# Office of the President

Cal Poly Community,

Over the past several weeks, a proposed development for a portion of the San Luis Obispo West Campus has generated significant discussion and engagement across our community. I want to share an update on the project and outline the path forward over the coming years.

I have had many thoughtful conversations with faculty, staff, students, alumni, agricultural leaders, neighbors and other stakeholders. I am grateful to everyone who has participated by attending meetings, submitting feedback through our online form, or reaching out directly.

After carefully weighing the feedback received against the potential benefits that development could bring to Cal Poly, I have decided to pursue a more-focused mixed-use project that better reflects the concerns and priorities expressed by our community. While we do not have a detailed development plan, our principles and commitments going forward can be viewed at calpoly.edu/west-campus.

This revised approach will allow us to:

- Provide services and amenities that support the needs of our campus community.
- Expand Learn by Doing opportunities for students in CAFES and across a wide range of academic disciplines.
- Preserve more of the agricultural land that is central to Cal Poly's identity and mission.

We will focus planning efforts on an 18-acre parcel of land south of Highland Drive. **A 12-acre parcel of Class I agricultural land currently**

**planted as a lemon grove, which was previously considered for development, will remain in agricultural use.**

The years ahead will involve conducting further planning and needs assessments, completing environmental review processes, and evaluating necessary infrastructure improvements. Throughout this work, we will continue to engage stakeholders to inform our decisions.

We will also begin evaluating and preparing a separate 18-acre plot of land on campus that is currently used as spray fields. The goal is to restore this land to productive agricultural use, subject to testing and verification. The university is committed to providing the funding necessary for the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences to undertake this work, including the assessment, remediation and infrastructure improvements needed to support future agricultural use.

We will limit development of existing agricultural land north of Highland Drive to currently entitled land or development that is deemed critical to the agricultural mission of the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences.

I want to reiterate that Cal Poly's academic mission remains our highest priority, and our commitment to the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences is unwavering. We will continue to honor and strengthen our agricultural heritage while creating additional Learn by Doing opportunities for students across disciplines.

The location of the planned development was chosen because, more than other sites considered, it offers a unique opportunity to advance multiple objectives: supporting our academic mission, expanding opportunities for students, and providing valuable services to students, faculty, staff and the broader community.

A further benefit is the recent approval of Opportunity Zone designation. Cal Poly worked closely with the County of San Luis Obispo, the submitting agency, to secure Opportunity Zone 2.0 designation for a

portion of its campus. This federal designation is intended to stimulate investment in designated areas by providing tax incentives for qualifying long-term, private capital investments, potentially supporting future campus development, research and innovation partnerships, and economic growth. The designation is effective January 1, 2027, for a 10-year period through December 31, 2036.

It is important to emphasize that we remain far from a finalized development plan. As planning progresses, we will continue to keep our community informed and provide updates at calpoly.edu/west-campus.

I am proud to lead a university where so many people care deeply about preserving the Learn by Doing ethos that makes Cal Poly distinctive. Thank you for your engagement, your thoughtful feedback, and your continued commitment to Cal Poly and our students.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey D. Armstrong
President

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