

October 7, 2025 University Update Academic Senate

U.S. News & World Report Rankings

U.S. News & World Report released its 2026 rankings late last month and Cal Poly once again ranked #1 on the Best in the West list. That marks 33 years on the list and three in the top spot.

Other accolades include #1 in for Most Innovative in the West and Top Public University in the West. We also get very high marks for support of veterans, our teaching and engineering programs and for providing the best value

These rankings are a testament to the quality of our faculty and the education you provide combined with the success of our alumni.

CSU Policies and Guidance Regarding Potential ICE Activity on Campus

I want to ensure that you are familiar with Cal Poly and CSU policies if Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers come to campus. Written guidelines are in your packet and I'll just remind you of a few key points:

- **University Police role:** Cal Poly Police Department does not collaborate with ICE to enforce immigration laws, nor do they inquire about immigration status.
- **Campus access:** ICE officers may access *public* areas of campus. To access non-public areas (classrooms, residence halls, offices) they must have valid judicial warrant unless someone with legal authority provides consent. Administrative ICE warrants (e.g., Form I-200 or I-205) do *not* grant this access.
- **Verification of warrants:** Campus officials should request to see a warrant, confirm its validity, and notify campus police (911 or 756-2281) and University Counsel before granting access.
- **Privacy protections:** Student and employee information is protected by FERPA and other privacy laws. Records are not released without a valid legal requirement (e.g., a court order).
- **Resources available:** The Cal Poly Dream Center, UndocuSupport and CSU legal aid programs provide support for undocumented and DACA students.

Additional details are available in the packet provided.

H1-B Visa

We want to clarify that a recent federal proclamation that imposes a new \$100,000 fee on H-1B visa applications applies primarily to **new** petitions. For existing H-1B holders inside the U.S., the fee generally does not apply unless you are filing a new petition or an extension.

Some implementation details remain unclear, and the situation may continue to evolve. Therefore, we advise H-1B visa holders to:

- Review your individual circumstances carefully.
 - Seek guidance from qualified immigration counsel if you have upcoming travel plans. The [California State University Immigration Legal Services](#) Project may be a resource in this process.
 - Reach out to Cal Poly HR or international office if you need additional support.
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CSU AI Survey Deadline Extended

At the request of many campuses, the CSU has extended the deadline to participate in the systemwide AI Survey. The survey will remain open through **Monday, Oct. 20, 2025**.

You can access the survey at aisurvey.calstate.edu.

You are encouraged to complete the 10-minute survey and if possible, **set aside time in your classes to allow students to complete the survey**.

The survey will provide a snapshot of how we currently use GenAI, our concerns and training needs. The findings from this study will inform institutional research and contribute to the development of resources and policies regarding AI use in academia. Strong participation from Cal Poly will enable CSU to respond more effectively to local campus needs related to this potentially game-changing technology.

More information about the survey is available on the [CSU website](#).

NAGPRA / CalNAGPRA Annual Survey

Today, we launched our second annual NAGPRA survey, asking all departments to physically check your spaces (classrooms, labs, offices, storage, etc.) and report any Native American cultural items or human remains using the [Campus Self-Assessment Survey](#) by Tuesday, Nov. 4.

Thank you to those of you who participated in last year's survey. For those who are new to this process, it is an annual effort required as part of our legal and ethical obligation under [NAGPRA and CalNAGPRA](#) (AB-275, AB-389) and as part of the [CSU NAGPRA policy](#).

Please ensure that you complete the assessment in a timely manner so we may report any findings to the CSU as part of our annual report. If you have any questions, you may reach out to our NAGPRA Coordinator Kent Spiers.

President's Task Force on Antisemitism

As promised last spring quarter, we are convening a President's Task Force on Antisemitism, charged with developing actionable recommendations to strengthen the university's commitment to a place of belonging for Jewish students, faculty and staff.

This Task Force is not only about responding to acts of antisemitism when they occur but also about nurturing a sense of belonging and promoting respectful dialogue; enhancing educational opportunities and training; and strengthening academic and residential life.

I will co-lead the task force with Beya Makekau, Associate Vice President for Strategic Planning & Networks. The first of six meetings will be held this month, with final recommendations expected by June 2026. We will continue to share updates as they are available.

Virtual Computer Labs Upgrades

Information Technology Services (ITS) has upgraded the Virtual Computer Labs to provide a smoother, faster experience for all Cal Poly students, faculty and staff. Virtual machines now have double the CPU power, more than double the memory. For graphics-intensive programs, they offer eight times more GPU memory. Most applications have been updated to their latest versions and will remain at that version throughout the academic year. These upgrades mean applications will launch more quickly, run more smoothly and deliver better overall performance.

Poly PDF

Cal Poly became aware of a spreadsheet known as "Poly PDF" which was located on a shared Google document often accessed via Reddit. This spreadsheet contained access to electronic

versions of textbooks. Cal Poly was not responsible for providing and did not authorize the spreadsheet or link, which have been removed.

We encourage students to utilize the many legal and affordable options available for accessing course materials:

- **Kennedy Library** offers free access to course reserves, open textbooks, and sharable books licensed by the university. Details about [affordable course material](#) are available on the library website.
- **Mustang Shop** provides discounted digital materials and textbook rentals.
- Students experiencing financial hardship may contact the **Office of the Dean of Students** to inquire about the [Cal Poly Cares Grant](#) which offers short-term financial assistance.

Cal Poly remains dedicated to supporting student success while protecting intellectual property rights and maintaining ethical standards in the distribution of academic materials.