Adopted: February 29, 2000

# ACADEMIC SENATE Of CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY San Luis Obispo, CA

## AS-537-OOIEC RESOLUTION ON FIRE SAFETY IN THE CAL POLY RESIDENT STUDENT HOUSING

1 2 3	Background: On January 19,2000, a resident student housing fire at Seton Hall University killed three students and injured 58 others. The resident student housing lacked a sprinkler system and had experienced frequent false fire alanns. There had been 18 false alanns since		
4	September but University officials do not believe the delayed responses of the students		
5	contributed to the deaths.		
6			
7	A survey of o	ther campuses conducted by Seton Hall subsequent to the fire revealed that 67	
8	percent of those polled said their campuses had at least one residence hall without a sprinkler system. 37 percent of the respondents reported that false alanns were a problem on their		
10	campuses.		
11	campuses.		
12 13	The situation at Cal Poly is very similar. The majority of the resident student housing have no sprinkler systems while the two newer resident student housing (Yosemite and Sierra Madre)		
14	have sprinkler systems only in public spaces.		
15	nave sprinkle	systems only in public spaces.	
16	As a result of the fire, New Jersey is considering legislation to require the retrofitting of		
17	sprinklers in all resident student housing. After a fire at Texas Tech in 1997, the Texas Fire		
18	Marshall issued a ruling requiring the installation of sprinklers in all resident student housing.		
19			
20	After the MGM Grand Hotel fire in Las Vegas, California passed a law requiring hotels and		
21	motels higher than 75 feet to have sprinklers installed. This required retrofitting existing		
22	structures as v	well as requiring all such new structures to include sprinkler systems.	
23	WHEDEAC		
24	WHEREAS,	There have been a number of fires at resident student housing without sprinkler	
<ul><li>25</li><li>26</li></ul>		systems, including the recent fatal fire at Seton Hall University; and	
27	WHEREAS,	The resident student housing at Cal Poly with the exception of Yosemite and	
28	WILKEAS,	Sierra Madre lack sprinkler systems; and	
29		Sierra Madre lack sprinkler systems, and	
30	WHEREAS,	The State of New Jersey has considered introducing legislation to require the	
31	WILKEINS,	retrofitting of sprinklers in all resident student housing; and	
32		recontains of sprinklers in an resident student nousing, and	
33	WHEREAS,	The Texas Fire Marshall has issued a ruling requiring the installation of sprinklers	

34 35		in all resident student housing in the State of Texas; and
36 37 38	WHEREAS,	California passed a law requiring hotels and motels higher than 75 feet to be retrofitted with sprinkler systems; and
39 40	WHEREAS,	The CSU has a fund specifically to address issues of safety; therefore, be it
41 42 43 44	RESOLVED:	That Cal Poly statewide academic senators urge the CSU to use its funds designated for safety to help fund the retrofitting of all CSU resident student housing with sprinkler systems; and be it further
45 46 47 48	RESOLVED:	That Cal Poly statewide academic senators urge the statewide Academic Senate to endorse the retrofitting of all CSU resident student housing with sprinkler systems; and be it further
49 50 51 52	RESOLVED:	That the Cal Poly Academic Senate urge both the CSU and our local legislators to seek one-time funding from the State for the retrofitting of all CSU resident student housing with sprinkler systems; and be it further
53 54 55 56 57	RESOLVED:	That a copy of this resolution be sent to Senator Diane Feinstein, Senator Barbara Boxer, and the members of the California Congressional Delegation urging the Federal Government to require and fund the retrofitting of all college residence halls in the United States; and be it further
58 59 60	RESOLVED:	That Cal Poly place a high priority on the retrofitting of all resident student housing with sprinkler systems; and be it further
61 62	RESOLVED:	That Cal Poly develop a plan and timeline to provide for the retrofitting of all resident student housing with sprinkler systems by October 31, 2000.

Proposed by: Academic Senate Executive

Committee

Date: February 22, 2000 Revised: February 24, 2000 Revised: February 29, 2000



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State of California

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### <u>CAL</u> <u>POLY</u>

#### **MEMORANDUM**

**ACADEMIC SENATE** 

SAN LUIS OBISPO CA 93407

To

: Myron Hood, Chair

Academic Senate

Date

: April 20, 2000

File No.

From

Warren J. Bake President

Copies

: P. Zingg, J. Gonzalez

Subject: RESPONSE TO ACADEMIC SENATE RESOLUTION (AS-

537-00/EC) ON FIRE

This acknowledges receipt of the subject Academic Senate resolution. While I appreciate the sincerity and concern with which the resolution was adopted and forwarded, the background factors merit clarification. First, the California laws requiring hotels and motels higher than 75' to have sprinklers installed, do riot apply in the case of residence halls. While no legal mandate exists, the spirit and intent of the resolution is well founded. It should benoted, however, that there exist no CSU funds specifically to address issues of fire life safety particularly as related to non-general fund facilities. The residence halls are part of the Dormitory Revenue Fund, a self-supporting fund within the CSU structure. The only current means to address capital improvements in the residence hall facilities are through an increase in license rates to residence hall occupants. Therefore, should we proceed to retrofit for sprinkler systems as suggested in the resolution, an increase in room license rates would be anticipated unless special funding were appropriated through the legislative process. There is some question as to whether or not a self-support fund could be the beneficiary of such resources.

'should also be noted that the comparison of the situation at Cal Poly to the situation at Seton Hall does not fully address (he fire life safety efforts in our residence halls. For example:

- The Housing and Residential Life Program at Cal Poly provides a significant level of control of hazards which
  could lead to fire, control of false fire alarms and educational programming preparing for disasters to enhance
  life-safety in the residence halls.
- Residence halls at Cal Poly are inspected annually by the assigned Deputy State Fire Marshal for hazards. and compliance with National Fire Protection Association guidelines as well as applicable State Fire Codes.
- Fire sensors and alarm systems in the Cal Poly residence halls are continually tested and have been upgraded (as well as increased in number and locations) several times over the past 15 years.
- Cal Poly residence halls are rated as Type I construction-non-combustible material.
- The City of San Luis Obispo Fire Department provides fire suppression for Cal Poly facilities and maintains
  the highest rating for structure fire suppression capability. Response times average 4-6 minutes from the
  nearest station with immediate additional support from additional city resources as well as mutual aid from
  County Fire (located near the campus).

Furthermore, the California Uniform Building Code did not require sprinklers in the existing Residence Halls at the time of construction (with the exception of the Yosemite and Sierra Madre facilities where they were required in the lounges and mechanical areas, respectively); and no California law or regulation requires retrofitting of college or university residence halls with fire sprinklers either in rooms or hallways or common areas.

All the above factors considered, it is my understanding that federal legislation has been introduced to provide matching funds for colleges and universities to retrofit fire sprinklers in residence halls, and there is some discussion of similar state legislation being introduced.

In the meantime, until resources can be identified to cover any retrofitting costs, the University will continue to aggressively pursue efforts to minimize risk to fire life safety in our residence halls.