Due to a decrease in the state budget, Cal Poly now decreased its enrollment in Fall 2009. The 19,325 total students enrolled is a 0.7% decrease from Fall 2008. The decrease in enrollment is in the undergraduate and post-baccalaureate student population. Undergraduate headcount enrollment decreased 1.2% from Fall 2008. Post-baccalaureate headcount, which is comprised mostly of credential students, decreased 15.6% from Fall 2008.

Graduate enrollment rose to 882 students in Fall 2009, an increase of 11.9% from Fall 2008.

Notes: Post-baccalaureate category consists of credential and non-degree-seeking students. Graduate category consists of students who are pursuing master’s degrees.

Beginning in Fall 2008, second-bachelor’s students are counted as undergraduates to conform with federal reporting standards.

The undergraduate average unit load jumped to a record high of 14.55 in Fall 2009. This is also the largest one-year increase on record.

Registration procedures in Fall 2009 differed from previous Fall terms in that new freshmen were block scheduled, and continuing students registered earlier than usual: in May as opposed to August. The differences in these registration patterns likely contributed to the increase in average loads.

The graduate student average unit load had been increasing from Fall 2005 through Fall 2008 but decreased to the 10.98 unit mark in Fall 2009.
Gender proportions do not change much from year to year. Of the Fall 2009 total student population, 43.9% are women. This proportion is a slight increase over last Fall but is still 1.4% below the high point in Fall 2001.

- 43.7% of Fall 2009 undergraduates are women.
- 76.6% of Fall 2009 post-baccalaureate students are women.
- 42.4% of Fall 2009 graduate students are women.

As of Summer 2009, Cal Poly converted to the new federal standards for collecting and reporting ethnicity. As a result, comparisons to previous years are not possible. Among the changes is a new option for students to identify themselves in multiple races. Because of the new multi-racial category, we no longer aggregate students into a "non-white" category.

Of the Fall 2009 total student population, 11.7% identify themselves as Hispanic/Latino, and 10.6% identify themselves as Asian American. The 2.2% of students that identify themselves as multi-racial consists almost exclusively of Fall 2009 new students, since the new collection method started with the Summer 2009 applicants.

The College of Engineering continues to enroll the largest number of Cal Poly majors, with 28.5% of all Fall 2009 students. The College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences follows with 20.2% of all Fall 2009 students. The College of Engineering also has the most graduate (master’s) students (322). The College of Architecture and Environmental Design has the highest average undergraduate unit load. Conversely, the College of Liberal Arts has the lowest average undergraduate unit load.