

Office of the President

Dear Campus Community,

Welcome to the new academic year! I hope you are as excited as I am for what's ahead for Cal Poly in 2023 and 2024.

I want to talk with you today about the need for our university to grow — and an exciting new initiative that will allow that to happen.

The 2022 state budget contained an historic compact with the governor, under which the CSU agreed to increase enrollment and the governor agreed to increase the CSU budget each year for five years.

Cal Poly needs to grow in order to serve more exceptional California students and because having more students on campus will provide our university with financial stability and flexibility to address urgent infrastructure and salary needs. And the CSU needs to grow to fulfill its agreement with the governor. We have a plan to address these two needs simultaneously — and the CSU's leadership team agrees with and supports our approach.

Today, I am announcing the first phase of a new Year-Round Operation initiative aimed at increasing the university's overall enrollment through greater utilization of the summer term — providing increased opportunities for students to experience our renowned Learn by Doing education and take part in High-Impact Practices such as study abroad and internships.

Year-Round Operation is the next phase in the more-than-120-year evolution of Learn by Doing as well as a pathway to solidifying the

standing of our university while enhancing student success and helping both Cal Poly and the CSU meet our respective growth goals.

Beginning with students applying for 2024-25, new students can volunteer to start at Cal Poly in the summer of their first year and spend a second summer on campus later in their career, while agreeing to spend two typical academic terms off-campus. This first phase will extend the option to students in certain select majors in the College of Liberal Arts, College of Engineering, and Orfalea College of Business.

This initial group of up to 600 students will be scheduled so that one-third is off campus during each term of academic year 2024-25. This way, the university can increase enrollment while minimizing the increase in on-campus headcount during the fall, winter or spring terms.

Think of Year-Round Operation as increasing students' opportunities at Cal Poly by increasing availability of beds, labs and classrooms — and achieving this by increasing attendance in the summer and, ultimately, slightly lowering attendance during the fall, winter and spring terms.

As we gain experience with this approach, we will expand the number of majors and the number of students involved using this model, so that actual head count on campus in any given term will be significantly lower than the university's overall enrollment for the year. At full implementation, we could see several thousand students taking part in summer term — a significant increase from our traditional levels but not close to the on-campus enrollment of other terms.

Year-Round Operation also will allow us to extend our Learn by Doing pedagogy by giving students a greater opportunity to take part in High-Impact Practices, including enriching activities such as study abroad, internships and co-ops, service-learning projects, and others.

Participating students will be encouraged, though not required, to spend their time off campus taking part in High-Impact Practices.

While participation in such activities is not always an option for all students, we are pleased to announce an anonymous \$300,000 annual

donation aimed at providing these opportunities to students with financial need — and we plan to seek additional funding to make sure these educationally enhancing experiences are available to all who want to partake.

Year-Round Operation will help Cal Poly and the CSU meet enrollment growth requirements at a time when higher education broadly is challenged by application and enrollment declines and some colleges and universities are consolidating or even closing campuses.

The goals in the governor's compact aren't easily attainable. But with its routine demand for admission, Cal Poly is uniquely qualified to help the CSU meet these goals. This year, the university received upwards of 70,000 applications for only about 6,200 new spots.

Increasing Year-Round Operation allows us to grow enrollment faster and at a lower capital cost than we could achieve any other way. That enrollment growth will in turn bring more funding to the university and allow us to address infrastructure and salary needs while also addressing campus-specific and overall CSU enrollment goals.

Year-Round Operation has received the enthusiastic support of Interim CSU Chancellor Jolene Koester and her leadership team — and it could serve as a model for the system's other campuses.

This initiative will take work and resources at the front end to fully implement over the next few years.

One task is repurposing space in the campus core away from administrative uses and toward uses supporting student success, such as classrooms, labs, faculty and student-facing staff offices, and more. We have taken a first step by purchasing a commercial building by the airport, where we will relocate some staff who can do their work from this location. This will ultimately make 40,000 to 45,000 square feet available. We have similar plans for the "surge spaces" currently being used by the library staff and collections while Kennedy Library is undergoing a badly needed transformation. Another step is adding classrooms and faculty

offices to new University Housing and student success projects over the next few years.

As well, to be ready for Summer 2024, we will hire additional faculty during 2023-24, and we will be communicating with applicants and their families about these new options.

We have talked about greater utilization of our summer term for many years, and now is the right time to take advantage of this opportunity for our university and for the many more students we can help to succeed.

More details on this exciting initiative are forthcoming. This is an exciting change for our university, and I look forward to working with you all to make it a reality.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey D. Armstrong

President