculty unit employee, the Working Personnel Action File (WPAF), which includes all information, materials, recommendations, responses, [course evaluations summaries,] and rebuttals, shall be incorporated by reference into the Personnel Action File;" and

WHEREAS "Faculty unit employees may submit written rebuttals to student course evaluations pursuant to Provision 11.2 when it is believed that additional information is needed or in the case of student bias. Evaluators must review such written rebuttals when reviewing underlying student course evaluations;" and

WHEREAS "Student course evaluations collected as part of the regular student evaluation process shall be anonymous and identified only by course and/or section;" and

WHEREAS "The format of student course evaluations shall be quantitative (e.g., "Scantron" form, etc.) or a combination of quantitative and qualitative (e.g., space provided on the quantitative form for student comments);" and

WHEREAS, In 2025, ASI Resolution #25-04 called for reform of the student evaluation instrument and processes, citing concerns about bias, validity, and the impact of evaluations on faculty from underrepresented groups; and

WHEREAS, The Academic Senate established the Ad Hoc Committee on Student Perception of Teaching Effectiveness, charged with providing a revised policy and resolution to replace AS-759-13; and

WHEREAS, Research on student evaluations of teaching establishes that student evaluations have large unpredictable biases linked to the instructor's gender, race, and other characteristics protected under employment law, and that these biases systematically disadvantage women and faculty from marginalized groups (Stark, 2026); and

WHEREAS, Research has also shown that student evaluations of teaching are subject to measurement bias, in that the results are more likely to have been shaped by discipline, student interest in the course, class level and difficulty, class meeting

time, location, and setting, but not actual instructor or course effectiveness (Boring, Ottoboni and Stark, 2016; Stark and Freishtat, 2014); and

WHEREAS, Research indicates that students are well-positioned to report on their own experience of the learning environment (Stark and Freishtat, 2014; Austin et al., 2025) but are not positioned to assess an instructor's disciplinary competence, pedagogical technique, or the degree to which learning outcomes were achieved (Deslauriers et al., 2019; Uttl, White, and Gonzalez, 2017); and

WHEREAS, How the data collected from student evaluations is interpreted and reported by evaluators is inconsistent across the university — including, in some cases, the use of numerical averages and cross-comparisons that are inappropriate for ordinal categorical data; and

WHEREAS, This makes it difficult, if not impossible, to maintain consistency of interpretation of results from student evaluations within and across colleges; therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That Cal Poly Academic Senate adopts the Ad Hoc Committee's report "Student Perceptions of Learning Experience: Rationale and Broad Principles of Design"; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate establish a standing committee with broad representation charged with oversight of all student feedback instruments and initiatives—summative, formative, and college or department-originated—including future revisions to the instrument; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate Executive Committee charges the Faculty Affairs Committee with developing policy based on the recommendations in this report; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate forward the companion document "Formative Learning Feedback: A Companion to the Student Perceptions of Learning Experience Report", prepared by a sub-committee of this Ad Hoc Committee, to the Academic Senate Instruction Committee and to the Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology for their consideration; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate forward the companion document "Guidance for Evaluation of Instruction" (formatted as proposed language for UFPP §8.3), prepared by a sub-committee of this Ad Hoc Committee, to the Academic Senate Faculty Affairs Committee for their consideration.

Proposed by: Ad Hoc Committee on Student Perception of Teaching Effectiveness
Date: *April 28, 2026*

Student Perceptions of Learning Experience

Rationale and Broad Principles of Design

A Report

by

the Ad Hoc Committee on

Student Perceptions of Teaching Effectiveness

2026-04-28

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Committee Members

Name	Affiliation
John Pan (Chair)	Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering, CENG
Anelise Sabbag	Statistics, COSAM
Shantanu Kumar	Construction Management, CAED
Laura Cacciamani	Psychology and Child Development, CLA
Eduardo Zambrano	Economics, OCOB
Jermaine Washington	Architecture, CAED (Lecturer)
Carrie A. Langner	Psychology and Child Development, CLA (Department Head)
Jett Palmer	Student Representative (ASI)
Silvia Marijuan	World Languages and Cultures, CLA (CFA)
Kylie Parrotta	Social Sciences, CLA (Faculty Affairs Committee)
James Bingaman	Agricultural Education and Communication, CAFES (Instruction Committee)
Simone Aloisio	Academic Personnel (ex officio, non-voting)
Jean Lee	Academic Programs and Planning (Faculty Director)
Patrick O'Sullivan	Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology (ex officio)

Executive Summary

The Academic Senate charged this committee with providing a revised policy and instrument to replace AS-759-13, which established the current university-wide student evaluation questions in 2013.

The current instrument asks students to assess "educational effectiveness" — a judgment that peer-reviewed research has shown to be susceptible to bias linked to the instructor's gender, race, and other characteristics, and that does not reliably measure teaching quality. Students are, however, uniquely positioned to report on their own experience of the learning environment — whether they felt the instructor engaged with them as individuals, whether expectations were clear and consistently applied, and whether the environment supported their participation and learning.

Building on this distinction, and drawing on the TEval framework for multidimensional evaluation of teaching (Austin et al., 2025), the committee approved the following five motions:

1. **Rename the instrument** to Student Perceptions of Learning Experience (SPLE).
2. **Adopt six aspects of class climate** as the focus of the instrument: Regard for Students, Consistent Communication and Enforcement of Expectations, Access to Instructor and Instructor Resources, Perceived Course Coherence, Participatory Climate, and Responsive Learning Environment.
3. **Retain open-ended questions** tied to specific aspects of class climate through structured prompts, accompanied by an informational anti-bias preamble.
4. **Report Likert-scale results as frequency distributions** — raw counts together with percentages — excluding the use of means and medians, and provide guidance for the proper interpretation of these results.
5. **Administer the instrument using a hybrid approach** where online surveys are completed during in-class time in the last two weeks of instruction before finals.

The remainder of this report provides the rationale, evidence base, and implementation details for these recommendations.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

In 2013, the Academic Senate adopted AS-759-13, establishing the current university-wide student evaluation questions. In 2025, ASI Resolution #25-04 called for reform of the evaluation instrument and processes. In turn, the Academic Senate established the Ad Hoc Committee on Student Perception of Teaching Effectiveness, charged with providing a revised policy and resolution to replace AS-759-13.

The committee was given the following charges:

1. Reviewing the reliability and validity of the prompts required on all student evaluation instruments, suggesting revisions to the prompts if necessary, and determining if additional prompts are necessary to obtain a more reliable and valid assessment of teaching effectiveness at Cal Poly.
2. Revisiting the criteria for procedures for conducting student evaluations to increase response rates and reduce incidences of bias, particularly negative bias toward people of color, women, and other minoritized populations in student feedback.
3. Reviewing how both quantitative and qualitative data collected from student evaluations are provided to faculty, the analysis of the data, and how data are presented for review for retention, promotion, and tenure. The committee should also consider as part of their charges what data is appropriate for development of teaching effectiveness purposes and data appropriate for performance evaluation.
4. Suggesting processes for disseminating results of student evaluations to Cal Poly students.[1]

[1] After consulting with the Academic Senate Faculty Affairs Committee, Academic Personnel, and CFA, the committee learned that it is not possible to share course evaluation survey information with students under the current CBA and therefore did not pursue this charge further.

1.2 Summary of recommendations

The proposal this committee has crafted has five parts.

First, it unanimously recommends that the instrument known as the **Student Evaluation of Instruction** and **Student Evaluation of Faculty** in the University Faculty Personnel Policies[2] be renamed as **Student Perceptions of Learning Experience**.

Second, it unanimously recommends for the aspects of teaching effectiveness assessed through the **Student Perceptions of Learning Experience** instrument to be the following:

Interpersonal — how the instructor relates to individual students:

1. Regard for Students
2. Consistent Communication and Enforcement of Expectations
3. Access to Instructor and Instructor Resources

Structural — how the course is experienced as a whole by the students:

4. Perceived Course Coherence

Environmental — what the classroom feels like as a shared space:

5. Participatory Climate
6. Responsive Learning Environment

In the context of this recommendation, the committee unanimously recommends that the Academic Senate establish a standing committee with broad representation charged with oversight of all student feedback instruments and initiatives—summative, formative, and department-originated—including future revisions to the instrument.

Third, the committee discussed whether to remove open-ended questions from the summative instrument due to the extensive evidence of bias in unstructured student comments (see Evidence on bias in open-ended comments below). A motion to remove them from the Student Perceptions of Learning Experience obtained three votes in favor and five votes against. The motion failed. The committee then voted unanimously to retain open-ended questions in the Student Perceptions of Learning Experience instrument under structured prompts and guardrails designed to minimize bias (see Guardrails for open-ended questions below).

Open-ended questions remain a key component of the companion Formative Learning Feedback proposal, where they serve their intended developmental purpose.

The committee understands that the final decision on open-ended questions rests with the Academic Senate, and that endorsement of this report does not commit the Senate to either approach.

[2] In sections 3.2, 3.4, 7.2, 8.1 and 8.4.

Fourth, it unanimously recommends that Likert-scale results be reported as frequency distributions — raw counts together with percentages — excluding the use of means and medians, with guidance for the proper interpretation of these results (see Chapter 4).

Fifth, it unanimously recommends a hybrid approach where online surveys are completed during in-class time in the last two weeks of instruction before finals (see Chapter 5).

This report is organized as follows. Chapters 2 and 3 provide the rationale for the instrument's name and design. Chapter 4 establishes scoring and reporting guidelines. Chapter 5 addresses implementation best practices. The appendix presents a sample survey instrument with a recommended preamble and sample items. The items presented in the sample survey are illustrative. They are intended to demonstrate how the six aspects of class climate can be operationalized as experiential survey items. **The sample survey is not intended to be the final instrument.**

Chapter 2

Student Perceptions of Learning Experience (SPLE)

The name change recommendation in this chapter was approved unanimously by the committee.

2.1 Rationale for the name change

The current names — **Student Evaluation of Instruction** and **Student Evaluation of Faculty** — mischaracterize what the instrument does and should do. The word "evaluation" implies that students are rendering a verdict on the quality of instruction or on the instructor. They are not. As detailed below, the proposed instrument asks students to report on their own experiences in the classroom: whether they felt treated with regard, held to consistent standards, able to access help, able to see how course elements connected, comfortable participating, and that the learning environment was responsive to them. These are experiential reports, not evaluative judgments.

This distinction is not merely semantic. The peer-reviewed literature on student evaluations of teaching (SET) establishes that items framed as evaluations of teaching effectiveness, course effectiveness, or instructor competence are particularly susceptible to bias — including bias linked to the instructor's gender, race, and accent — and are evidently misleading (Boring, Ottoboni, and Stark, 2016; Stark, 2016; Stark, 2026). By contrast, items that ask students to report on their own experience are less susceptible to these biases, precisely because they do not ask students to make judgments they are not qualified to make. The name of the instrument should reflect what it actually measures.

2.1.1 Sources of evidence about the validity and bias of SET

Some earlier research has argued that student evaluations are valid and reliable measures of teaching effectiveness (e.g., Marsh, 1987; Abrami, 2002; Berk, 2005). This committee exam-

ined this claim in light of the more recent experimental and quasi-experimental evidence summarized below.

Studies that claim SET are fair and valid rely on data that cannot answer the relevant question. Some studies compare average SET for male and female faculty and conclude there is no bias because these averages are similar. That conclusion is unwarranted because "one cannot assess gender bias in SET merely by comparing how women and men are rated by students: that comparison does not control for actual differences in teaching effectiveness, subject matter, class size, format, etc., resulting in confounding (Boring et al., 2016; Wagner et al., 2016). The appropriate question is not 'do men and women get similar ratings?' but rather 'would a given instructor teaching a given course have received different ratings if their gender had been different but nothing about their teaching were different?' " (Stark, 2026, p.7).

Randomized experiments and natural experiments — where nature assigns subjects to treatments as if at random — in real class settings provide the strongest evidence about whether SET measure teaching quality or something else. Such research has found:

- SET have weak or negative association with objective measures of learning (Carrell and West, 2010; Braga et al., 2014; Boring et al., 2016)
- SET have substantial bias from gender: female instructors sometimes get lower ratings than objectively less effective male instructors (Boring et al., 2016); gender affects ratings of "objective" items like promptness (MacNell et al., 2015; Boring et al., 2016); bias varies across disciplines (Boring et al., 2016; Mengel et al., 2018); the bias of male and female students towards male and female faculty differs (Boring et al., 2016)
- SET have bias from ethnicity and gender (Chisadza et al., 2019)
- SET have stronger association with grade expectations than with learning (Boring et al., 2016)
- Students reward grades — not learning — by giving high SET scores (Cho et al., 2015; Carrell and West, 2010; Braga et al., 2014; Stroebe, 2020)
- Providing cookies during class increases ratings of instructors and course materials (Hessler et al., 2018)
- The number of points on Likert scales affects gender differences in SET scores (Rivera and Tilcsik, 2019)
- Student perceptions of their learning do not match objectively measured learning (Deslauriers et al., 2019; Dunning et al., 2004; Hartwig and Dunlosky, 2017; Knof et al., 2024; Kruger and Dunning, 1999; Lake, 2001; Lindsey and Nagel, 2015; Wooliscroft et al., 1993; Xu et al., 2024)

Source: Stark, 2026, pp. 2–3

Moreover, such research has found that "bias may be large in some situations and small in others... Indeed, the main reason it is impossible to adjust SET for bias is that there are many

sources of bias that may interact in complex ways. SET cannot be presumed to be valid, reliable, or fair in any given course, department, or university, absent affirmative evidence of reliability, validity, and unbiasedness in that time and place." (Stark, 2026, p.8).

It is on the strength of the experimental and quasi-experimental evidence — which can control for these confounds — that this proposal reframes the instrument around experiential reports rather than evaluative judgments, since these are the ones that this literature finds most susceptible to bias.

2.2 The proposed name

Each word in the proposed name — **Student Perceptions of Learning Experience** — is chosen deliberately:

- **Student**: the respondent.
- **Perceptions of**: what the data represent. The word "perceptions" acknowledges that the instrument captures how students experience the learning environment from their own vantage point. Their nature as perceptions is already captured in the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA §15.15). Students occupy a position in the classroom that no other observer shares — they are the only ones who can report on whether the instructor engaged with them as individuals, whether they could see how the course fit together, or whether they felt comfortable participating. "Perceptions" names this unique epistemic contribution directly: the data are the students' own account of their experience, grounded in what they are distinctively positioned to observe.
- **Learning Experience**: what is being reported on. "Learning experience" scopes the instrument to the educational context without making the teaching or the instructor the object of assessment. It signals that the data concern the student's experience of learning — the process, not the outcome — rather than a judgment of instructional quality.

Chapter 3

SPLE Questionnaire Design

The recommendations in this chapter — the adoption of the six aspects of class climate as the focus of the instrument, and the retention of open-ended questions under structured prompts with an informational anti-bias preamble — were approved unanimously by the committee.

3.1 Rationale for the aspects of teaching effectiveness chosen to be included in the survey

When determining which aspects of teaching effectiveness should be included in the **Student Perceptions of Learning Experience**, the committee used the following three criteria. This approach is consistent with the broader movement toward multidimensional evaluation of teaching, which recognizes that student surveys should focus on dimensions students are qualified to assess, as part of a comprehensive evaluation system (TEval Project, 2025; Austin et al., 2025).

1. **It carries a summative component.** The dimension is relevant to personnel decisions under the UFPP.
2. **Students are qualified to assess it.** Reporting on the dimension does not require disciplinary or pedagogical expertise (Palmer, 2026; Stark, 2016).
3. **Students can assess it with minimal bias.** The dimension concerns experiential reports rather than evaluative judgments that the literature identifies as particularly susceptible to bias.

A useful starting point for applying these criteria is the TEval framework developed by Austin et al. (2025), an NSF-funded initiative that draws on twenty-five years of scholarly work on teaching evaluation. The framework identifies seven dimensions of teaching for evaluation, each accompanied by guiding questions that articulate what the dimension captures. Together, the seven dimensions provide a comprehensive definition of high-quality educational practice.

The seven dimensions of the TEval framework (Austin et al., 2025)

Guiding questions for each dimension of the framework

Dimension 1: Goals, Content, and Alignment. What are students expected to learn from the courses taught? Are learning goals clearly articulated in a way that is accessible to all students? Are course goals appropriate for the course as part of the larger curriculum and for the audience for which it is intended? Are topics appropriately challenging and related to current issues in the field? Are the materials high-quality and aligned with course goals? Does the content represent diverse perspectives? Are assessments aligned with course goals?

Dimension 2: Teaching Practices. How is in-class and out-of-class time used? Are assignments, assessments, and learning activities designed to help all students learn? What effective or high-impact methods are used to improve understanding and engage all students in learning? Do in- and out-of-class activities provide opportunities for practice and feedback on important skills and concepts? Are forms of assessment varied to allow for the success of diverse learners?

Dimension 3: Class Climate. To what extent is the class climate respectful, supportive, and cooperative? Does it encourage motivation and engagement for all students? Do all students feel included? How are student-student and student-instructor dialogue fostered? What are the students' views of their learning experiences? How has the instructor sought student feedback, and how has feedback informed the instructor's teaching?

Dimension 4: Achievement of Learning Outcomes. Does the instructor clearly communicate the learning goals for the course? What evidence is used to determine the degree to which students achieve the defined course goals? How well are course assignments, assessments, and learning activities aligned with the defined learning goals? Are there efforts to ensure that all students have equitable opportunities to achieve the learning goals? Are standards for evaluating learning clear and connected to program, curriculum, or professional expectations? Does the quality of learning support success in other contexts?

Dimension 5: Reflection and Iterative Growth. How and why has the instructor's teaching changed over time? How have changes been informed by evidence of student learning and student feedback? How has peer feedback been incorporated as changes in the instructor's teaching over time? How have the instructor's goals for their courses and students changed over time?

Dimension 6: Mentoring and Advising. How effectively has the instructor worked individually with undergraduate or graduate students? Does the instructor establish clear, individualized, and responsive expectations for student and mentor? Does the instructor provide constructive and timely coaching and feedback? How does the quality of and time commitment to mentoring fit with disciplinary and departmental expectations?

> **Dimension 7: Involvement in Teaching Service, Scholarship, or Community.** How has the instructor contributed to the broader teaching community, both on and off campus? Areas of contribution can include the learning culture in the department or institution (e.g., curriculum committees, program assessment, cocurricular activities); engaging with peers on or off campus in teaching communities, workshops, peer reviews, or similar activities; educational leadership activities (e.g., leading teaching workshops, presentations or publications about teaching, grants related to teaching).

When the seven dimensions are assessed against the three criteria above, one dimension stands out as the natural focus of the student survey: **Dimension 3 — Class Climate**. Class climate carries a summative component: the UFPP requires evidence of the instructor's effectiveness in creating a productive learning environment, and how students experience the classroom is directly relevant to that requirement. Students are qualified to assess it: reporting on whether the classroom felt supportive, responsive, and conducive to their learning does not require disciplinary or pedagogical expertise — it requires only that students reflect on their own experience. And students can assess it with minimal bias: items about class climate elicit experiential reports ("I felt treated with regard," "I felt the instructor created a learning environment that was responsive to all students") rather than the evaluative judgments about teaching effectiveness or instructor competence that the literature identifies as particularly susceptible to bias.

This focus on class climate is particularly fitting at a polytechnic university organized around Learn by Doing. Where students learn primarily through active engagement — in labs, studios, clinics, and collaborative projects — the learning environment is not a backdrop to instruction but the literal space in which learning happens. The climate of that space is, accordingly, not a secondary concern but a direct determinant of whether the pedagogy works.

The remaining six dimensions, by contrast, do not meet all three criteria. Dimensions 1, 2, and 4 — concerning course goals, teaching methods, and achievement of learning outcomes — require disciplinary or pedagogical expertise that students do not possess, and items targeting these dimensions are among those most susceptible to bias (Stark, 2016; Boring, Ottoboni, and Stark, 2016; Stark, 2026). Dimensions 5, 6, and 7 — reflection and growth, mentoring, and service — concern activities that students in a single course generally cannot observe or are not positioned to evaluate. It is worth noting that items asking students whether they feel they learned a great deal — while intuitively appealing — fall squarely within Dimension 4. The peer-reviewed evidence shows that perceived learning does not track actual learning. In a controlled experiment, Deslauriers et al. (2019) found that students who learned *more* (as measured by test performance) reported feeling they had learned *less*, and vice versa — a strong anti-correlation between perceived and actual learning. Uttl, White, and Gonzalez (2017), in a comprehensive meta-analysis correcting for small-sample and publication bias, found that the correlation between student evaluation ratings and

student learning is effectively zero. As Stark (2026) summarizes, student perceptions of their learning do not match objectively measured learning — a finding replicated across multiple disciplines and study designs. A "perceived learning" item would thus measure neither the learning environment nor actual learning, while carrying the same bias vulnerabilities as other evaluative items.

Having identified class climate as the appropriate focus, the committee then asked: *how can class climate be assessed comprehensively, with aspects that are conceptually distinct and collectively exhaustive?* The guiding questions for Dimension 3 in the TEval framework point toward the answer. They ask whether the climate reflects *regard for students as persons*, is *supportive*, and *cooperative*; whether it encourages *motivation and engagement*; whether all students feel *included*; how *dialogue* is fostered; and what students' *views of their learning experiences* are. Drawing on these guiding questions — and on the broader literature on classroom climate (Moos, 1979; Fraser, Treagust, and Dennis, 1986; Fraser, 1998; Lizzio, Wilson, and Simons, 2002; Frisby and Martin, 2010; Ambrose et al., 2010; Hurtado et al., 2012; Hagenauer and Volet, 2014) — the committee identified six aspects, each capturing a distinct facet of the student's experience in the classroom. In arriving at these aspects, the committee reviewed student course evaluation survey questions currently used by colleges and departments at both the San Luis Obispo and Solano campuses. Furthermore, in naming these aspects, the committee was deliberate in selecting language that describes what students experience without invoking terms that the literature associates with gendered or racialized expectations in evaluation contexts. These are described below.

Interpersonal — how the instructor relates to individual students

3.1.1 Regard for Students

What it captures: Whether the instructor engages with students as individuals — acknowledging their contributions, responding to their questions with care, and treating them as persons whose presence and participation matter.

> How Regard for Students differs from the other aspects
>
> An instructor can apply the same standards to everyone yet be dismissive in manner. A class can welcome questions without the instructor showing regard for the students offering them. A course can feel *coherent* (well-structured, connected) while the instructor is curt or condescending. Regard for Students is about the quality of interpersonal treatment, not consistency of standards (Consistent Communication and Enforcement of Expectations), availability outside class (Access to Instructor and Instructor Resources), perceived course structure (Perceived Course Coherence), conditions for engagement (Participatory Climate), or belonging (Responsive Learning Environment).

3.1.2 Consistent Communication and Enforcement of Expectations

What it captures: Whether expectations are communicated clearly and applied consistently — no favoritism, uniform access to learning and assessment.

> How Consistent Communication and Enforcement of Expectations differs from the other aspects
>
> An instructor can show *regard for students as persons* while playing favorites. A class can feel responsive in atmosphere while grading or attention is unevenly distributed. A course can be *coherent* (activities clearly connected to goals) while standards are applied inconsistently. Consistent Communication and Enforcement of Expectations is about equity across students, not the character of interaction (Regard for Students), availability outside class (Access to Instructor and Instructor Resources), perceived course structure (Perceived Course Coherence), the openness of the environment (Participatory Climate), or sense of belonging (Responsive Learning Environment).

3.1.3 Access to Instructor and Instructor Resources

What it captures: Whether the student can access the instructor and the resources the instructor provides — office hours, email, after-class conversations, course materials, and other support for learning.

> How Access to Instructor and Instructor Resources differs from the other aspects
>
> An instructor can be available one-on-one but create a poor in-class climate (Participatory Climate). A student may find the instructor easy to reach but, once there, feel dismissed (Regard for Students) or experience uneven standards (Consistent Communication and Enforcement of Expectations). A course can be *coherent* in structure while the instructor is difficult to reach outside of class. Access to Instructor and Instructor Resources is about availability, not the quality of what happens during interaction (Regard for Students), consistency of standards (Consistent Communication and Enforcement of Expectations), perceived course structure (Perceived Course Coherence), in-class environment (Participatory Climate), or belonging (Responsive Learning Environment).

Structural — how the course is experienced as a whole

3.1.4 Perceived Course Coherence

What it captures: Whether the student could see connections between course elements — that what happened in class, what was assigned, and what was assessed were recognizably related. A course can be highly coherent — readings connect to lectures connect to assessments — even when the content is disorienting or challenges students' prior beliefs.

Perceived Course Coherence might appear to belong with course design (Goals, Content, and Alignment) rather than with class climate. But what a peer reviewer assesses from the syllabus — whether the course elements are aligned — is different from what the student experiences in the classroom — whether the connections between those elements are *visible* to them. A syllabus can be perfectly aligned on paper while students experience the course as disjointed because the connections were never made explicit. It is this experiential dimension — perceived structure, not designed structure — that the SPLE measures, and that makes Perceived Course Coherence a class climate variable.

> How Perceived Course Coherence differs from the other aspects
>
> A class can score well on every other aspect — students treated with regard, standards applied consistently, instructor available, environment participatory and responsive — while the student still cannot see how the pieces fit together, how today's class connects to last week's, or how the assessments relate to what was covered. Perceived Course Coherence captures one specific, concrete experience: whether the student could see the connections between course elements. It is not a summary of the overall learning experience or a proxy for teaching effectiveness. It is about perceived structure, not interpersonal treatment (Regard for Students), consistency of standards (Consistent Communication and Enforcement of Expectations), availability outside class (Access to Instructor and Instructor Resources), conditions for engagement (Participatory Climate), or belonging (Responsive Learning Environment).

Environmental — what the classroom feels like as a shared space

3.1.5 Participatory Climate

What it captures: Whether the classroom environment supports multiple modes of active engagement — asking questions, sharing ideas and/or resources, discussing with peers, and making mistakes without penalty. This aspect concerns the conditions for engagement, not the format of instruction — a lecture in which the instructor welcomes questions and responds to them thoughtfully is a participatory climate no less than a seminar built around discussion.

> How Participatory Climate differs from the other aspects
>
> A class can be participatory in structure while individual students still don't feel they *belong* (Responsive Learning Environment). The instructor can show regard for students in replies without the environment actually encouraging participation. A course can feel *coherent* (well-structured) while the classroom format discourages questions, discussion, or student-to-student dialogue. Participatory Climate is about the conditions for engagement in class — including peer interaction — not the quality of treatment (Regard for Students), consistency of standards (Consistent Communication

and Enforcement of Expectations), availability outside class (Access to Instructor and Instructor Resources), perceived course structure (Perceived Course Coherence), or belonging (Responsive Learning Environment).

3.1.6 Responsive Learning Environment

What it captures: Whether the instructor creates a learning environment that is responsive to the range of students in the class — one that reflects awareness of differences in background, preparation, learning needs, and experience, rather than treating all students as interchangeable.

How Responsive Learning Environment differs from the other aspects

A student can be treated with regard and held to consistent standards without feeling they belong. A class can be *participatory* (questions encouraged, ideas welcomed) while a student still feels like an outsider — because of whose experiences are centered, who dominates discussion, or what the implicit culture of the class signals. A course can be *coherent* (activities connect, expectations are clear) while a student feels the class was not designed with them in mind. Responsive Learning Environment is about belonging in the group, not individual treatment (Regard for Students, Consistent Communication and Enforcement of Expectations), one-on-one availability (Access to Instructor and Instructor Resources), perceived course structure (Perceived Course Coherence), or conditions for engagement (Participatory Climate).

3.2 Evidence on bias in open-ended comments

The committee reviewed the following evidence on bias in open-ended comments. This evidence informed the committee's unanimous decision to retain open-ended questions only under the structured prompts and guardrails described in the next section.

The design of the **Student Perceptions of Learning Experience** rests on a principle: ask students only about things they are qualified to report on, in a form that minimizes bias. The Likert-scale items above are carefully worded to elicit experiential reports — structured statements about what the student felt — rather than open-ended evaluative judgments. An unstructured open-ended question undoes this by design.

Open-ended comments reintroduce exactly the biases the instrument is built to exclude

When given an unstructured prompt, students are free to comment on anything — teaching effectiveness, grading leniency, course organization, the instructor's appearance, accent, or personality — all topics the literature identifies as particularly suscepti-

ble to bias (Boring, Ottoboni, and Stark, 2016; Stark, 2026). The structured Likert items constrain responses to experiential reports about class climate; an open-ended field removes that constraint entirely.

⚠ The research on open-ended comments is clear

In a controlled experiment where identical online courses were taught under male and female instructor names, students commented on women's appearance and personality far more often than men's (Mitchell and Martin, 2018). An analysis of over 14 million reviews found that male professors were described as "brilliant" or "genius" two to three times more often than female professors across every field studied (Storage et al., 2016). A survey of 674 academics found that the highest volume, most derogatory, and most threatening abuse in student evaluations is directed at women and academics from marginalized groups — leading the authors to conclude that anonymous comments in student evaluations must be removed if institutions wish to be inclusive (Heffernan, 2023). A review of over 100 articles on SET bias concluded that open-ended comments show "the strongest evidence of equity bias" and recommended that "the use of qualitative comments, where equity bias is most apparent, should be limited and cautious" (Kreitzer and Sweet-Cushman, 2021). The scale of the problem is considerable: a survey of 791 Australian academics found that more than 91% reported receiving non-constructive comments — clustering into comments about attire, appearance, and accent; allegations against character; general insults; projections of blame; and threats or calls for punishment (Lakeman et al., 2023). At one large university, a machine-learning screening system flagged 6.9% of all student comments — 4,258 out of 62,049 — as potentially harmful; manual screening at that scale is not feasible, which means institutions that include open-ended comments in the personnel file are including content they cannot even review (Gibson et al., 2022).

⚠ Open-ended comments resist the reporting standards this proposal establishes

The scoring and reporting methodology for the **Student Perceptions of Learning Experience** that this Committee recommends — frequency distributions, no numerical averages, no cross-comparisons — is designed to prevent misinterpretation and misuse of the data. Open-ended comments cannot be reported as frequency distributions, cannot be standardized, and invite selective quotation by evaluators. A single vivid comment, whether positive or negative, can disproportionately influence a reader in ways that a frequency distribution of structured responses does not (Boysen et al., 2014; Linse, 2017).

> **A growing number of institutions are restricting or removing open-ended comments**
>
> Cal Poly Pomona, the University of Houston, and Florida State University restrict open-ended comments so that only the instructor can see them. St. Olaf College's Office of Institutional Effectiveness states plainly: "Invitations for open-ended comments should be avoided, as these tend to produce the strongest evidence of bias." USC eliminated student evaluations from tenure and promotion decisions in 2018. UCLA made them optional for personnel actions in 2024. Dalhousie University made student ratings entirely formative — no results are shared with chairs or deans. Miami University's policy states that evaluations "will be conducted for formative purposes only." The University of Toronto Faculty Association, as of January 2026, has an active grievance at arbitration challenging the use of student evaluations, citing discriminatory, harassing, and abusive comments that members receive in the open-ended portions of their evaluations.

This does not mean students should have no voice beyond the six items. It means that unstructured feedback belongs in the formative component of the evaluation of teaching — a separate, developmental process designed exclusively to help the instructor grow as an educator (Centra, 1993; Berk, 2005). Best practices are that formative results are shared only with the instructor and are not used for employment decisions (Benton and Young, 2018; Stark and Freishtat, 2014). In this context, open-ended questions can serve their intended purpose without the risk of biased comments influencing personnel decisions.

3.3 Guardrails for open-ended questions

If the Academic Senate elects to retain open-ended questions in the Student Perceptions of Learning Experience, which is this committee's recommendation, the committee recommends the following guardrails:

The committee recognizes that open-ended questions provide qualitative information that structured items alone cannot capture — including the ability to surface concerns the instrument designers did not anticipate and to give students a voice in their own words. In a listening session with ASI on April 13, 2026, students expressed support for retaining open-ended questions, noting that they allow students to provide context for their Likert-scale responses and to offer suggestions for improvement. Their input helped shape the committee's decision to retain open-ended questions under structured prompts. The TEval framework emphasizes that effective evaluation involves "multiple lenses," and that the student lens captures experiences invisible to peer reviewers and self-reports (Austin et al., 2025). It is for this reason that the committee voted to retain open-ended questions rather than remove them, while adopting the guardrails described below to mitigate the equity bias that the literature documents in unstructured responses.

1. **Informational framing.** The preamble must explicitly instruct students to comment

on specific aspects of their learning experience and to avoid comments about the instructor's personal characteristics, consistent with the anti-bias framing described in Section 5.5 (Boring and Philippe, 2021).

2. **Structured prompts, not generic invitations.** Open-ended questions must not use generic prompts such as "Please comment on the instructor" or "What are your suggestions for improvement?" Instead, each open-ended question should be tied to a specific aspect of class climate — for example, asking the student to elaborate on their experience of class coherence. This channels comments toward the dimensions the instrument measures and away from the unstructured commentary that the literature identifies as most susceptible to bias.

Residual bias in open-ended responses. The evidence on informational framing and structured prompts is encouraging for structured Likert-scale items (Boring and Philippe, 2021), and the SPLE is designed to benefit from this effect. The evidence is less encouraging for open-ended responses. Owen, De Bruin, and Wu (2024) found that structured prompts improved the specificity and constructiveness of open-ended comments but did not reduce gender bias — women faculty were penalized at similar rates across all conditions. This finding is consistent with the broader literature documenting that the unstructured format of open-ended responses gives bias channels that structured items constrain.

Chapter 4

Scoring and Reporting Guidelines

The recommendations in this chapter were approved by the committee with 7 votes in favor, 0 votes against, and 2 abstentions.

4.1 Scoring Methodology

The following scoring approach applies to all items in the **Student Perceptions of Learning Experience.**

- **Ordered categorical data.** The responses are ordered categorical: the categories have a natural ranking but the distances between them are undefined. They are not interval-scale measurements (Stevens, 1946; Jamieson, 2004). The instrument uses a structured fixed-response format — what the Collective Bargaining Agreement terms "Scantron form, etc." (CBA §15.17), and the resulting survey data constitute student course evaluations under that provision.
- **Five ordered categorical response options:** Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree.
- **A Not Applicable (N/A) option** is also available for each question.
- **No numerical scoring.** The categorical responses are not assigned numerical values, as those values cannot be interpreted and their presence encourages misinterpretation. As Stark explains:

  > "While it is common to replace the category names with numbers, for instance, using '1' to signify 'strongly disagree' and '5' to signify 'strongly agree,' the numbers themselves are not quantities, just new labels. They are codes that happen to be numerical. The actual magnitudes of the numbers do not mean anything. The labels are arbitrary. Averaging such numbers is meaningless as a matter of statistics. For the average to be meaningful, the difference between '1' and '2' would need to mean the same thing as

the difference between ‘4’ and ‘5.’ A ‘1’ would have to balance a ‘5’ to be the equivalent of two ’3’s. But adding or subtracting labels from each other does not make sense, any more than it makes sense to add or average postal codes” (Stark, 2016, ¶28–29; see also Stark, 2026).

4.1.1 Why frequency distributions are preferred over measures of central tendency for this instrument

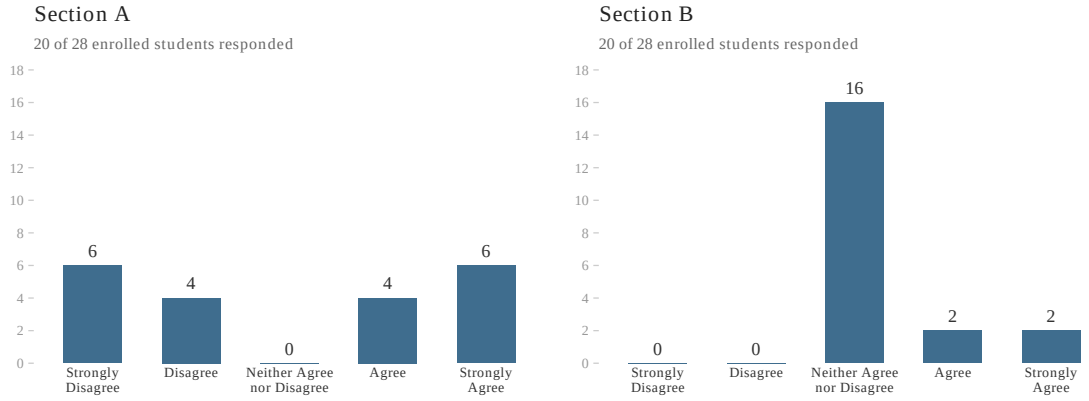
With only five possible values and many more than five students in a classroom, the median cannot move until the distribution shifts enough to push the 50th percentile across a category boundary. Small but meaningful differences — and even some large ones — are invisible to it. This creates two distinct problems.

4.1.1.1 Problem 1: The median hides variation

Two distributions can have very different spreads yet produce the same median.

Table 4.1: Frequency distribution of responses (20 of 28 enrolled students responded)

	Section A	Section B
Strongly Agree	6	2
Agree	4	2
Neither Agree nor Disagree	0	16
Disagree	4	0
Strongly Disagree	6	0



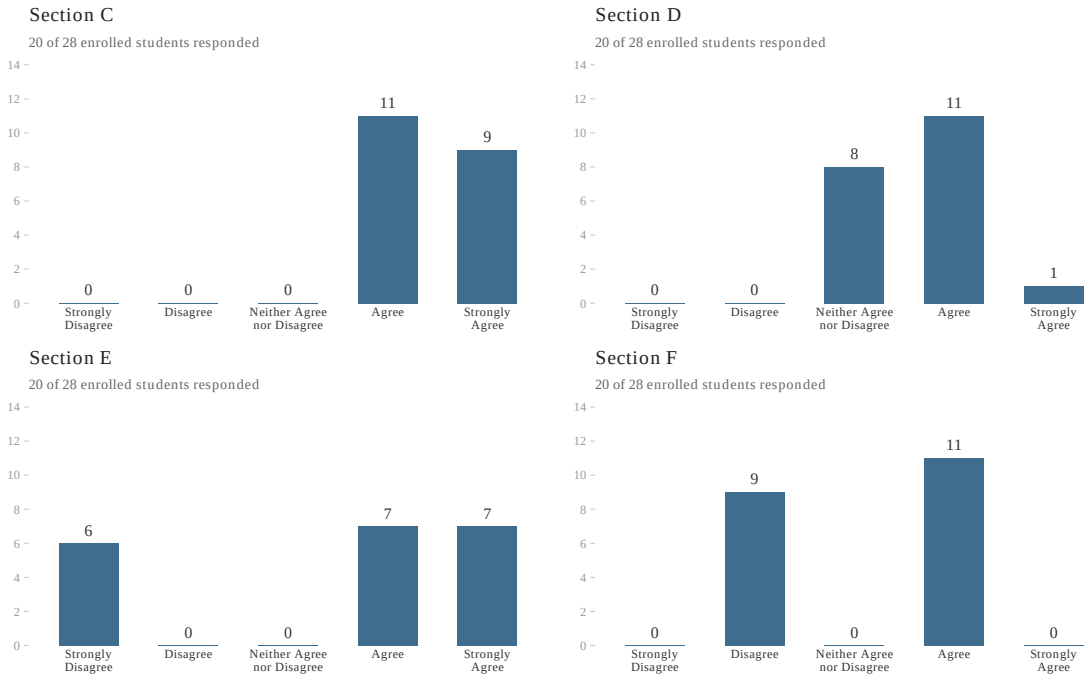
Sections A and B above have the same median (Neither Agree nor Disagree), and very different distributions. Section A is deeply polarized — students are split between strong agreement and strong disagreement. Section B is concentrated at the center. An evaluator seeing “Neither Agree nor Disagree” twice would assume these are similar. They are not.

4.1.1.2 Problem 2: The median is too coarse to locate the center

The median also fails to distinguish distributions that differ in where their weight sits. Problem 1 showed that two distributions with different spreads can share a median. The following examples show that even distributions with very different centers of gravity — where one class is overwhelmingly positive and another is split down the middle — can produce the same median.

Table 4.2: Frequency distribution of responses (20 of 28 enrolled students responded)

	Sec. C	Sec. D	Sec. E	Sec. F
Strongly Agree	9	1	7	0
Agree	11	11	7	11
Neither Agree nor Disagree	0	8	0	0
Disagree	0	0	0	9
Strongly Disagree	0	0	6	0



All four sections report median = "Agree." But Section C is overwhelmingly positive, Section D is lukewarm, Section E is fairly polarized, and Section F is a knife-edge split. The median cannot tell them apart because five categories do not give it enough resolution — the distribution must shift *a lot* before the median moves to the next step. The distributions shown above shift *plenty* and the median does not budge.

The frequency distribution tells you instantly which case you are looking at. The median

hides it.

In practice, the problem is sharper still. Student evaluations are typically such that most students who respond to the survey report nominally positive experiences. With a five-category scale and typical class sizes (15–40 students), the median will almost always fall at "Agree" or "Strongly Agree." This compresses nearly all instructors into two bins, making the median nearly useless for the purpose it is most needed for: helping evaluators distinguish between cases.

A well-designed bar chart is not merely an illustration — it is itself the most effective summary available. As Tufte (1983) observed, the best statistical graphics communicate the full distribution of the data at a glance, rendering patterns, extreme values, and variation instantly legible in a way that no single summary statistic can. For a five-category ordinal variable, a bar chart *is* the summary measure — one that preserves the distributional information that the median discards.

4.2 Reporting Guidelines

- **Frequency distributions.** The number of students whose response falls in each category should be reported as raw counts together with percentages.

> ⚠ Care in interpretation of percentages
>
> Percentages make it easier to compare the shape of a distribution across sections with different numbers of respondents — "30% Strongly Agree" is immediately interpretable in a way that "7 out of 23" requires mental arithmetic. For evaluators reviewing many courses, percentages provide a quicker read of the distributional pattern.
> However, with the class sizes typical of most courses, percentages create a misleading impression of precision: a single student's response can shift a percentage by several points, and the small denominator is hidden from the reader. Reporting counts — e.g., "7 out of 23 respondents" — keeps the sample size visible and discourages over-interpretation (Lang and Secic, 2006, Ch. 1). For this reason, percentages should always be reported alongside raw counts and the total number of respondents, never in isolation.

- **Response rates.** Both the number of enrolled students and the number of respondents should be reported.
- **No extrapolation.** Results should not be extrapolated from responders to nonresponders. Students who submit evaluations are a self-selected sample of convenience, not a random sample; standard statistical measures of uncertainty such as standard errors and confidence intervals are therefore inapt (Stark, 2026).
- **No cross-comparisons.** Results should not be compared across instructors, courses, departments, or disciplines. This is so for the following two reasons:

First, student experience scores are confounded with variables unrelated to teaching effectiveness — including the instructor's gender, race, and age — and these biases are large enough to cause more effective instructors to receive lower scores than less effective ones (Boring, Ottoboni, and Stark, 2016). The bias cannot be corrected because it varies by discipline, by student gender, by survey item, and by other factors. This means that comparing Instructor A's scores to Instructor B's scores — even for the same course — does not reveal who taught more effectively. It reveals the combined effect of demographics, student biases, and nonresponse patterns.

Second, cross-comparisons are invalidated by differences in course characteristics that have nothing to do with teaching: class size, course level, whether the course is required or elective, and student preparation (Stark and Freishtat, 2014, Recommendation 5; McKeachie, 1997, p. 1222). Evaluators should assess each faculty member individually; evaluations and decisions should stand alone without reference to other faculty members or to a unit average (Linse, 2017).

The following table illustrates the recommended reporting format. Each cell contains the raw count and percentage of respondents selecting that category. The table caption states both the number of respondents and the number of enrolled students, making the response rate immediately visible. No numerical averages or information about other instructors or groups of instructors appear.

Table 4.3: Frequency distribution of responses (22 of 33 enrolled students responded; response rate 67 percent)

	Question 1	Question 2
Strongly Agree	6 (27%)	6 (27%)
Agree	7 (32%)	8 (36%)
Neither Agree nor Disagree	4 (18%)	3 (14%)
Disagree	3 (14%)	4 (18%)
Strongly Disagree	2 (9%)	1 (5%)

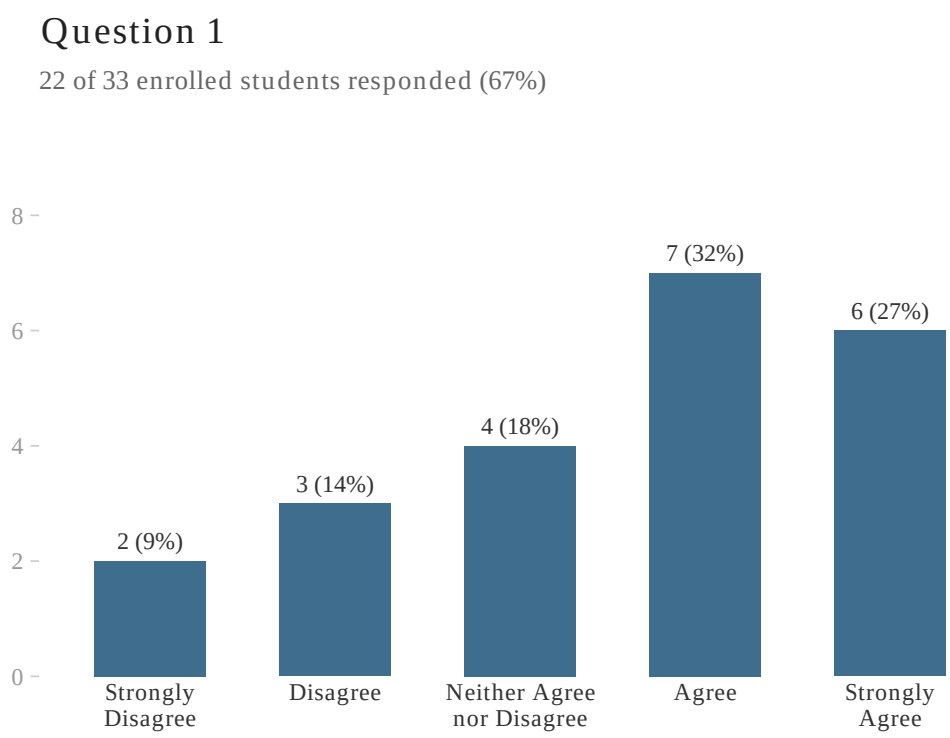
4.3 Visualization Guidelines

The distribution of responses should be examined across the entire scale, not reduced to a single summary statistic (Linse, 2017; Stark and Freishtat, 2014). The distribution should also be displayed as a bar chart showing the count and percentage of respondents in each category.

4.3.1 Bar chart for a single question

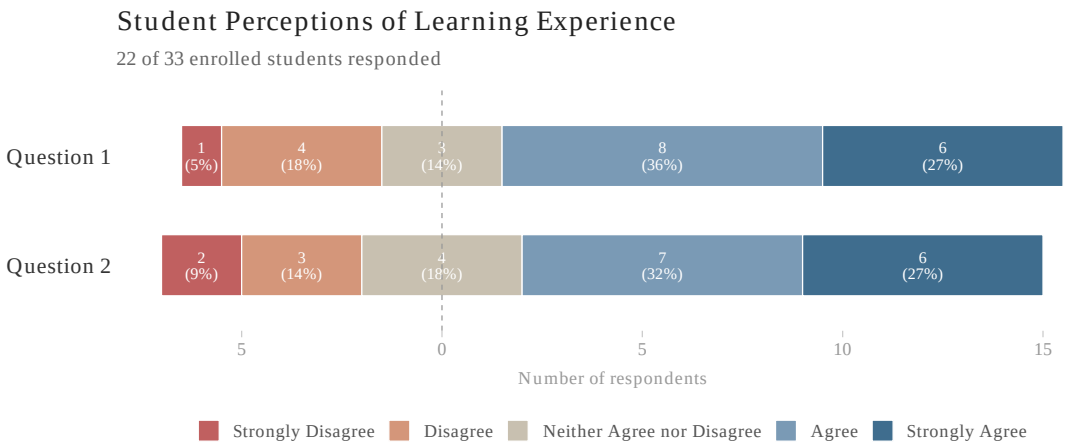
For individual instructor reports, a simple vertical bar chart is the most transparent format. Each bar represents one response category; the vertical axis shows the count of respondents,

with percentages displayed alongside. The response rate appears as a subtitle.



4.3.2 Diverging stacked bar chart for comparing multiple questions

When multiple survey items from an individual need to be compared at a glance, a diverging stacked bar chart is recommended. In this design, proposed by Heiberger and Robbins as "the primary graphical display technique for Likert scales," bars diverge from the neutral midpoint: agreement categories extend to the right, disagreement categories extend to the left, and the neutral category is split evenly across both sides (Heiberger and Robbins, 2014). This layout makes the balance between agreement and disagreement immediately visible — the reader can judge the overall sentiment by comparing the visual mass on each side of the center line. Each segment is labeled with the raw count and percentage; zero-count categories are omitted.


Student Perceptions of Learning Experience
22 of 33 enrolled students responded
Question 1
1 (5%)
4 (18%)
3 (14%)
8 (36%)
6 (27%)
Question 2
2 (9%)
3 (14%)
4 (18%)
7 (32%)
6 (27%)
5
0
5
10
15
Number of respondents
Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Neither Agree nor Disagree
Agree
Strongly Agree

Chapter 5

Implementation Best Practices

The recommendations in this chapter were approved unanimously by the committee.

The preceding chapters define *what* the **Student Perceptions of Learning Experience** (SPLE) measures — six aspects of the learning environment that students are qualified to report on — and *how* its results should be scored and reported. This companion chapter addresses a third question: *how should the instrument be administered?*

Cal Poly's transition to semesters — from 10-week quarters — is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to design the administration of this instrument from scratch rather than inheriting the practices of a system it replaces. The recommendations below draw on the peer-reviewed literature and on the published practices of peer institutions to propose a concrete implementation model for the SPLE.

5.1 Scope

This chapter addresses the implementation of the SPLE — the summative instrument whose results enter the personnel file under CBA §15.17. It does not address the evaluation of teaching more broadly, nor does it address course design, pedagogy, or the other dimensions of the TEval framework that are assessed through peer review, self-reflection, and other evidence sources.

The broader literature on teaching evaluation recognizes that many institutions complement their end-of-term summative instrument with informal mid-semester formative feedback — brief, anonymous check-ins designed to give instructors actionable information while the course is still in progress. Oregon's two-survey model, Angelo and Cross's Classroom Assessment Techniques (1993), and Harvard's early-feedback recommendations (Bok Center) all exemplify this practice. Developing a formative feedback process at Cal Poly is a **separate effort**. A sub-committee of this Ad Hoc Committee prepared a separate document that is not part of this report — Formative Learning Feedback: A Companion to the Student Perceptions of Learning Experience Report — that addresses this topic in detail. This chapter

does not address it further.

The sections that follow focus exclusively on the SPLE instrument: when to administer it, how to administer it, how to maximize response rates, and how to frame it to minimize bias.

5.2 Timing

5.2.1 The literature consensus

The peer-reviewed literature is clear on one point: summative course evaluations should be administered during the **last one to two weeks of instruction, before final examinations begin**. Administering evaluations before students receive final grades avoids contaminating responses with grade-related anxiety or gratitude — a well-documented source of bias (Centra, 2003; Marsh, 2007). Administering them too early misses late-semester developments in the learning environment.

ℹ What peer institutions do

Institution	Evaluation Window	Source
San José State	~10 days; last 2 weeks of classes	SJSU Teaching Evaluation; SOTE Interpretation Guide (2022)
San Diego State	~14 days; two-week window before finals	SDSU Student Feedback
UC Davis	Last week of each quarter (~7 days)	UC Davis ACE
UC Santa Barbara	Week 9 Monday – Week 10 Friday (~10 days)	UCSB Course Evaluations
UC San Diego	Week 9 Monday – Week 10 Saturday 8 AM (~6 days)	UCSD SET

All of these institutions release results only after final grades have been submitted — a universally recommended practice that protects anonymity and ensures that neither students nor instructors face grade-related pressure during the evaluation period.

5.2.2 Recommendation for Cal Poly's semester

The SPLE window should be **open during the last two weeks of instruction before finals week**. This two-week window is consistent with the practice at most peer institutions, provides sufficient time for reminders and in-class completion, and ensures that the evaluation captures students' experience of nearly the full semester without bleeding into the final examination period.

5.3 Mode of administration

5.3.1 The response-rate problem

The single most important administrative decision is the *mode* of administration, because it largely determines the response rate.

The evidence is unambiguous: **in-class administration** produces the highest response rates. Paper-based in-class administration historically achieved **80–90%** response rates (Nulty, 2008; Berk, 2013). By contrast, **online-only outside-class** administration typically produces **30–60%** response rates — a range in which self-selection bias is a serious threat to the validity of the data (see Section 5.4).

5.3.2 The hybrid model

A growing number of institutions have adopted a hybrid approach: dedicating class time for students to complete the evaluation *online*, on their own devices. This combines the response-rate benefits of in-class administration with the logistical efficiency of an online platform. Studies report response rates of **70–80%** with this model — comparable to traditional paper-based in-class administration (Berk, 2013; Chapman and Joines, 2017).

The hybrid model is particularly well suited to the SPLE. The instrument is designed to be short and focused — a student can complete it in under ten minutes on a phone. Ten to fifteen minutes of dedicated class time is more than sufficient, even accounting for the time to display the link, wait for students to access it, and allow for thoughtful responses.

5.3.3 Recommendation

The summative SPLE should use a **hybrid model**: during the evaluation window, each instructor dedicates **10–15 minutes of class time** for students to complete the survey online. The instructor displays the survey link (URL or QR code), then **leaves the room**. A designated student or TA signals the instructor to return when time is up. Students who are absent during the in-class session complete the evaluation outside of class during the remainder of the window.

This is the single most effective step the university can take to ensure that the SPLE produces high enough response rates.

5.4 Maximizing response rates

5.4.1 Why response rates matter

When response rates are low, the students who choose to respond may differ systematically from those who do not — they may be more satisfied, more dissatisfied, higher-performing, or lower-performing than the class as a whole. This self-selection bias is not a theoretical concern; it is well documented. As Stark (2026) emphasizes, students who submit eval-

uations are a self-selected sample of convenience, not a random sample, and there is no statistical basis for extrapolating from respondents to the class as a whole.

Springer (2015) found that online evaluation respondents differed from non-respondents in academic achievement, satisfaction, and motivation. Holtgraves and colleagues (2023) found that non-respondents were not a random subset of enrolled students and that the resulting bias could not be corrected by statistical adjustment. Springer (2016) further showed that the *direction* of the bias varied by course context — meaning that the bias cannot be predicted or corrected post hoc.

i Strategies ranked by effectiveness: what the literature says

The literature identifies the following strategies, roughly ranked by their demonstrated impact on response rates:

1. **Dedicate class time for online completion.** This is the single most effective intervention. It converts the evaluation from a task students must remember to do on their own time into one that is built into the structure of the course (Berk, 2013; Chapman and Joines, 2017).
2. **Multiple automated reminders.** Adams and Umbach (2012) found that four reminders spaced at 2–3 day intervals brought response rates to approximately the 70th percentile of course-level rates. Each additional reminder (up to four) produced a statistically significant increase.
3. **LMS integration.** Embedding the evaluation link within Canvas — as a dashboard notification, a pop-up reminder, or a course navigation item — reduces the friction of locating and accessing the survey. Students are already in the LMS daily; the evaluation should meet them there.
4. **Instructor communication.** When instructors discuss the evaluation on Day 1 (e.g., a syllabus note explaining that the SPLE asks about the student's learning experience and that the data are read and taken seriously), and again when the evaluation window opens, response rates increase modestly. The mechanism is legitimacy: students participate when they believe their feedback matters (Chen and Hoshower, 2003).
5. **Class-level incentives.** Goodman, Anson, and Belcheir (2015) found that a class-level incentive (e.g., a bonus point if the class achieves an 80% response rate) increased response rates by approximately 22 percentage points. Class-level incentives avoid the coercion problem of individual incentives because no individual student's participation can be identified.

5.4.2 Recommendation

We recommend the following:

- **Dedicate class time.** Each instructor should set aside 10–15 minutes during the

evaluation window for students to complete the SPLE online in class. The instructor displays the survey link or QR code, then leaves the room. This is the single most effective intervention for achieving high response rates.

- **Send four automated reminders** at 2–3 day intervals during the evaluation window, via email and Canvas notification.
- **Integrate with the LMS.** Embed the evaluation link within Canvas — as a dashboard notification, pop-up reminder, or course navigation item — so that the survey meets students where they already are.
- **Encourage instructor communication.** A brief mention on Day 1 (e.g., a syllabus note explaining that the SPLE asks about the student's learning experience and that the data are taken seriously), repeated when the window opens, increases participation.

5.5 Framing the instrument to minimize bias

5.5.1 The evidence on anti-bias framing

A natural question is whether the instructions presented to students before they complete the evaluation can reduce the biases documented in the literature — particularly gender bias. The answer is nuanced: it depends entirely on what kind of framing is used.

Normative framing — generic appeals to fairness such as "Please evaluate your instructor fairly, regardless of their gender, race, or other characteristics" — has been shown to have **no significant effect** on evaluation outcomes. Boring and Philippe (2021) tested this directly in a large-scale field experiment at Sciences Po and found that a normative anti-bias warning produced no detectable change in the gender gap.

Informational framing — pairing the warning with institution-specific data showing that previous cohorts had evaluated male and female instructors differently — produced a markedly different result. In the same experiment, Boring and Philippe found that informational framing significantly reduced the gender bias, raising ratings of female instructors without affecting ratings of male instructors. The effect was driven primarily by male students' evaluations of female instructors; female students' ratings were not significantly affected by either treatment.

An important caveat: The evidence that informational framing reduces bias applies to *structured Likert-scale items*. It does not extend to *open-ended responses*, where the unstructured format gives bias room to operate regardless of how the prompt is framed. Owen, De Bruin, and Wu (2024) found that even directed, structured prompts — while they improved the specificity and constructiveness of open-ended comments — did not reduce gender bias. This is one of the reasons the committee considered discontinuing open-ended questions from the summative instrument, and ultimately voted to retain them only under the structured prompts and guardrails described in Chapter 3.

5.5.2 Recommendation

The SPLE should open with a brief, concrete, **data-informed preamble** — not a generic "be fair" appeal, which the evidence shows is ineffective, but a factual statement that provides students with context about what the survey measures and what the research shows about evaluation biases. The preamble should:

1. **Name what the survey measures.** Remind students that the SPLE asks about their *own experience* of the learning environment — not a verdict on the instructor as a person or professional.
2. **Provide specific information about documented biases.** A brief, factual statement — e.g., "Research shows that students' evaluations of their learning experience can be influenced by characteristics of the instructor unrelated to the learning environment, such as gender and race. Being aware of this tendency helps produce more accurate feedback."
3. **Reinforce the survey's purpose.** The data are used to understand the student learning experience and to support faculty development and evaluation. Thoughtful, honest responses improve the quality of the data.

The name **Student Perceptions of Learning Experience** is itself a framing device. By directing attention to the student's *experience* rather than to the instructor's *performance*, the instrument's name reinforces the experiential focus that the bias literature recommends.

> **i** Draft preamble language
>
> **Student Perceptions of Learning Experience**
> This brief survey asks about *your experience* in this course — the learning environment, your interactions with the instructor, and how you perceive the course was structured. It does not ask you to evaluate the instructor's teaching ability or the course content.
> Research shows that students' responses to surveys like this can be influenced by characteristics of the instructor — such as gender, race, and accent — that are unrelated to the learning environment. Being aware of this tendency helps you provide more accurate feedback.
> Your responses are anonymous and will not be shared with the instructor until after final grades have been submitted. Please respond thoughtfully and honestly.

5.6 Recommended implementation model

The following table synthesizes the evidence reviewed in this chapter into a concrete recommendation for administering the summative Student Perceptions of Learning Experience under Cal Poly's semester calendar.

Element	Recommendation	Rationale
When	Last two weeks of instruction before finals week	Literature consensus: last 1–2 weeks of instruction, before finals begin (Centra, 2003; Marsh, 2007)
Mode	Hybrid: dedicated class time for online completion	Single most effective method for achieving 70%+ response rates (Berk, 2013)
Class time	10–15 min; instructor displays link/QR code, then leaves	The instrument is short and focused — feasible in under ten minutes
Framing	Informational preamble (data-informed, not generic)	Boring and Philippe (2021): informational framing reduces gender bias; generic appeals do not
Reminders	4 automated reminders at 2–3 day intervals	Adams and Umbach (2012): achieves ~70% response rates
Results release	Only after final grades are submitted	Universally recommended; protects anonymity and reduces grade-anxiety bias

Administering the SPLE in the final two weeks of instruction, with dedicated class time and an informational preamble is an achievable model — it requires no new technology, no additional personnel, and minimal class time — and it reflects the best available evidence on how to implement a student survey that is both useful and fair.

Chapter 6

Conclusions

The **Student Perceptions of Learning Experience** proposed here is a short, focused instrument grounded in the peer-reviewed literature and aligned with the UFPP's requirements. By renaming the instrument, centering it on the six aspects of class climate that students are qualified to report on, and adopting guardrails for the open-ended questions to mitigate documented equity bias, we can give students a meaningful voice in the evaluation of teaching while protecting both students and instructors from the well-documented biases of traditional teaching evaluations. This is an achievable reform — one that strengthens the integrity of the evaluation process and brings Cal Poly's practices in line with a growing movement across higher education toward multidimensional, evidence-based evaluation of teaching (McCreary, 2026; Stark, 2026). Moreover, the instrument reflects Cal Poly's distinctive pedagogical identity: at a university where students learn by doing, a survey centered on the climate in which that doing takes place is not just methodologically sound — it is institutionally apt.

In addition, two sub-committees of this Ad Hoc Committee prepared companion documents that are separate from this report. These documents have not been formally adopted by the full committee and are offered as companion resources for consideration by the respective Academic Senate committees to which they are addressed.

- **Guidance for Evaluation of Instruction** — a proposed revision to UFPP §8.3 that organizes the evaluation of teaching around the seven TEval dimensions, includes a teaching effectiveness rubric adapted from the University of Kansas Benchmarks for Teaching Excellence, provides guidance on the appropriate and inappropriate uses of the survey data (including the inherent limitations of student evaluation data and the role of SPLE results within the broader evaluation framework), addresses department-associated questions, sets departmental expectations, and outlines training and implementation requirements. Offered for consideration by the Academic Senate Faculty Affairs Committee.
- **Formative Learning Feedback: A Companion to the Student Perceptions of Learning**

Experience Report — a voluntary, developmental feedback process to be tentatively offered through the Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology (CTLT), organized around the seven research-based principles of learning identified by Ambrose et al. (2010), and designed to give instructors actionable information about how students are experiencing the learning environment while the course is still in progress. Offered for consideration by the Academic Senate Instruction Committee and the Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology.

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Appendix A

Appendix: Sample Survey Instrument

This appendix presents a sample version of the **Student Perceptions of Learning Experience** (**SPLE**), including the recommended preamble and one item per aspect of class climate (two for Coherence). The instrument uses a five-point ordered categorical scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree) plus a Not Applicable option for each item. The items presented here are illustrative. They are intended to demonstrate how the six aspects of class climate can be operationalized as experiential survey items. **This is not intended to be the final instrument.**

A.1 Preamble

The survey should open with the following informational preamble, consistent with the evidence on anti-bias framing discussed in Section 5.5 (Boring and Philippe, 2021).

> **Student Perceptions of Learning Experience**
> This brief survey asks about *your experience* in this course — the learning environment, your interactions with the instructor, and how you perceive the course was structured. It does not ask you to evaluate the instructor's teaching ability or the course content.
> Research shows that students' responses to surveys like this can be influenced by characteristics of the instructor — such as gender, race, and accent — that are unrelated to the learning environment. Being aware of this tendency helps you provide more accurate feedback.
> Your responses are anonymous and will not be shared with the instructor until after final grades have been submitted. Please respond thoughtfully and honestly.

A.2 Sample Items

All items use the following response scale:

Strongly Agree · Agree · Neither Agree nor Disagree · Disagree · Strongly Disagree · Not Applicable

A.2.1 Regard for Students

"I felt the instructor engaged with students as individuals."

A.2.2 Consistent Communication and Enforcement of Expectations

"I knew what was expected of me in this course."

"I felt the instructor applied the same expectations and standards to all students."

A.2.3 Access to Instructor and Instructor Resources

"I was able to get help from my instructor when I needed it (in office hours, after class, or by email)."

"I was able to access the course materials and resources I needed for this class."

A.2.4 Perceived Course Coherence

"I could see how what was assessed related to what was covered in the course."

"I could see how the different parts of this course fit together."

A.2.5 Participatory Climate

"I felt there were ways for me to participate in the course."

"I felt the instructor created opportunities for me to explore the ideas in the course."

A.2.6 Responsive Learning Environment

"I felt the instructor created a learning environment that was responsive to all students."

A.3 Sample if the Academic Senate elects to retain open-ended questions

If open-ended questions are retained under the guardrails described in Section 3.3, the instrument would include one structured open-ended prompt on Perceived Course Coherence — the aspect where elaboration is most informative and least susceptible to bias. The prompt appears immediately after the Perceived Course Coherence Likert items and directs the student to describe their experience with course structure.

A.3.1 Perceived Course Coherence (with structured open-ended prompt)

"I could see how what was assessed related to what was covered in the course."

"I could see how the different parts of this course fit together."

"Please describe your experience with how the different parts of this course fit together — for example, how readings, class activities, assignments, and assessments related to each other. Focus on specific aspects of the course, not on personal characteristics of the instructor."

Your response here...

All other items (Regard for Students, Consistent Communication and Enforcement of Expectations, Access to Instructor and Instructor Resources, Participatory Climate, Responsive Learning Environment) remain Likert-only.

A.3.2 Why an open-ended question only on Perceived Course Coherence?

The committee considered attaching an open-ended prompt to each of the six aspects and concluded that Perceived Course Coherence is the only aspect where the benefit of elaboration clearly outweighs the risk of bias. The reasoning, aspect by aspect:

- **Regard for Students.** An open-ended prompt here invites commentary on manner, demeanor, and personality — exactly the content that disproportionately targets women and faculty from marginalized groups (Mitchell and Martin, 2018). Highest risk, lowest benefit.
- **Consistent Communication and Enforcement of Expectations.** An open-ended prompt here invites comments about grading, which correlates with grade *expectations*, not actual consistency of standards. It also invites favoritism allegations that can be racialized (Chisadza, Nicholls, and Yitbarek, 2019). High risk.
- **Access.** An open-ended prompt here invites commentary on communication style, accent, and warmth — all heavily gendered and racialized (Subtirelu, 2015; Miller and Chamberlin, 2000). High risk.
- **Responsive Learning Environment.** An open-ended prompt here could elicit valuable information, but it could also produce comments about the instructor's identity that are impossible to disentangle from bias. A student who doesn't feel they belong might attribute it to the instructor's demographics rather than to specific practices (Heffernan, 2023). Moderate-to-high risk.
- **Perceived Course Coherence.** This is the safest choice. An open-ended prompt here channels comments toward course structure — readings, assignments, assessments, the connections between topics. These are the most impersonal, practice-oriented

comments a student can make. It is hard (but not impossible) to write something biased about whether the exam matched the lectures. And it is the aspect where elaboration is most useful to evaluators — a Likert response tells you the student didn't see the connections; a structured comment tells you *which* connections were missing.

- **Participatory Climate.** An open-ended prompt here could produce useful structural feedback (e.g., "group work was dominated by two people," "questions were welcomed but never answered"). But it readily invites evaluative commentary about the instructor's teaching style — particularly judgments like "the lectures were boring" or "there was too much group work." Research shows that students conflate instructor enthusiasm and charisma with teaching effectiveness, even though enthusiasm is not associated with learning (Feeley, 2002; Williams and Ceci, 1997). A comment like "boring" tells you about the student's affective response — which may reflect the instructor's gender, accent, or presentation style — not about whether the environment supported participation. This kind of feedback is valuable in the formative process, where the instructor can contextualize it; in the personnel file, it becomes indistinguishable from bias. Moderate risk.

A.4 Relationship to Existing Cal Poly Maritime Academy Practices

Several of these aspects are already tracked in other CSU instruments. The Cal Poly Maritime Academy, for example, includes items on Consistent Communication and Enforcement of Expectations ("The instructor attempted to be fair and unbiased in their interaction with students"), Responsive Learning Environment ("The instructor demonstrated awareness and consideration of the diversity of students in the class"), Access to Instructor and Instructor Resources ("The instructor was responsive when I had questions"), and Participatory Climate ("The instructor provided opportunities for class participation"). The SPLE items are compatible with this existing practice. The principal difference is one of framing: the SPLE items are worded as first-person experiential reports ("I felt…") rather than third-person assessments of instructor behavior ("The instructor attempted…"), consistent with the evidence that experiential items are less susceptible to bias than evaluative ones.

Formative Learning Feedback

A Companion to 'Student Perceptions of Learning Experience: Rationale and Broad Principles of Design'

Sub-Committee of the Ad Hoc Committee on Student Perceptions of Teaching Effectiveness

2026-04-29

Table of contents

Preamble

This document was prepared by a sub-committee of the Ad Hoc Committee on Student Perceptions of Teaching Effectiveness as a companion resource. It has not been formally adopted by the full committee and is offered for consideration by the Academic Senate Instruction Committee and the Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology.

This document describes and proposes **Formative Learning Feedback** — a flexible, voluntary feedback process to be potentially offered through the Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology (CTLT) and designed to give instructors actionable information about how students are experiencing the learning environment while the course is still in progress.

Three foundational principles govern the formative feedback process:

a. **Opt-in.** Formative Learning Feedback is entirely voluntary. No instructor is required to use it, and no administrator may mandate its use.

b. **Results only to the instructor.** Feedback is shared only with the instructor. It is not included in the personnel file, not reported to department chairs or deans, and not used for retention, tenure, promotion, or any other employment decision.

c. **Developmental, not evaluative.** The purpose of formative feedback is to help the instructor improve the learning environment in real time. It is not a tool for summative evaluation and should never be framed as one.

Because formative feedback is developmental and shared only with the instructor, it can also be the appropriate home for general-purpose **open-ended questions** — the kind of unstructured, in-their-own-words feedback that is most useful when the instructor can still act on it, and that the literature identifies as too susceptible to bias for inclusion in a summative personnel file.

Formative Learning Feedback is entirely separate from the **Student Perceptions of Learning Experience** (**SPLE**), which is the summative instrument whose results enter the personnel file. The two serve fundamentally different purposes and operate under different rules.

Chapter 1

Why Formative Feedback?

1.1 Purpose and scope

This document describes a feedback process designed to give instructors actionable information about the learning environment while the course is still in progress.

The formative feedback process is **developmental only**:

- Results are shared **only with the instructor**
- Results are **not** included in the personnel file
- Results are **not** used for retention, tenure, promotion, or any other employment decision
- Results are **not** reported to department chairs, deans, or any administrative unit

1.2 The case for feedback throughout the term

Traditional mid-semester evaluations offer a single snapshot — typically around weeks 6–8 — that arrives too early for some concerns and too late for others. Students entering a new subject may not have enough experience at week 6 to report on how practice and feedback are supporting their learning, while by week 8 it may be too late to address confusion about how course elements connect.

A more effective model provides **multiple touchpoints** across the term, each targeting the dimensions of learning most relevant at that stage:

- **Early in the term (weeks 2–3):** Students are orienting to the course. Feedback on whether the course is building on what they already know and whether they can see how the pieces fit together is most actionable here.
- **Mid-term (weeks 6–8):** Students have enough experience to report on motivation, the quality of practice and feedback, and the classroom climate.
- **Late in the term (weeks 11–12):** Students can reflect on whether the course has helped

them develop mastery and self-directed learning skills — and there is still time for the instructor to adjust the final weeks.

Faculty choose which touchpoints to use and which dimensions to ask about. The instrument is a menu, not a mandate.

1.3 Evidence base

The formative feedback process draws on a well-established literature on feedback practices in higher education.

1.3.1 Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs)

Angelo and Cross (1993) developed a comprehensive set of Classroom Assessment Techniques — brief, usually anonymous, in-class activities designed to give instructors rapid feedback on student learning and experience. The most widely used CATs include the Minute Paper, the Muddiest Point, and the One-Sentence Summary. The design principles underlying CATs — brevity, anonymity, low stakes, instructor-initiated — inform the formative feedback process proposed here (see also Diamond, 2004, for a practical overview of classroom feedback techniques).

1.3.2 Small Group Instructional Diagnosis (SGID)

The SGID method, developed at the University of Washington (Clark and Redmond, 1982), uses a trained facilitator to gather structured feedback from small groups of students during class time, with the instructor absent. The facilitator synthesizes the responses and meets privately with the instructor. SGID is more resource-intensive than a written check-in but produces richer, more contextualized feedback. Institutions with active SGID programs include Indiana University (Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning), UCLA, and the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

1.3.3 Oregon Mid-Semester Experience Survey (M-SES)

The University of Oregon operates a two-survey model: a formative **Midway Student Experience Survey (M-SES)** and a summative End-of-term Student Experience Survey (E-SES). The M-SES is administered during week 4 of the 10-week quarter (equivalent to approximately weeks 6–7 of a 15-week semester) and asks students about their learning experience to date. Instructors are encouraged to provide 10 minutes of class time for completion. Results are shared only with the instructor (University of Oregon TEP). Notably, Oregon's Senate motion US18/19-14 phased out traditional "course evaluations" in favor of learning-focused "Student Experience Surveys" — and pilot data showed that personal comments about instructors dropped from 21% to 1.5% of all comments under the new instrument. The Oregon model demonstrates that mid-semester feedback can be institutionally supported without being tied to personnel decisions.

1.3.4 Harvard Bok Center

Harvard's Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning recommends that instructors collect early feedback in weeks 3–5 of the semester, using brief anonymous surveys or structured class discussions. The emphasis is on actionable feedback that can inform adjustments before the midpoint of the course (Bok Center).

1.3.5 Indiana University CITL

The Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning at Indiana University offers both SGID facilitation and a mid-semester feedback template that instructors can administer independently. The CITL model emphasizes "closing the loop" — the instructor's public response to the feedback received — as essential to the process's effectiveness (Indiana CITL).

1.3.6 UCLA Center for the Advancement of Teaching

UCLA's Center for the Advancement of Teaching provides mid-semester evaluation resources including facilitated SGID sessions and self-administered survey templates. The program is framed explicitly as a developmental tool with no connection to personnel review (UCLA CAT).

1.4 Theoretical backbone: Ambrose et al. (2010)

The formative feedback instrument is organized around the seven research-based principles of learning identified by Ambrose et al. (2010) in *How Learning Works: Seven Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching*. These principles synthesize decades of cognitive and educational research into a practical framework for understanding how students learn. Each principle is framed as a question — *How does students' prior knowledge affect their learning?* — and each suggests specific dimensions of the learning experience that students are positioned to observe and report on.

The mapping of these seven principles to candidate feedback items draws on work by Committee Member Patrick O'Sullivan (CTLT), who identified the teaching practices associated with each principle that students can directly experience and comment on. This mapping also connects the formative dimensions to the TEval framework (Austin et al., 2025), providing a coherent link between the formative feedback process and the broader evaluation of teaching.

The seven dimensions — Prior Knowledge, Knowledge Organization, Motivation, Mastery, Practice and Feedback, Student Development and Course Climate, and Self-Directed Learning — are described in detail in Chapter 2.

Chapter 2

Integrating Effective Teaching Practices Into the Formative Learning Feedback

The formative feedback instrument is organized around seven dimensions of learning, each drawn from the research-based principles identified by Ambrose et al. (2010). For each dimension, we provide:

- The **guiding question** from Ambrose et al.
- A brief description of **what it captures**
- A note on **why the dimension is appropriate formatively but not summatively**

All candidate items to be offered to Faculty are phrased as student-experience statements about observable teaching practices. Faculty select which dimensions and items to include based on their course, their goals, and the timing of the feedback. They can also include their own items.

Foundations — what students bring and how the course builds on it:

1. Prior Knowledge
2. Knowledge Organization

Engagement — what drives and sustains the learning process:

3. Motivation
4. Mastery
5. Practice and Feedback

Environment and autonomy — the climate for learning and beyond:

6. Student Development and Course Climate
7. Self-Directed Learning

2.1 Dimension 1: Prior Knowledge

Guiding question: *How does students' prior knowledge affect their learning?*

What it captures: Whether the instructor creates opportunities for students to connect new material to what they already know — including opportunities to surface and correct misconceptions.

> ! Why formative, not summative?
>
> Whether an instructor effectively activates prior knowledge requires understanding the content and the pedagogical choices involved. Students can report on whether opportunities were provided — a valuable formative signal — but cannot judge whether the strategies were appropriate for the subject matter.

2.2 Dimension 2: Knowledge Organization

Guiding question: *How does the way students organize knowledge affect their learning?*

What it captures: Whether the course helps students see how concepts relate to one another — through explicit organizational frameworks, concept maps, or other structuring activities.

> ! Why formative, not summative?
>
> Judging whether a course's organizational structure is effective requires pedagogical expertise. Students can report on whether organizational support was provided, but the quality and appropriateness of that support depend on disciplinary context that students are not positioned to evaluate summatively.

2.3 Dimension 3: Motivation

Guiding question: *What factors motivate students to learn?*

What it captures: Whether the instructor helps students understand the value and purpose of learning activities, supports students' sense of efficacy, and fosters a climate conducive to engagement.

> ! Why formative, not summative?
>
> Motivation is influenced by many factors beyond the instructor's control — including the student's own goals, preparation, and external circumstances. Students can report on whether the instructor took actions to support motivation, which is valuable formative feedback. But summative evaluation of motivational support risks confounding the instructor's practices with factors outside their influence.

2.4 Dimension 4: Mastery

Guiding question: *How do students develop mastery?*

What it captures: Whether the course provides opportunities for students to acquire, practice, and integrate component skills toward increasingly complex performance.

> ! Why formative, not summative?
>
> Whether a course effectively scaffolds skill development toward mastery requires understanding the disciplinary goals and the appropriateness of the progression. Students can report on whether practice and integration opportunities were provided — actionable feedback for the instructor — but cannot judge whether the progression was well-designed for the learning goals of the course.

2.5 Dimension 5: Practice and Feedback

Guiding question: *What kinds of practice and feedback enhance learning?*

What it captures: Whether students receive goal-directed practice with clear criteria for success, and whether feedback is timely and specific enough to guide improvement.

> ! Why formative, not summative?
>
> The quality and timeliness of feedback is something students can directly experience and report on, making it excellent formative data. However, summative evaluation of feedback practices risks conflating the *experience* of feedback (which may feel harsh or generous regardless of quality) with its *effectiveness* (which requires pedagogical judgment). The well-documented disconnect between perceived and actual learning (Deslauriers et al., 2019) applies directly here.

2.6 Dimension 6: Student Development and Course Climate

Guiding question: *Why do student development and course climate matter for student learning?*

What it captures: Whether the classroom climate promotes a sense of belonging and whether norms for interaction support mutual respect — climate as it supports the learning process.

> ! How Dimension 6 relates to the SPLE
>
> This dimension overlaps with the summative SPLE, which also addresses class climate. The overlap is intentional: climate is important enough to warrant both a formative check (visible only to the instructor, actionable mid-course) and a summative record (entered in the personnel file at term's end). The two serve different institutional

purposes even when they touch the same territory.

2.7 Dimension 7: Self-Directed Learning

Guiding question: *How do students become self-directed learners?*

What it captures: Whether the instructor models and supports metacognitive practices — helping students assess what they know, identify what they still need to learn, and develop strategies for continued learning.

> **!** Why formative, not summative?
>
> Self-directed learning is a developmental outcome that unfolds over time and across courses. Students can report on whether metacognitive support was provided in a specific course — helpful formative feedback — but cannot assess whether those practices were effective in building lasting self-regulation skills.

Chapter 3

Relationship to the Summative SPLE

3.1 Comparison

The formative feedback process is **not** a practice run for the summative SPLE, and it should not be framed as one. The two instruments differ in every relevant dimension:

Table 3.1: Comparison of formative and summative instruments

Dimension	Formative Learning Feedback	Summative SPLE
Purpose	Developmental: help the instructor improve the course in real time	Evaluative: provide data for the personnel file
Audience	Instructor only	Instructor, department chair, personnel committee
Timing	Throughout the term (weeks 2–3, 6–8, 11–12)	Last two weeks of instruction before finals week
Content	Seven dimensions of learning (Ambrose et al., 2010)	Six aspects of class climate
Format	Flexible: structured items, open-ended questions, or both; faculty choose dimensions	Standardized: Likert-scale items and structured open-ended prompts
Anonymity	Anonymous	Anonymous
Personnel file	No	Yes
Required	No (instructor's choice)	Yes (institutional requirement)

Dimension	Formative Learning Feedback	Summative SPLE
Input for self-reflection and iterative growth	Yes	Yes

The formative feedback process exists because some of the most useful feedback students can provide — what is working, what is not, what they wish were different — is most valuable *before* the course ends, when the instructor can still act on it. The summative SPLE, by contrast, captures the student's experience of the full term and provides data for institutional evaluation. **These are complementary but distinct functions.** Both instruments provide input for self-reflection and iterative growth (Dimension 5 of the TEval framework) — the formative process by giving instructors actionable feedback while the course is still in progress, and the summative instrument by revealing patterns across terms that inform longer-term development.

3.2 Formative feedback as the home for open-ended questions

The SPLE committee voted to retain open-ended questions on the summative instrument under structured prompts and guardrails designed to minimize the equity bias that the literature documents in unstructured responses (see the SPLE proposal for the full evidence base). Open-ended questions also play a central role in the formative feedback process. In the formative context, results go only to the instructor, so potentially biased comments cannot influence personnel decisions. In a formative context:

- Results go only to the instructor, so biased comments cannot influence personnel decisions
- The instructor can contextualize comments with their knowledge of the class
- The developmental framing encourages constructive rather than evaluative responses
- There is no need to standardize or compare across instructors

Open-ended questions serve their intended purpose — giving students a voice and giving instructors actionable information — without the risks that attend their inclusion in the personnel file.

3.3 Optional structured check-in on SPLE dimensions

Instructors may optionally include a brief structured component — a "temperature read" on the six aspects of the SPLE — to get a quick snapshot alongside the formative items. This is **not** the SPLE itself; it is a lightweight check-in that uses the same conceptual dimensions.

Optional: Quick check-in on learning environment dimensions

Please indicate how you have experienced each of the following so far in this course.
Response options: **Positive experience**, **Mixed experience**, **Negative experience**, **Not sure / Not applicable**

Dimension	
Regard for Students — feeling treated with regard	○ Positive ○ Mixed ○ Negative ○ N/A
Consistent Communication and Enforcement of Expectations — feeling that all students are treated equitably	○ Positive ○ Mixed ○ Negative ○ N/A
Perceived Course Coherence — seeing how course elements connect	○ Positive ○ Mixed ○ Negative ○ N/A
Participatory Climate — feeling comfortable asking questions and sharing ideas	○ Positive ○ Mixed ○ Negative ○ N/A
Access to Instructor and Instructor Resources — feeling able to access help when needed	○ Positive ○ Mixed ○ Negative ○ N/A
Responsive Learning Environment — feeling that the learning environment is responsive to all students	○ Positive ○ Mixed ○ Negative ○ N/A

This structured component serves two purposes: it gives the instructor an at-a-glance summary of the dimensions they will be evaluated on at the end of the term, and it helps students become familiar with the conceptual framework before they encounter the summative SPLE. It is **not** scored, reported, or retained beyond the instructor's own use.

3.4 What the Formative Learning Feedback is *not*

To prevent misunderstanding, the following points should be communicated clearly to both instructors and students:

- The formative feedback process is **not** the Student Perceptions of Learning Experience instrument. The SPLE is the summative instrument administered at the end of the term.
- The formative feedback process is **not** part of the personnel file. No administrator, department chair, or personnel committee will see the results.
- The formative feedback process is **not** required. It is a tool available to instructors who want real-time feedback on the learning environment in their course.
- The formative feedback process is **not** anonymous feedback about the instructor's

teaching ability. It is anonymous feedback about the student's learning experience — the same conceptual framing as the SPLE, but in a developmental rather than evaluative context.

- The formative feedback process **does not** replace the SPLE. Students will still complete the summative instrument at the end of the term regardless of whether formative feedback was collected.

Chapter 4

Administration and Closing the Loop

4.1 Three touchpoints model

The formative feedback process can be used at **any point in the term** — once, twice, or at multiple touchpoints. Different dimensions of learning are most actionable at different stages, and the framework below suggests which dimensions fit naturally at each stage.

Table 4.1: Recommended dimensions by touchpoint

Touchpoint	Timing	Recommended Dimensions	Rationale
Early	Weeks 2–3	Prior Knowledge, Knowledge Organization	Students are orienting to the course; feedback on whether the course is connecting to what they know and how it is organized is most actionable here
Mid	Weeks 6–8	Motivation, Practice & Feedback, Student Development & Course Climate	Students have enough experience to report on engagement, the quality of practice and feedback, and the classroom climate

Touchpoint	Timing	Recommended Dimensions	Rationale
Late	Weeks 11–12	Mastery, Self-Directed Learning	Students can reflect on skill development and metacognitive growth; there is still time for the instructor to adjust the final weeks

This is a framework, not a prescription. An instructor might use only the mid-term touchpoint. Another might use all three but select only one or two dimensions at each. The instrument is a menu: faculty choose the dimensions that match their course goals and the timing that makes sense for their schedule.

4.2 Mode

Two modes are recommended. Instructors should choose the one that best fits their course:

4.2.1 Option A: In-class administration (~5 minutes)

1. The instructor distributes a brief paper form or displays a link/QR code to an online form
2. Students complete the feedback anonymously during class time (approximately 5 minutes)
3. The instructor may remain in the room (unlike the summative SPLE, the formative feedback process is not an evaluative instrument and does not require the instructor to leave)
4. If using paper, the instructor collects the forms; if using an online form, responses are submitted digitally

4.2.2 Option B: Online administration (3-day window)

1. The instructor sends students a link to an anonymous online form (Google Forms, Qualtrics, or similar)
2. The form is open for 3 days
3. The instructor sends one reminder during the window
4. Responses are anonymous

In-class administration is preferred because it typically produces higher response rates and takes only a few minutes. However, online administration may be more practical for large-enrollment courses or courses with irregular meeting patterns.

The technology already exists

Several universities have deployed online platforms that allow instructors to build and deploy formative feedback surveys in minutes. UC Irvine's EEE Evaluations system, for example, lets instructors select dimensions, choose items, set a collection window, and view results — all through a self-service web interface. Implementing a similar tool at Cal Poly would not require building from scratch; the CTLT could adapt existing survey infrastructure to offer a comparable experience.

4.3 Anonymity

All responses must be anonymous. The feedback should not collect names, student IDs, or any other identifying information. If using an online platform, the instructor should verify that the platform's settings do not record respondent identities or email addresses.

4.4 Supplementary open-ended items

In addition to the structured items drawn from the seven dimensions, instructors may include open-ended questions at any touchpoint. The following three types of items are recommended as a starting set:

Item 1: What is working

An open-ended item asking students to identify aspects of the course that are helping their learning. This provides positive reinforcement and helps the instructor understand which practices to continue.

Item 2: What could change

An open-ended item asking for constructive suggestions about the learning experience. The framing should keep the focus on the student's experience rather than inviting a judgment of the instructor.

Item 3: Open channel

An open-ended item providing space for concerns that may not fit neatly into the first two — issues of climate, inclusivity, accessibility, or anything else the student wants the instructor to know.

These open-ended items serve their intended purpose — giving students a voice and giving instructors actionable information — in the formative context where results go only to the instructor. As discussed in Chapter 2, this is the appropriate home for unstructured

feedback.

4.5 Closing the loop

The most critical step in the formative feedback process is **closing the loop** — the instructor's public response to the feedback received. Without this step, the feedback is a data-collection exercise that may actually *reduce* student trust if students feel their feedback was ignored.

4.5.1 What "closing the loop" means

Within one week of collecting feedback, the instructor should dedicate **5–10 minutes of class time** to:

1. **Acknowledge the feedback.** Thank students for participating and confirm that the responses were read.
2. **Summarize the themes.** Identify 2–3 themes that emerged from the responses. Be specific: "Several of you mentioned that the pace of lectures is too fast" is more effective than "I got some feedback about the course."
3. **State what will change (if anything).** If the feedback points to a change the instructor is willing and able to make, say so: "Starting next week, I'm going to pause more often during lectures for questions."
4. **Acknowledge what will not change, and why.** This is as important as stating what will change. Students respect transparency about constraints. What erodes trust is silence. If the feedback points to something the instructor cannot or will not change, explain why: "A few of you asked for fewer assignments, but the assignment sequence is designed to build skills progressively, so I'm going to keep the current schedule. What I *can* do is provide clearer guidance on how to prioritize your time."

4.5.2 Template for closing the loop

Instructors may find the following template useful for structuring their in-class response:

Closing-the-loop template

Thank you for completing the feedback check-in. I read every response. Here is what I heard and how I plan to respond.

What's working well:

- [Theme 1, in the students' words]
- [Theme 2]

What you'd like to see changed:

- [Theme 1]: Here is what I plan to do about this: [specific action]
- [Theme 2]: I understand this concern. Here is why the current approach is set

up this way: [brief explanation]. What I *can* adjust is: [specific action, if any]

Other concerns raised:

- [If applicable, address any climate or environment concerns with care and specificity]

I appreciate your willingness to share your experience. If you have follow-up thoughts, my office hours are [time/place] and you can always reach me at [email].

4.6 In sum

The **Formative Learning Feedback** process complements the summative **Student Perceptions of Learning Experience** by covering the dimensions of effective teaching that students can observe and report on but that fall outside what they can validly evaluate for personnel purposes. It is voluntary, developmental, and shared only with the instructor — making it the appropriate home for both structured feedback on teaching practices and the open-ended questions that the literature identifies as too susceptible to bias for inclusion in a personnel file. The seven dimensions, drawn from Ambrose et al. (2010), give faculty a research-grounded menu of feedback options they can deploy at any point in the term, on their own terms, in service of their own growth as educators.

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Guidance for Evaluation of Instruction

A Companion to 'Student Perceptions of Learning Experience: Rationale and Broad Principles of Design'

Sub-Committee of the Ad Hoc Committee on Student Perceptions of Teaching Effectiveness

2026-04-25

Table of contents

Preamble

This document was prepared by a sub-committee of the Ad Hoc Committee on Student Perceptions of Teaching Effectiveness as a companion resource. It has not been formally adopted by the full committee and is offered as proposed language for consideration by the Academic Senate Faculty Affairs Committee.

This document provides guidance for the evaluation of instruction in a format that can be directly incorporated into the University Faculty Personnel Policies (UFPP) as §8.3. The section numbering, structure, and language are designed so that, upon approval by the Academic Senate, this text can serve as the basis for the corresponding UFPP section with minimal modification.

This guidance addresses the **summative** evaluation of teaching as understood and required by the UFPP and the Collective Bargaining Agreement — that is, the formal assessment of teaching effectiveness for purposes of retention, tenure, promotion, and other personnel decisions. It is distinct from the **formative** assessment of teaching, which is an informal, voluntary, ongoing process of instructor development offered through the Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology (CTLT). The formative process is described in a separate companion document, Formative Learning Feedback.

§8.3.1. Policy History

[Reserved for Academic Senate.]

§8.3.2. Purpose and Scope

The goal of evaluation of instruction in faculty evaluations is to maintain high quality of instruction and provide guidance to faculty for improvement of instruction. Evaluations of instruction should do the following:

- Briefly and specifically report on the candidate's successes and challenges in instruction.
- Provide brief and specific guidance when important deficits are apparent to evaluators.
- Clearly state any necessary changes to be implemented and documented in the next evaluation cycle.

§8.3.3. Dimensions of Teaching for Evaluation

This guidance adopts the TEval framework (Austin et al., 2025), which identifies seven dimensions of teaching for evaluation. Each dimension encompasses one or more of the criteria currently listed in UFPP §7.2.5.2, as shown below:

Table 1: Mapping of TEval dimensions to current UFPP §7.2.5.2 criteria

TEval Dimension	Current UFPP §7.2.5.2 Criteria
D1: Goals, Content, and Alignment	Competence in the discipline; organization of courses; relevance of instruction to course objectives
D2: Teaching Practices	Ability to communicate ideas effectively; versatility of teaching techniques; appropriateness of teaching techniques
D3: Class Climate	Relationship with students in class
D4: Achievement of Learning Outcomes	Relevance of instruction to course objectives; methods of evaluating student achievement
D5: Reflection and Iterative Growth	Other factors relating to performance as an instructor
D6: Mentoring and Advising	Effectiveness of student advising
D7: Teaching Service, Scholarship, or Community	Other factors relating to performance as an instructor

Proposed revision to UFPP §7.2.5.2

We therefore propose that UFPP §7.2.5.2 be revised to read: "Evaluators shall consider such dimensions as (1) Goals, Content, and Alignment; (2) Teaching Practices; (3) Class Climate; (4) Achievement of Learning Outcomes; (5) Reflection and Iterative Growth; (6) Mentoring and Advising; and (7) Involvement in Teaching Service, Scholarship, or Community."

Evidence for evaluating teaching comes from three sources: the instructor (e.g., CV, syllabi, course materials, student work samples, reflection), peers or observers (e.g., meeting with instructor, class observation, review of student materials), and students (e.g., Student Perceptions of Learning Experience instrument, letters from students). The sections that follow describe each dimension, the guiding questions evaluators should consider, the sources of evidence appropriate to that dimension, and — where applicable — the limitations of particular evidence sources.

§8.3.4. Dimension 1: Goals, Content, and Alignment

This dimension is about what students are expected to learn from the courses taught, whether learning goals are clearly articulated in a way that is accessible to all students, whether course goals are appropriate for the course as part of the larger curriculum and for the audience for which it is intended, whether topics are appropriately challenging and related to current issues in the field, whether the materials are high-quality and aligned with course goals, whether the content represents diverse perspectives, and whether assessments are aligned with course goals.

Sources of evidence: Syllabi, course materials, reflection, meeting with instructor, class observation, review of student materials.

> **Note**
>
> This dimension requires disciplinary expertise to evaluate. It is assessed through peer review (syllabi review, class observation, review of course materials) and instructor self-report (reflection), not through student surveys. The Student Perceptions of Learning Experience instrument does not assess this dimension.

§8.3.5. Dimension 2: Teaching Practices

This dimension is about how in-class and out-of-class time is used, whether assignments, assessments, and learning activities are designed to help all students learn, whether effective or high-impact methods are used to improve understanding and engage all students in learning, whether in- and out-of-class activities provide opportunities for practice and feedback on important skills and concepts, and whether forms of assessment are varied to allow for the success of diverse learners.

Sources of evidence: Syllabi, course materials, reflection, meeting with instructor, class observation, review of student materials.

> **Note**
>
> This dimension requires pedagogical expertise to evaluate. It is assessed through peer observation, review of course materials, and instructor reflection, not through student surveys. The Student Perceptions of Learning Experience instrument does not assess this dimension.

§8.3.6. Dimension 3: Class Climate

This dimension is about the extent to which the class climate reflects regard for students as persons, is supportive, and cooperative, whether it encourages motivation and engagement for all students, whether all students feel included, how student-student and student-instructor dialogue are fostered, what the students' views of their learning experiences are, and how the instructor has sought student feedback and used it to inform their teaching.

Sources of evidence: Syllabi, reflection, class observation, **Student Perceptions of Learning Experience** instrument, letters from students.

This is the only dimension assessed through the **Student Perceptions of Learning Experience** (**SPLE**) instrument, which asks students to report on six aspects of class climate:

- **Regard for Students** — Regard for students as persons in how the instructor interacts with them.
- **Consistent Communication and Enforcement of Expectations** — Equitable treatment and consistent application of standards.
- **Access to Instructor and Instructor Resources** — Perceived accessibility of the instructor for help outside of class.
- **Perceived Course Coherence** — Whether the student could see connections between course elements.
- **Participatory Climate** — Whether the classroom environment supports multiple modes of active engagement.
- **Responsive Learning Environment** — Whether the instructor creates a learning environment that is responsive to all students.

§8.3.6.1. Interpreting Student Perceptions of Learning Experience results

Evaluators and candidates should interpret SPLE results with care, following the scoring, reporting, and visualization guidelines established in the "Student Perceptions of Learning Experience: Rationale and Broad Principles of Design" report. Key principles include:

- **Frequency distributions and percentages, not averages.** SPLE responses are ordered categorical data. They must not be averaged, and evaluators should examine the full distribution of responses, not any summary statistic.

- **No cross-comparisons.** SPLE results must not be compared across instructors, courses, departments, or disciplines. Differences in scores may reflect demographic biases, course characteristics, or nonresponse patterns rather than differences in the learning environment.
- **No extrapolation.** Results from respondents should not be extrapolated to non-respondents. Students who submit evaluations are a self-selected sample of convenience, not a random sample.

§8.3.6.2. Inherent limitations of student evaluation data

Even when student survey items are framed as experiential reports about class climate — as in the SPLE — rather than as evaluative judgments about teaching effectiveness, evaluators must be mindful of the inherent limitations of student evaluation data. These include, but are not limited to, the following factors (Stark, 2026):

- **Gender bias.** Student evaluations have substantial bias from gender: female instructors sometimes receive lower ratings than objectively less effective male instructors; gender affects ratings of ostensibly "objective" items like promptness; and bias varies across disciplines and differs between male and female students (Boring, Ottoboni, and Stark, 2016; MacNell, Driscoll, and Hunt, 2015; Mengel, Sauermann, and Zölitz, 2018).
- **Racial and ethnic bias.** Evaluations show bias from ethnicity and race (Chisadza, Nicholls, and Yitbarek, 2019), and bias against non-native English speakers (Subtirelu, 2015).
- **Age and appearance bias.** Evaluations show bias against older instructors (Bianchini, Lissoni, and Pezzoni, 2013) and bias in favor of physically attractive instructors, especially for female faculty (Wolbring and Riordan, 2016; Babin et al., 2020).
- **Grade expectations.** Evaluations have stronger association with grade *expectations* than with learning (Boring, Ottoboni, and Stark, 2016); students reward grades — not learning — by giving high evaluation scores (Stroebe, 2020).
- **Halo effect.** Students conflate enthusiasm, attractiveness, and other characteristics with effectiveness; enthusiasm is not associated with learning (Feeley, 2002; Keeley et al., 2013; Michela, 2023).
- **Physical environment.** Evaluations are influenced by the physical condition of the room, time of day, mathematical level of the course, class size, and other factors unrelated to instruction (Bedard and Kuhn, 2005).
- **Fabricated responses.** A substantial fraction of students give demonstrably or deliberately false responses (Stanfel, 1995; Clayson and Haley, 2011).
- **Non-random samples.** Response rates are typically below 75%. The respondents are not a random sample; standard statistical measures of uncertainty (standard errors,

confidence intervals) are inapt (Stark, 2026).

- **Perceived learning does not track actual learning.** Students who learn more may report feeling they learned less, and vice versa (Deslauriers et al., 2019; Uttl, White, and Gonzalez, 2017).

§8.3.6.3. Department-associated questions

Departments are not required to add questions to the Student Perceptions of Learning Experience instrument. The university-wide items are designed to provide a comprehensive assessment of class climate across six aspects, and many departments will find them sufficient.

Departments that wish to add questions should weigh the benefit of additional information against the cost of making the instrument more burdensome for students to complete. A longer survey reduces response rates, and lower response rates weaken the representativeness of the data — undermining the very information the additional questions are meant to provide.

If a department elects to add questions, those questions must meet the same standards that govern the university-wide items. The bar is high:

- **Students must be qualified to answer.** The question must concern something students can report on from their own experience, without requiring disciplinary or pedagogical expertise.
- **Students must be able to answer with minimal bias.** The question must elicit an experiential report, not an evaluative judgment. Items that ask students to assess teaching effectiveness, course quality, or instructor competence are not permitted, as these are the items the literature identifies as most susceptible to bias.
- **Closed-ended, structured items only.** Department-associated questions must be closed-ended items on the five-point Likert scale. The university-wide instrument already includes open-ended questions with structured prompts and guardrails designed to minimize equity bias; there is no need for departments to add additional open-ended questions at the department level.

Department-associated questions must use the same five-point ordered categorical (Likert) response scale as the university-wide items (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, plus Not Applicable). They must be scored and reported identically to the university-wide questions — as frequency distributions of raw counts and percentages, with no numerical averages, no cross-comparisons, and no extrapolation from respondents to non-respondents. Every guardrail established in the Scoring and Reporting Guidelines of the "Student Perceptions of Learning Experience" report for the university-wide items applies in full force to department-associated questions, lest the protections built into the university-level instrument be undone at the department level.

§8.3.7. Dimension 4: Achievement of Learning Outcomes

This dimension is about whether the instructor clearly communicates the learning goals for the course, what evidence is used to determine the degree to which students achieve the defined course goals, how well course assignments, assessments, and learning activities are aligned with the defined learning goals, whether there are efforts to ensure that all students have equitable opportunities to achieve the learning goals, whether standards for evaluating learning are clear and connected to program, curriculum, or professional expectations, and whether the quality of learning supports success in other contexts.

Sources of evidence: Student work samples, reflection, meeting with instructor, review of student materials.

> **Note**
>
> This dimension is assessed through review of student work, analysis of learning outcomes, and instructor reflection, not through student surveys. The Student Perceptions of Learning Experience instrument does not assess this dimension. While it may seem natural to ask students how much they learned, perceived learning does not track actual learning. In a controlled experiment, Deslauriers et al. (2019) found that students who learned *more* (as measured by test performance) reported feeling they had learned *less*, and vice versa. Uttl, White, and Gonzalez (2017), in a comprehensive meta-analysis, found that the correlation between student evaluation ratings and student learning is effectively zero. A "perceived learning" item would thus measure neither the learning environment nor actual learning, while carrying the same bias vulnerabilities as other evaluative items.

§8.3.8. Dimension 5: Reflection and Iterative Growth

This dimension is about how and why the instructor's teaching has changed over time, whether changes have been informed by evidence of student learning and student feedback, how peer feedback has been incorporated into the instructor's teaching over time, and how the instructor's goals for their courses and students have changed over time.

Sources of evidence: Syllabi, course materials, student work samples, reflection, meeting with instructor.

> **Note**
>
> This dimension is assessed through the candidate's reflective narrative and through longitudinal review of course materials and student outcomes. The Student Perceptions of Learning Experience instrument does not assess this dimension, though SPLE results over time may inform the candidate's reflection.

§8.3.9. Dimension 6: Mentoring and Advising

This dimension is about how effectively the instructor has worked individually with undergraduate or graduate students, whether the instructor establishes clear, individualized, and responsive expectations for student and mentor, whether the instructor provides constructive and timely coaching and feedback, and how the quality of and time commitment to mentoring fit with disciplinary and departmental expectations.

Sources of evidence: CV (student awards, achievements), reflection, meeting with instructor, review of student materials, letters from students.

> **Note**
>
> This dimension is assessed through the candidate's CV, reflective narrative, meeting with the instructor, and letters from students — not through the Student Perceptions of Learning Experience instrument.

§8.3.10. Dimension 7: Involvement in Teaching Service, Scholarship, or Community

This dimension is about how the instructor has contributed to the broader teaching community, both on and off campus. Areas of contribution include the learning culture in the department or institution (e.g., curriculum committees, program assessment, cocurricular activities), engaging with peers on or off campus in teaching communities, workshops, peer reviews, or similar activities, and educational leadership activities (e.g., leading teaching workshops, presentations or publications about teaching, grants related to teaching).

Sources of evidence: CV (participation in teaching and learning committees), reflection, meeting with instructor.

> **Note**
>
> This dimension is assessed through the candidate's CV and reflective narrative. The Student Perceptions of Learning Experience instrument does not assess this dimension.

§8.3.11. Teaching Effectiveness Rubric

The following rubric provides descriptions of teaching practice at three quality tiers — Developing, Proficient, and Expert — for each of the seven dimensions of teaching. This rubric is adapted from the Benchmarks for Teaching Excellence Rubric (University of Kansas Center for Teaching Excellence, 2024).

Evaluators should use this rubric to organize their assessment of each dimension. The rubric is not a checklist; it describes patterns of practice. An instructor may exhibit characteristics of different tiers across different dimensions, and growth across tiers is expected over the course of a career.

Dimension 1: Goals, Content, and Alignment

Developing	Proficient	Expert
Course goals are not articulated, or are unclear, inappropriate, or marginally related to curriculum. Content and materials are outdated or unsuitable. Range of topics is too narrow or too broad. Content is not clearly aligned with curriculum or institutional expectations.	Course goals are articulated and appropriate for curriculum. Content is current and appropriate for topic, students, and curriculum. Course topics have appropriate range. Standard, intellectually sound materials. Course materials reflect multiple viewpoints in the field.	Course goals are well-articulated, high quality, relevant to all students, and clearly connected to program or curricular goals. Content is challenging and innovative or related to current issues in the field. Topics are well-integrated and of appropriate range and depth. High-quality materials, well-aligned with course goals. Course materials reflect multiple perspectives and promote meaningful reflection on them.

Dimension 2: Teaching Practices

Developing	Proficient	Expert
Courses are not sufficiently planned or organized. Practices are not well-executed and show little development over time. Students lack opportunities to practice critical skills. Student engagement is generally low. Assessments are at inappropriate difficulty level or not well-aligned with course goals.	Courses are well-planned and organized. Standard course practices; follows conventions of discipline and institution. Opportunities for practice or feedback on skills embedded in course goals. Practices elicit student engagement. Assessments are appropriately challenging and tied to course goals.	Courses are well-planned and integrated, with meaningful assignments and assessments. Uses effective or innovative methods to support learning in all students. Activities consistently provide opportunities for practice and feedback. Practices foster high levels of active engagement. Assessments are varied and allow students to demonstrate knowledge through multiple modalities.

Dimension 3: Class Climate

Developing	Proficient	Expert
Class climate discourages student motivation or self-efficacy. Does not effectively create a responsive learning environment. Consistently negative student reports of instructor access or interaction. Little attempt to address concerns voiced by students.	Class climate promotes student motivation. Fosters a responsive learning environment with regard for students as persons. No consistently negative student reports of instructor access or interaction. Instructor articulates some lessons learned through student feedback.	Climate promotes motivation, self-efficacy, ownership of learning. Instructor models responsive language and behavior. Fosters an open learning environment that promotes student-student and student-instructor dialogue. Student feedback on instructor access and interaction is generally positive. Instructor seeks and is responsive to student feedback.

For Dimension 3 (Class Climate), the rubric tiers correspond to patterns observable in the SPLE frequency distributions (see the Scoring and Reporting Guidelines of the "Student Perceptions of Learning Experience" report) and in other evidence of class climate.

Dimension 4: Achievement of Learning Outcomes

Developing	Proficient	Expert
Insufficient attention to student understanding; quality of learning is not described or analyzed with clear standards. Evidence of inadequate learning without clear attempts to improve. Quality of learning is insufficient to support success in other contexts.	Standards for evaluating student understanding are clear and generally meet department expectations. Attends to student achievement through formal and informal assessments. Some use of student learning evidence to inform teaching.	Standards for evaluating understanding are clear and connected to program, curriculum, or professional expectations. Consistently attends to student learning, uses it to inform teaching. Efforts to support learning in all students. Quality of learning supports success in other contexts.

Dimension 5: Reflection and Iterative Growth

Developing	Proficient	Expert
Little or no indication of having reflected upon or learned from prior teaching, evidence of student learning, or peer or student feedback. Little or no indication of efforts to develop as a teacher despite evidence of need.	Continued competent teaching, possibly with minor reflection based on input from peers and/or students. Articulates some lessons learned or changes informed by prior teaching, student learning, or feedback.	Regularly adjusts teaching based on reflection on student learning and other feedback, within or across semesters. Examines student performance after adjustments. Reports improved student outcomes based on past teaching modifications.

Dimension 6: Mentoring and Advising

Developing	Proficient	Expert
No indication of effective advising or mentoring (but expected in department).	Some evidence of effective advising and mentoring (define as appropriate for discipline).	Evidence of exceptional quality and time commitment to advising and mentoring (define as appropriate for discipline).

Dimension 7: Involvement in Teaching Service, Scholarship, or Community

Developing	Proficient	Expert
Little or no evidence of positive contributions to teaching and learning culture in department or institution. Little or no interaction with teaching community. Practices and results of teaching are not shared with others.	Some positive contributions to teaching and learning culture in department or institution. Some engagement with peers on teaching. Has shared teaching practices or results with others.	Consistently positive contributions to teaching and learning culture (e.g., curriculum committees, program assessment, co-curricular activities). Regular engagement with peers on teaching. Presentations or publications to share practices or results of teaching with multiple audiences. Scholarly publications or grant applications related to teaching.

§8.3.12. Setting Departmental Expectations

Not all seven dimensions apply to every instructor. Some faculty may play no role in student advising or mentoring; others may not engage in teaching-related service, scholarship, or community activities. The TEval framework recognizes this explicitly: "alternative configurations are possible, and departments, programs, or institutions can customize the dimensions to suit their needs" (Austin et al., 2025, p. 26). Evidence collection should fit each instructor's activities. Departments should identify which dimensions are applicable to each faculty role and evaluate accordingly — an instructor should not be penalized for the absence of activity in a dimension that is not part of their responsibilities.

For the rubric to function as a tool for personnel evaluation, departments and programs must establish and document expectations for each career phase. These expectations should specify the rubric tier expected for each applicable dimension, recognizing that faculty develop across dimensions at different rates and that departmental missions may weight some dimensions more heavily than others. The rubric is intended to guide holistic professional judgment, not to replace it. Evaluators should consider the full pattern of a candidate's teaching practice rather than treating the rubric as a checklist of minimum requirements.

Template for departmental expectations

Departments should adopt language such as the following, adapted to their context and documented in their personnel policies:

"For [career phase: e.g., retention of tenure-track faculty / tenure / promotion to full professor], the candidate is expected to demonstrate performance at the [tier] level or above in Dimensions [list]. A trajectory of growth from [tier] toward [tier] is expected in Dimensions [list]. Performance at the Developing level in any dimension should be accompanied by a documented plan for improvement."

Specific expectations may vary by department. For example, a department with a strong emphasis on undergraduate mentoring may set higher expectations for Dimension 6 (Mentoring and Advising), while a department with a significant graduate program may weight Dimension 4 (Achievement of Learning Outcomes) more heavily.

Departmental expectations should be:

- Established through faculty-based governance procedures.
- Documented in department or program personnel policies.
- Communicated to candidates in advance of the evaluation cycle.
- Reviewed periodically to ensure alignment with the university's evolving expectations for teaching.

§8.3.13. Training, Resources, and Implementation

The evaluation framework described in this guidance represents a substantial change from current practice. Evaluators should not be expected to implement it without adequate preparation, and instructors should not be expected to navigate it without clear guidance. Prior to implementation, the university must invest in training for evaluators and orientation for instructors.

Training for evaluators. All faculty who serve on peer review committees should receive training on the seven-dimension framework, the teaching effectiveness rubric, and the proper interpretation of Student Perceptions of Learning Experience data — including the inherent limitations described in Chapter . Training should include **norming sessions** in which evaluators from the same peer review committee review sample evidence portfolios and calibrate their application of the rubric. Norming is essential to ensure that evaluators across the university understand and use the instruments and evaluation framework in a coherent way, so that the quality of an instructor's evaluation does not depend on which committee reviews it. Cross-departmental norming sessions are also recommended so that college and university-level review committees apply consistent standards. For this same reason, Deans, and the Provost, should receive the training as well.

Guidance for instructors. Instructors should receive clear guidance on the evaluation framework before their first evaluation cycle under the new system. This guidance should explain the seven dimensions, the rubric tiers, the kinds of evidence that are appropriate for each dimension, and how SPLE data will be used. Instructors should understand what is expected of them at their career phase and how to assemble an evidence portfolio.

Resources and tools. The university should develop and maintain resources to support both evaluators and instructors, including:

- Ready-to-use rubric templates and evidence portfolio checklists.
- A website with guidance documents, sample portfolios, and frequently asked questions — modeled on resources such as the University of Kansas Center for Teaching Excellence and the USC Center for Excellence in Teaching.
- Facilitated workshops for peer review committees at the start of each evaluation cycle.

Phased implementation. To avoid inconsistency — where some evaluations proceed under the new framework while others follow legacy practices, at a cost to instructors — the university should establish a clear implementation timeline with a defined transition date after which all evaluations follow this guidance.

Adopted:

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

AS-___-26

RESOLUTION TO UPDATE ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM POLICY TO INCLUDE GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Impact on Existing Policy: Updates AS-722-10

WHEREAS, Cal Poly's existing policy on academic dishonesty fails to address how generative artificial intelligence (AI) or other automated systems may be used for cheating or plagiarism; therefore, be it

RESOLVED: that the Academic Senate of Cal Poly endorse the attached updates to *Academic Dishonesty: Cheating and Plagiarism* procedures to begin fall 2026 (?); and be it further

RESOLVED: that the approved updated *Academic Dishonesty: Cheating and Plagiarism* procedures be distributed via electronic mail to all faculty members for their information and use.

Proposed by: Academic Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Generative Artificial Intelligence
Date: May 5, 2026

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

684 Academic Dishonesty: Cheating and Plagiarism

The University does not condone academic cheating or plagiarism in any form, including by the unauthorized use of generative artificial intelligence or other automated systems (AI systems). The faculty is expected to uphold and support the highest academic standards in this matter. Instructors should be diligent in reducing potential opportunities for academic cheating or plagiarism to occur, including by the unauthorized use of AI systems. Students' rights shall be ensured through attention to due process, as detailed below.

The University recognizes that AI systems may be used in academic, professional, or creative contexts, but students must avoid academic dishonesty in such use. Students must strictly comply with instructors' directions concerning the permitted or prohibited use of AI systems and the proper disclosure of that use. Any use of AI systems in submitted academic work must be disclosed, but instructors shall determine the appropriate form and level of that disclosure. Instructors shall provide clear direction to students concerning AI system use and its proper disclosure in course syllabi and/or as assignments or assessments are given. Regardless, students must never use AI systems to fabricate or misrepresent academic work (e.g., by inventing references, quotations, data, or results) or to impersonate a student (e.g., by taking quizzes, exams, or otherwise participating in a course on their behalf).

684.1 Definition of Cheating

Cheating is defined as obtaining or attempting to obtain, or aiding another to obtain, credit for work, or any improvement in evaluation of performance, by any dishonest or deceptive means. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: lying; copying from another's test or examination; discussion at any time of questions or answers on an examination or test, unless such discussion is specifically authorized by the instructor; taking or receiving copies of an exam without the permission of the instructor; using or displaying notes, "cheat sheets," or other information devices inappropriate to the prescribed test conditions; allowing someone other than the officially enrolled student to represent the student.

Cheating in the use of AI systems consists primarily in using them to perform academic work in ways unauthorized by the instructor or in failing to properly disclose that use. Instructors shall determine when the use of AI systems is permitted, limited (in specified ways), or prohibited for academic work in their courses. Instructors shall provide clear direction to students concerning the use of AI systems in course syllabi and/or for each assignment as it is given. In the absence of such direction, however, student use of AI systems to perform academic work shall, for purposes of this policy, be treated in the same manner as assistance from another person.

Cheating includes, but is not limited to using AI systems to produce papers, proposals, or outlines, in whole or in part, generate answers, solve problems, write code, produce translations, create images or media, draft discussion posts, complete quizzes or examinations, or otherwise perform academic work when such use is unauthorized or without proper disclosure.

Cheating also includes using AI systems to fabricate or falsify academic work by, for example, inventing or deceptively altering quotations, citations, references, sources, data, or other results; and using AI systems to impersonate a student by, for example, posting to discussion boards online or taking quizzes or exams or other assessments or otherwise participating in a course on a student's behalf.

684.2 Procedure for Addressing Cheating

a) Instructors should be confident that cheating has occurred; if there is any doubt, the student should be consulted and/or additional information sought prior to taking action for cheating.

b) In cases involving the possible misuse of AI systems, instructors should consider the totality of the available evidence. Automated detection software results alone should not be treated as conclusive evidence of cheating. If there is any doubt whether students have cheated by the unauthorized use of AI systems, the student should be consulted and/or additional information sought prior to taking action for cheating.

c) The student should be notified by memorandum of the instructor's determination that cheating has occurred and the intended punishment. Said memorandum should notify the student ~~that~~ if ~~s/he~~ they deny cheating, that: (1) the department head of the course of record will be given an opportunity to resolve the situation to the satisfaction of both parties; and (2) if the situation remains unresolved, an appeal of the finding of cheating (though not of the punishment, if the finding of cheating is upheld) is available through the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (OSRR).

d) Cheating requires, at a minimum, an "F" assigned to the assignment, exam, or task, and this "F" must be reflected in the course grade. The instructor may assign an "F" course grade for an incidence of cheating.

e) Irrespective of whether an appeal is made, the instructor is obligated to submit to the OSRR director a Confidential Faculty Report of Academic Dishonesty. Physical evidence, circumstantial evidence, and testimony of observation may be attached. In cases involving AI systems, such evidence may include drafts, revision histories, prompts, outputs, metadata, source materials, discrepancies in citations or quotations, automated detection software results, statistical analyses, or other relevant documentation. Automated detection software results alone are insufficient evidence to establish cheating, however.

f) If an appeal is made, the grade assigned for cheating and the associated course grade cannot be appealed to the Fairness Board should the OSRR confirm the incidence of cheating.

g) The OSRR director shall determine if any disciplinary action is required in addition to the assignment of a failing grade. Disciplinary actions which are possible include, but are not limited to: required special counseling, special paper or research assignments, loss of student teaching or research appointments, removal from a course, loss of membership in organizations, suspension or dismissal from individual programs or from the University. The most severe of the possible actions shall be reserved for grievous cheating offenses or more than one offense by an individual.

684.3 Definition of Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as the act of using the ideas or work of another person as if they were one's own without giving proper credit, required acknowledgment, or both; or by using the ideas or work of an AI system without proper disclosure. Such an act is not plagiarism if it is ascertained that the ideas were arrived at through independent reasoning or logic or where the thought or idea is common knowledge. Acknowledgment of an original author or source must be made through appropriate references; e.g., quotation marks, footnotes, commentary. Any use of the ideas or work of AI systems in submitted academic work must be disclosed. Instructors shall determine the proper form and level of disclosure of the use of the ideas or work of AI systems and clarify that for students in course syllabi and/or on a per-assignment basis.

Examples of plagiarism include but are not limited to the following: the submission of a work, either in part or in whole, completed by another person; failure to give credit for ideas, statements, facts, or conclusions that rightfully belong to another; failure to use quotation marks (or other means of setting apart, such as the use of indentation or a different font size) when quoting directly from another, whether it be a paragraph, a sentence, or even a part thereof; close and lengthy paraphrasing of another's writing without credit or originality; use of another's project or programs or part thereof without giving credit; the submission of a work, either in part or in whole, completed by an AI system without proper disclosure; the submission of text, code, images, analysis, translations, summaries, outlines, or other materials generated in whole or in part by an AI system without proper disclosure.

In general, cheating consists in the unauthorized use of AI systems to perform academic work, while plagiarism consists in the use of the ideas of work or AI systems without proper disclosure. The use of AI systems in courses or assignments may constitute plagiarism, cheating, or both, depending on instructors' prior directions concerning whether or how that use is authorized and, when it is, its proper disclosure.

684.4 Procedure for Addressing Plagiarism

a) Instructors should be confident that plagiarism has occurred; if there is any doubt, the student should be consulted and/or additional information sought prior to taking action for plagiarism.

b) Plagiarism may be considered a form of cheating and therefore subject to the same procedure which requires notification to the OSRR director and, at a minimum, an "F" assigned to the assignment, exam, or task (See Section 684.2). However, plagiarism may be the result of poor learning or poor attention to format, or misunderstanding or confusion about the proper disclosure of the use of AI systems when that use is authorized, and so may occur without obvious intent to deceive; consequently, some instructor discretion is appropriate. Provided that there was no obvious intent to deceive, an instructor may choose to counsel the student and offer a remedy (within their authority) which is less severe than that required for cheating. (If in doubt about their authority to offer a particular remedy, the instructor should consult OSRR.) Even under these circumstances, the instructor must submit to the OSRR director a Confidential Faculty Report of Academic Dishonesty.

c) An instructor may not penalize a student for plagiarism in any way without advising the student by memorandum that a penalty is being imposed. The instructor should further advise the student in said memorandum that if they deny committing plagiarism: (1) the department head of the course of record will be given an opportunity to resolve the situation to the satisfaction of both parties; and (2) if the situation remains unresolved, an appeal of the finding of plagiarism (though not of the punishment, if the finding of plagiarism is upheld) is possible through OSRR.

Adopted:

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

AS-___-26

RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH THE CAL POLY MARITIME ACADEMY COUNCIL

WHEREAS, The Cal Poly San Luis Obispo campus will convert to a semester-based schedule as of Fall 2026 in response to a mandate from the CSU Chancellor's Office; and

WHEREAS, The California State University Board of Trustees (CSU BOT) directed Cal Poly and Cal Maritime to integrate and become one university by July 1, 2026; and

WHEREAS, One Cal Poly Academic Senate inclusive of faculty at the Cal Poly Solano Campus was established as of July 1, 2025 (AS-989-25), and

WHEREAS, AS-989-25 charged the academic senate with developing long-term shared governance and representation plans in collaboration with the Cal Poly administration to ensure Cal Poly Solano faculty are included in shared governance at Cal Poly; therefore be it

WHEREAS, The bylaws of the Academic Senate establish the Cal Poly Maritime Academy Council; therefore be it resolved

RESOLVED: That the Council's responsibilities in the attached revision to the Academic Senate bylaws be adopted; and therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the Council's responsibilities be located under the section on Representation in the senate bylaws; and therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the Council Chair be assigned Weighted Teaching Units the equivalent of one 3-unit lecture course per term for their service.

Proposed by: The Academic Senate Executive Committee
Date:

1. CAL POLY SOLANO CAMPUS REPRESENTATION

As outlined in AS-XXXX-26, the Cal Poly Maritime Academy Council will serve as a representative body for the General Faculty at the Cal Poly Solano Campus. Their membership and responsibilities are outlined in AS-XXXY-26. The council shall consist of members of the General Faculty, ex officio members from Solano campus administration, and a representative from the ASI from the Solano campus. The Chair of the Council will be a member of the General Faculty elected by the members of the General Faculty of Solano Campus, who shall serve on the Academic Senate Executive Committee as a voting member. They shall serve one-year terms as Council Chair for a maximum of four consecutive terms. The members of the Council may but are not required to be elected members of the Academic Senate, and are appointed by the Senate Executive Committee. Terms shall be staggered to ensure continuity.

a. Membership
    i. The Cal Poly Maritime Academy Council (CPMA) will be comprised of three members of the General Faculty of the Solano Campus, one of whom shall be appointed as CPMA Council Chair by the Executive Committee after a vote by the Solano campus General Faculty.
    ii. The members of the council may be but are not required to be elected members of the Academic Senate, and are appointed by the Executive Committee. Terms shall be staggered to ensure continuity of service.
    iii. The Council Chair shall serve one-year terms, for a maximum of four consecutive terms.
    iv. The Council will also include ex officio members of the Cal Poly Solano Campus administration, including the Vice President and CEO, or designee, the Superintendent, or designee, and a representative from ASI from the Solano Campus.
b. Responsibilities of the Cal Poly Maritime Academy Council
    i. The Council chair will lead the Council and will serve as a constant advocate for the General Faculty at the Cal Poly, Solano campus. They will interface with Solano campus administration, communicate the business of the Academic Senate to the General Faculty (for example, through monthly reports and town hall style meetings), and serve as an advocate for Solano campus to the Academic Senate. In consultation with college and PCS caucus chairs, recruit members of the Solano campus General Faculty to Senate and University committees (standing and ad hoc), either as caucus representatives or at-large representatives for the Solano campus, as appropriate. The Council Chair will also collaborate with senate committee chairs when appropriate to coordinate the Solano campus's participation in achieving senate committee charges. As a voting member of the Executive Committee, the Council Chair will serve as an at-large representative for the General Faculty of the Solano Campus, attend both Executive Committee and Academic Senate meetings, and report to Senate officers or the Executive Committee relevant updates.
    ii. The Council Members will serve the Cal Poly Maritime Academy/Solano campus

as at-large representatives with the responsibility of advocating the interests of the General Faculty of the Cal Poly Maritime Academy. They will assist the Council Chair communicating with Solano campus constituents about the senate agendas, general issues, and will canvass the General Faculty before meetings for questions and votes.

Adopted: XX/XX/2026

ACADEMIC SENATE

of

CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY

San Luis Obispo, CA

AS-XXX-26

RESOLUTION ON SUPPORTING AN ACADEMIC COMPONENT FOR A LIVING GREEN RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY AT CAL POLY, SAN LUIS OBISPO

WHEREAS, sustainability is a priority for Cal Poly as a member of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education.

WHEREAS, Cal Poly has pre-existing residential living and learning communities but these have not yet been tested as places for extending sustainability education and learning.

WHEREAS, Cal Poly housing has expressed interest in improving sustainability outcomes within residential living.

WHEREAS, other institutions including UC Davis, UC Merced, UC Los Angeles, UC Berkeley, UC Santa Cruz, San Diego State, and Cal Poly Humboldt have living and learning opportunities related to sustainability.

WHEREAS, there is ongoing enthusiasm from students to create a residential living and learning community where there may be opportunity to earn 2 units of academic credit

WHEREAS, this is an opportunity to grow the student leadership for sustainability initiatives and to help create a culture of sustainability in the on campus residential communities.

WHEREAS, no individual college should have to provide start-up funding for developing this academic program because this is an interdisciplinary effort.

WHEREAS, all colleges should be able to contribute some human resources on a rotating basis to this effort to enhance sustainability learning in a residential setting.

RESOLVED: that the Academic Senate of California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo supports requesting financial resources (4 WTUs per faculty for 2 faculty members for 2 semesters) from the University to support the involvement of faculty in designing, implementing, and assessing a robust academic program for the sustainability living and learning community that will be based in the residences.

RESOLVED: that every College will contribute academic teaching staff at least every 3 years to provide a variety of academic leadership and topics for the program.

RESOLVED: that a new 2 credit academic class “living and learning sustainability” will be created for Fall 2026 if there is university support and may be implemented in Fall 2026 if there is support from housing to designate a “living and learning” center.

Proposed by: Academic Senate Sustainability Committee
Date: May 5, 2026

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Here at Cal Poly learning is not constrained to the formal classroom. Students learn from their classes in the field, internships, and research jobs. They can also learn in their residential communities. Cal Poly has residential learning communities organized on the topics of leadership, social justice, honors students, PRIDE, TRIO achievers, and being substance free. For at least two years, students have expressed interest in developing a living and learning community ("Living Green") around sustainability practices including supporting existing program such as "SLO the Flow" but also building out new initiatives. Other universities have developed such communities including UC Davis, UC Merced, UC Los Angeles, UC Berkeley, UC Santa Cruz, San Diego State, and Cal Poly Humboldt.

These communities are generally student-led and include programming advisors. Students expressed interest in building out a program located across half a floor of first-year housing (supporting 30-40 students) with one resident adviser and one academic adviser. The resident adviser selected for the position would facilitate 1-2 events per month, lead discussion connected to monthly themes, coordinate guest speakers, and track participation. Residents would be expected to attend events and contribute to the organizations and implementation of 1-2 substantial projects over the course of the year including 1 project for fellow residents and 1 project for the broader campus/community.

The academic adviser would be responsible for oversight of the proposed 2 credits assigned to students for fully participating and learning in the "Living Green" residential learning community over the course of two semesters. The units would be noted on final transcripts to signal academic validation of student commitment to sustainability education. The academic advisers would be responsible for regularly interacting with the students within the community, proposing speakers for monthly themes, setting assessment criteria for projects, and grading projects (including potentially monthly projects as well as semester long projects). This proposal is to state the Academic Senate's support of this type of learning opportunity and to request university funding support for academic advisers to the Cal Poly SLO program (selected from faculty/teaching staff who teach sustainability-focused or sustainability-inclusive courses or have demonstrated sustainability knowledge in research/professional experience from 2 different colleges with colleges rotating the responsibilities over different years) each year to receive 2 WTUs per semester for a total of 8 WTUs per year. If Cal Poly Maritime adopts a similar program, additional funding will be requested for 1 faculty member.

Student Infographic from Winter Quarter 2026 presentation to Academic Senate Sustainability Committee

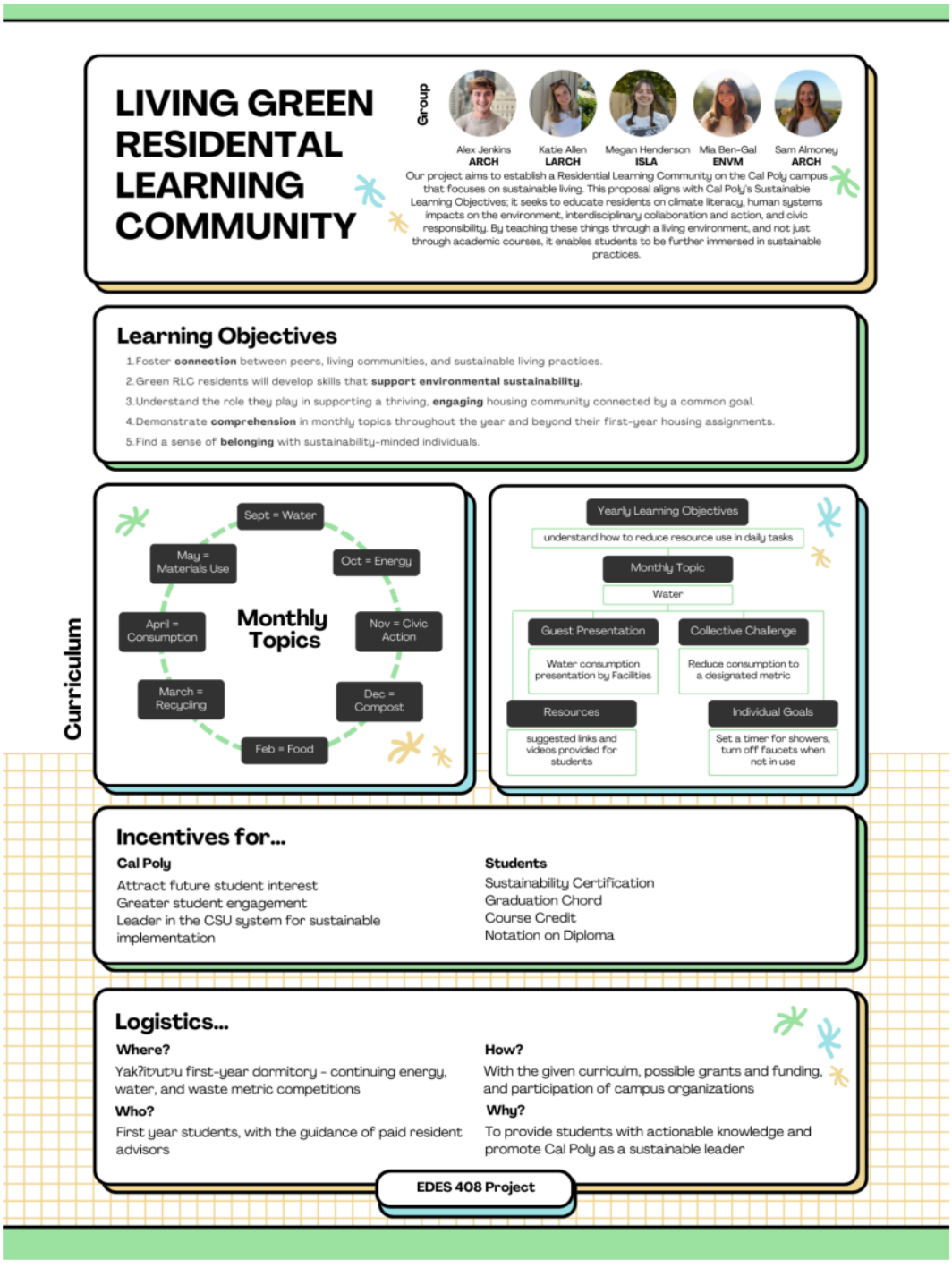

Figure Description: Living Green Residential Learning Community Poster

This poster presents a proposal for a sustainability-focused residential learning community (RLC) for first-year students at Cal Poly. The program integrates sustainability into daily student life through education, collaboration, and hands-on activities.

Key learning objectives include building peer connections around sustainability, developing practical environmental skills, supporting an engaged housing community, and fostering long-term interest in sustainable practices.

The curriculum is organized into monthly themes such as water, energy, civic action, composting, food, recycling, consumption, and materials use. Activities include guest speakers, group challenges, shared resources, and individual behavior goals, such as reducing water use.

Incentives include increased student engagement and institutional leadership in sustainability for Cal Poly. Student benefits include sustainability certification, course credit, graduation recognition, and transcript notation.

The program would take place in first-year housing (Yakʔitʸutʸu), supported by resident advisors, and implemented through structured curriculum, campus partnerships, and potential grant funding. The goal is to provide actionable sustainability knowledge and position Cal Poly as a sustainability leader.