

CAL POLY
SAN LUIS OBISPO

CAL POLY
COMMENCEMENT

Mustangs Forever



Cal Poly Commencement: *Focused on the Student Experience*



Commencement Policy Committee

University Standing Committee

Scope:

• Makes recommendations and advises President and Vice President on commencement policy relating to:

- Invited keynote speakers
- Student commencement fees
- Operational policy on posthumous degrees
- Student's eligibility to graduate
- Petition request process
- Parking and traffic impacts
- Guest accommodations (including ADA)
- Official academic regalia
- College pairings at Fall and Spring ceremonies
- Cultural commencement ceremonies
- Honorary degrees
- Ticketing requirements

• Meets twice yearly

• Consists of 16 members



Commencement Policy Committee, Cont...
University Standing Committee

Policy Committee members:

- Chair – Vice President for Student Affairs
- Two Faculty Grand Marshals
- President's Chief of Staff
- Two ASI student representatives
- Provost nominee for Academic Affairs
- Assistant Vice President, Alumni Relations
- Faculty representative, CAFES
- Faculty representative, CAED
- Faculty representative, OCOB
- Faculty representative, CENG
- Faculty representative, CLA
- Faculty representative, CSM
- Director of Commencement

Current members:

- Keith Humphrey
- Andrew Schaffner & Chip Appel
- Rachel Fernflores (Jessica Darin – May '16)
- Cyrus Ebadat & Emilie Morse
- Dean for CAED, Christine Theodoropoulos
- Ellen Cohune
- Ann De Lay
- Cornelius Nuworsoo
- Eric Olsen
- Dean Arakaki
- Michael Latner
- Tom Gutierrez
- Tessa Espinoza

Commencement Operations Committee

University Standing Committee

Scope:

- Executes all commencement events throughout the year.
- A collaborative working committee focused on all operations and logistics related to commencement.
- Meets monthly during academic year
- Consists of 26 members

Responsibilities include:

- Comprehensive marketing and communication strategy
- Electronic and hard copy ticketing for over 40,000 people
- Campus-wide facility operations
- Security, safety and campus-wide parking
- Presidential events and stewardship of VIP guests
- Campus-wide signage, traffic, and crowd control
- ADA compliancy
- Collaboration with all internal and external vendors
- Collaboration with city of San Luis Obispo, including promotional banners downtown, communication with hotels

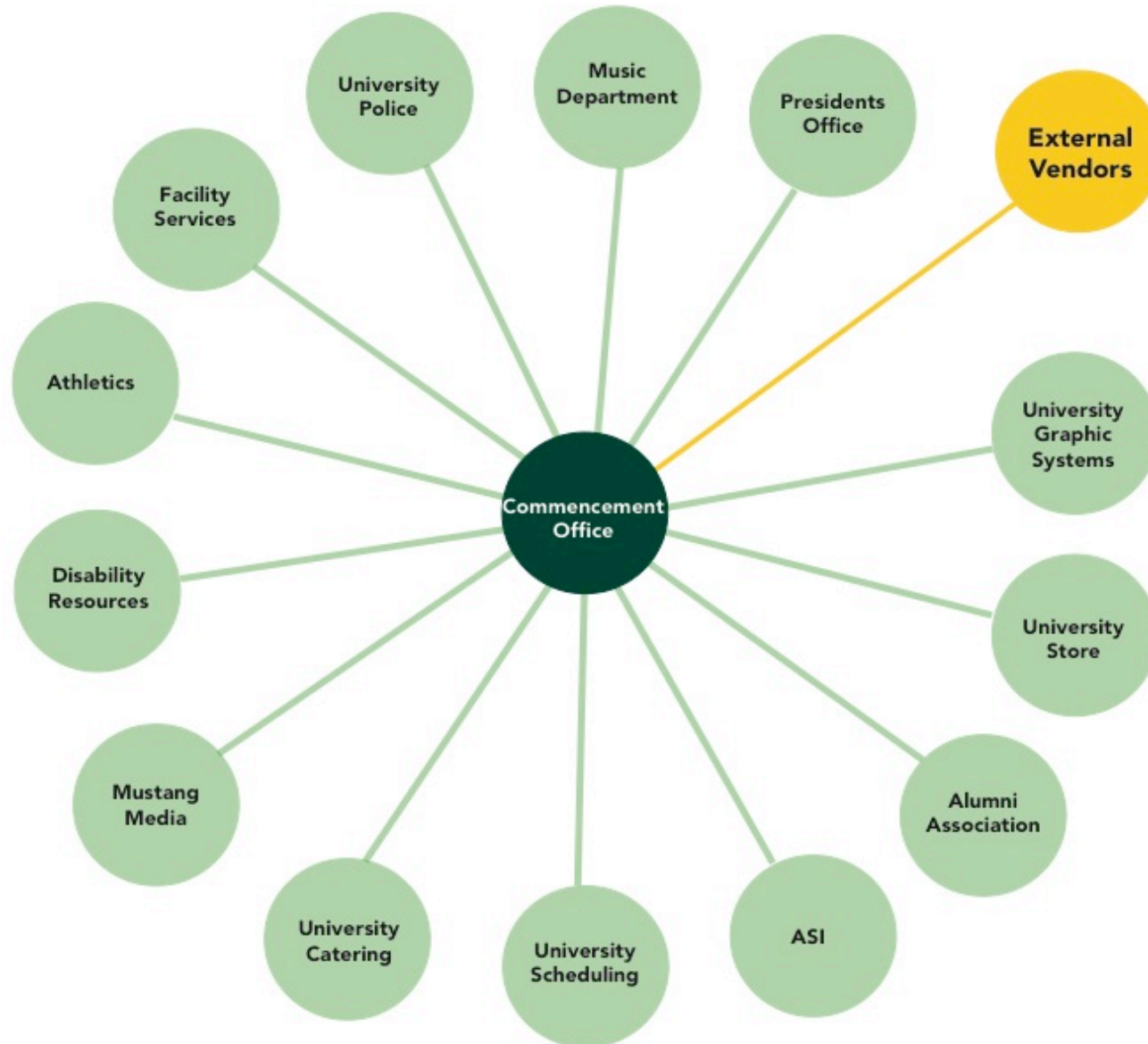
Commencement Operations Committee, Cont...

University Standing Committee

Operations Committee members:

- Two Faculty Grand Marshals → Andrew Schaffner & Chip Appel
- ASI student representative → Seth Borges
- Two Office of the President representatives → Diane Haupt & Dana Matteson
- Provost nominee for Academic Affairs → Staci Shoals
- University Marketing & Communications → Royaa Silver & Sasha Palazzo
- Asst. Vice President of Alumni Relations & Alumni staff → Ellen Cohune & Maureen O'Connor
- Facilities Manager → Donald Popham
- Athletics → Stacia Momburg
- University Bookstore → Preston Sirois & Annette Bly
- Faculty from Music Department → Andrew McMahan & Thomas Davies
- UPD Commander and Parking Manager → Brenda Trobaugh & Gwen Nielsen
- Commencement Staff → Katie Stubberfield & Tessa Espinoza
- Director of Disability Resources → Debi Hill & Vanessa Dominguez

Current members:



External Vendors

Freestyle Event Services

Audio and Staging

Central Coast Industries

Portable Toilets

Got You Cover'd

Chairs, Tents & Stancions

RideOn

Shuttles

Central Coast Printing

Postcards & Name badges

CRS

Posters, Pamphlets & Signage

Michael Jones

Doves

Epic Entertainment

Photo Booth

PolyTix

Tickets and Scanning

Left Coast T-shirts

Usher Vests

San Luis Ambulance

Ambulance Service

Robert Cooper

Big Screen Conductor

Vino Vice

Security Service

BestCare Pharmacy

Wheelchairs

Mr. Pickles

Volunteer and Staff lunch

Additional groups that are regularly consulted:

(Part of our collaborative and inclusive decision-making process)

- Various Student Groups and Committees
- ASI Student Government Leaders
- ASI Workshop
- Parent Advisory Council
- Dean's Council
- President's Cabinet
- City of San Luis Obispo Elected Officials
- University Housing (relating to concurrent move-out traffic)
- Student Affairs Senior Leadership Team
- Survey feedback from students, parents/supporters and faculty/staff



Spring Commencement Snapshot

Monthly

- Hold monthly Commencement Operations Committee meetings

9-12 months prior

- Review survey feedback
- Finalize keynote speaker(s)
- Finalize date/time/structure

8 months prior

- Develop Mar/Comm Plan to grads and families
- Facilitate Open Forums for college coordinators
- Create checklists for colleges
- Hold Commencement Policy Committee Meeting

7 months prior

- Finalize Honorary Degree Recipients

6 months prior

- Contact and reserve all vendors/services
- Develop interactive mobile app
- Initiate communication to grads
- Facilitate outstanding Senior Award nominees

5 months prior

- Finalize college/department event details
- Confirm all spaces are secure/scheduled
- Confirm Chancellor's Office attendees
- Process all petition requests

4 months prior

- Manage/author Commencement Program
- Mail materials to all parents of eligible graduates
- Finalize keynote speaker details/requests
- Finalize Cultural Commencement ceremonies

3 months prior

- Organize/coordinate Commencement Fair
- Design/coordinate commencement ticketing
- Author/finalize commencement scripts
- Hold Commencement Policy Committee Meeting
- Coordinate all accessibility services, shuttle routes, wheelchair rentals and closed captioning services
- Finalize processional and seating charts for platform
- Request final remarks from all ceremony speakers

2 months prior

- Disseminate comprehensive grad instruction pamphlet
- Collaborate with Grand Marshals to organize Marshals
- Hire over 100 student employees and volunteers

1 month prior

- Walk-through facilities/conduct vendor dry-runs
- Conduct several detailed training sessions for volunteers
- Support College Marshal trainings
- Disseminate certificates to colleges
- Deploy instructions/materials to Platform Party
- Deploy instructions to college marshals
- Finalize all VIP and Presidential events
- Conduct Presidential briefing

1 week prior

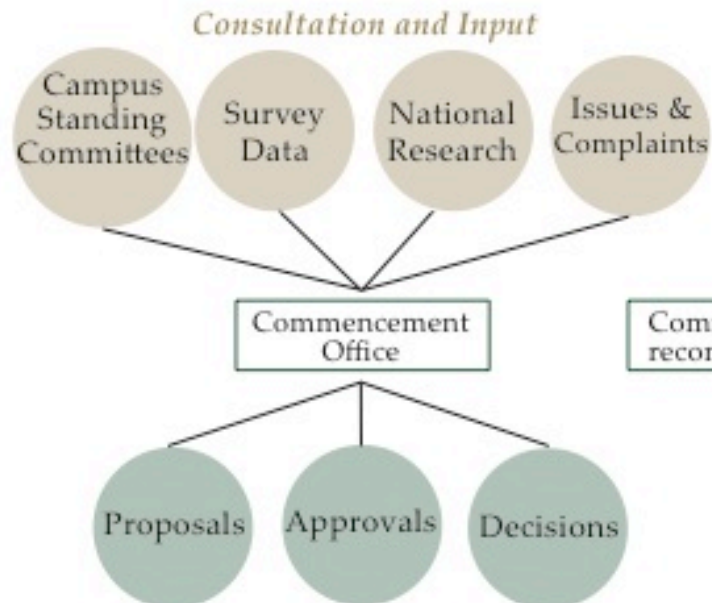
- Grad Week events
- Assemble over 5,000 Cal Poly Proud bags for grads and faculty
- Finalize stadium set-up
- Deliver scripts to all platform party members
- Host walk-through rehearsal in stadium



Our Current Process for Addressing Change



HOW DECISIONS ARE MADE



Constituent Groups Providing Input:

Commencement Operations Committee
Commencement Policy Committee
President's Cabinet
College Deans
College Departments Heads/Chairs
Graduate/Parents/Faculty Survey Data
ASI Student Government

Commencement Office receives and funnels information, seeks recommendations/approval, and implements change.

Constituent Groups Approving Change:

President's Cabinet
College Deans



Commencement Office along with Commencement Operations and Policy Committees have addressed and successfully resolved several concerns over the years including:

- Overall duration of the ceremony
 - Total ceremony length trimmed to 90 min
- Ceremony timing due to sun/heat of the day
 - Moved morning ceremonies to 9am
- Ceremony structure
 - Changed to a 3-ceremony model
- ADA Compliancy at all commencement events
 - Achieved full compliancy at all 45 events
- Signage and traffic flow throughout campus
 - Created a task force, routed traffic exclusively on Highland
- Duration of graduate and faculty processional
 - Trimmed graduate and faculty processional to 13 minutes
- Accessibility for guests with a mobility impairment
 - Increased and re-routed shuttles, rented 75 wheelchairs
- Shortage of tickets distributed per graduates
 - Increased number of tickets per grad from 7 to 10

ADA Compliancy: a Recent Issue Resolved

A Deeper Look at a Recent Issue that was successfully resolved:

In Spring 2014, 46% of post-commencement college/departments ceremonies were not ADA compliant (21 out of 45)

Our Process toward Resolution:

- Worked with Facilities Planning to determine all ADA compliant locations on campus **(July 2014)**
- Presented 3 well-developed scenarios to the Deans **(Aug 2014)**
- Upon request by the Deans, presented 3 well-developed scenarios to the Dept Heads and Chairs **(Sept 2014)**
- Consulted with Commencement Policy Committee **(Oct 2014)**
- Support from Commencement Operations Committee **(Sept 2014 – June 2015)**

Once a decision was reached:

- Held 2 Open Forums for the college coordinators **(December 2014)**
- Provided a detailed checklist to all college coordinators **(January 2015)**
- All 45 College/Department events were fully ADA-compliant **(June 2015)**



Additional Positive Changes:

- Established timeless brand – ***Mustangs Forever***
- Customized commencement **mobile app**
- **Live streaming** (YouTube) and closed captioning
- Advanced **ticket scanning** technology
- Interactive **customized map** online
- New and improved commencement **website**
- Enhanced **social media** campaign
- Hand **fans and water** for all grads, guests, and faculty
- Implemented and increased **streamers** each year for 'Big Finish'!
- Implemented **Cal Poly Proud pinning** ceremony
- Incorporated recognition of **alumni guests** during ceremonies
- **Commencement fair** expansion



Proposed Change for Spring 2016



Key Issue Addressed with College Deans:

Opportunity for Improvement with the College and Department Events

- Survey responses identified frustration with college/department events and the lack of organization.
- The overall positive rating for the college/department events dropped from 70% to 65% this year.
- 54% of grads felt college/department communication was poor
- Parents rated college/department events poorly
- Anecdotal feedback from President and others

2014



2015



Research and Data Collected to Address this Issue:

- 18 of the 23 CSU campuses conduct name reading at their main university-wide ceremonies.
- The CSU average ceremony duration is 2 hours, 10 minutes (including name reading and processional).
- 4 CSU campuses conduct separate departmental ceremonies (3 of these 4 conduct name reading at their department events).
- Cal Poly processional duration has decreased from 40 down to 15 minutes.
- Each graduate name would require 3-5 seconds (utilizing professional name readers)
- “Name reading & walking across the stage” listed as most important to include in the university-wide ceremony (Graduate survey)



Recommendation from President's Cabinet:

(After consultation with various constituent groups, including College Deans and Department Heads/Chairs)

- The main university ceremonies in Spanos stadium to include individual name reading for each graduate
- Following* each university ceremony, colleges and departments may host receptions or events
- Colleges and departments determine level of formality and structure for their event or reception
 - Formal staging, A/V, seating, name reading and event ticketing are optional and could be eliminated (decreased cost to colleges and departments)
- The university will continue to host 3 main commencement ceremonies in Spanos Stadium
 - 2 colleges represented at each
- The main university ceremonies will last approximately 2 hours
 - Some historical ceremony elements will be abbreviated or eliminated
- Professional name readers will be utilized
 - Total time added for name reading = approximately 1 hour
- Staging changes will accommodate two lines for graduate path of travel
- Commencement photography and faculty/student congratulatory exchanges will be conducted on the field