

**ACADEMIC SENATE  
of  
CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY  
San Luis Obispo, CA**

**AS-693-09**

**RESOLUTION ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM**

- 1 WHEREAS, Consistent with constitutional protections and long-standing American  
2 Association of University Professors (AAUP) principles, Cal Poly is obligated to  
3 support the academic freedom of its faculty and the integrity of its educational  
4 programs; and  
5
- 6 WHEREAS, Faculty<sup>1</sup> must have “freedom to conduct research, teach, and publish, subject to  
7 the norms and standards of scholarly inquiry, without interference or penalty,  
8 wherever the search for truth and understanding may lead”<sup>2</sup>; and  
9
- 10 WHEREAS, A “Report of the Board of Trustees Ad Hoc Committee on Governance,  
11 Collegiality, and Responsibility in the California State University” (adopted by  
12 the CSU Board of Trustees in September 1985) states in paragraph three:  
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14                   Collegial governance assigns primary responsibility to the faculty  
15 for the educational functions of the institution in accordance with  
16 basic policy as determined by the Board of Trustees. This includes  
17 admission and degree requirements, the curriculum and methods of  
18 teaching, academic and professional standards, and the conduct of  
19 creative and scholarly activities,  
20 [http://www.calstate.edu/acadaff/System\\_Strategic\\_Planning/docs/  
21 Rpt2BOT-CollegialityResponsibility.pdf](http://www.calstate.edu/acadaff/System_Strategic_Planning/docs/Rpt2BOT-CollegialityResponsibility.pdf) ; and  
22
- 23 WHEREAS, The statewide Academic Senate (ASCSU) “encourages the local campus senates  
24 to develop or review campus policies for the protection of freedom of inquiry,  
25 research, expression, and teaching both inside the classroom and beyond”  
26 (Academic Freedom and Free Speech Rights, AS-2649-04/FA, March 11 & 12  
27 2004),  
28 <http://www.calstate.edu/AcadSen/Records/Resolutions/2003-2004/2649.shtml> ;  
29 and  
30
- 31 WHEREAS, President Baker, in his response to Academic Senate Resolution AS-621-04/MF  
32 “Resolution on Academic Freedom,” reaffirmed the University’s commitment to  
33 the “principles of academic freedom,”  
34 <http://www.calpoly.edu/~acadsen/Resolutions/2003-2004/AS-621-04-MF.pdf> ;  
35 and

36 WHEREAS, In recent years, there have been attempts to quell discussion of contentious issues  
37 under the guise of a need for a “balanced” approach to controversial issues; and  
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39 WHEREAS, Cal Poly has witnessed attempts by political organizations and citizen groups to  
40 bring pressure to bear on our University to circumvent the domain of faculty in  
41 determining academic offerings and/or content; and  
42

43 WHEREAS, The ASCSU recommends that campus senates incorporate into their policies on  
44 academic freedom the 1940 AAUP *Statement on Academic Freedom and Tenure*  
45 with the *1970 Interpretive Notes* (per AS-2661-04/FA, March 6-7, 2004,  
46 “Endorsing the AAUP Statement on Principles on Academic Freedom and  
47 Tenure”),  
48 <http://www.calstate.edu/AcadSen/Records/Resolutions/2003-2004/2661.shtml> ;  
49 and  
50

51 WHEREAS, Cal Poly’s Statement on Academic Freedom has not been updated since 1991,  
52 [http://www.academicprograms.calpoly.edu/academicpolicies/Academic-](http://www.academicprograms.calpoly.edu/academicpolicies/Academic-freedom.htm)  
53 [freedom.htm](http://www.academicprograms.calpoly.edu/academicpolicies/Academic-freedom.htm) ; therefore be it  
54

55 RESOLVED: That the Cal Poly Academic Senate reaffirm its commitment to the principles of  
56 Academic Freedom as contained in the 1940 American Association of University  
57 Professors (AAUP) *Statement on Academic Freedom and Tenure* with the *1970*  
58 *Interpretive Notes*,  
59 <http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/policydocs/contents/1940statement.htm> ) ;  
60 and be it further  
61

62 RESOLVED: That the Cal Poly Academic Senate object to and reject any attempts to  
63 circumvent the domain of faculty in determining academic offerings and/or  
64 content; and be it further  
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66 RESOLVED: That Cal Poly’s Statement on Academic Freedom be expanded to include the  
67 nationally recognized definition of academic freedom as attached.  
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71 <sup>1</sup> The term “Faculty” to include instructional faculty, researchers, librarians, and counselors.

72 <sup>2</sup> American Federation of Teachers (2007). *Academic freedom in the 21<sup>st</sup> century college and university:*  
73 *academic freedom for all faculty and instructional staff, the AFT statement on academic freedom.* Washington,  
74 DC: American Federation of Teachers. Item no. 36-0585, [www.aft.org](http://www.aft.org).  
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77 Proposed by: Academic Senate Faculty Affairs Committee

78 Date: May 11 2009

79 Revised: May 20 2009

80 Revised: May 26 2009

## STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM

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83  
84 Cal Poly recognizes and supports the principle of academic freedom, by which each instructional  
85 faculty member, researcher, librarian and counselor has the right to teach, to conduct research,  
86 and to publish material relevant to that faculty member's discipline, even when such material is  
87 controversial.

88 The University also guarantees to its faculty the same rights shared by all citizens which include:

- 89     • the right to free expression,  
90     • the right to assemble, and  
91     • the right to criticize and seek revision of the institution's regulations.

92 At the same time, the faculty should recognize an equally binding obligation to perform their  
93 academic duties responsibly and to comply with the internal regulations of the university.

94 Each faculty member is expected to recognize the right of free expression of other members of  
95 the University community; intolerance and personal abuse are unacceptable.

96 Faculty shall not claim to be representing the University unless authorized to do so.

97 Cal Poly endorses the nationally recognized definition of academic freedom from the American  
98 Association of University Professors (AAUP): The 1940 *Statement of Principles on Academic*  
99 *Freedom and Tenure with 1970 Interpretative Notes, as follows:*

### Academic Freedom

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103 (a) Teachers<sup>1</sup> are entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of results,  
104 subject to the adequate performance of their other academic duties; but research,  
105 for pecuniary return, should be based upon an understanding with the authorities  
106 of the institution.  
107  
108 (b) Teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but  
109 they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial subject  
110 matter which has no relation to the subject.<sup>2</sup> Limitations of academic freedom  
111 because of religious or other aims of the institution should be clearly stated in  
112 writing at the time of appointment.  
113  
114 (c) College and university teachers are citizens, members of a learned profession, and  
115 officers of an educational institution. When they speak or write as citizens, they  
116 should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position  
117 in the community imposes special obligations. As scholars and educational  
118 officers, they should remember that the public may judge their profession and  
119 institution by their utterances. Hence, they should at all times be accurate, should

120 exercise appropriate restraints, should show respect for the opinions of others, and  
121 should make every effort to indicate they are not speaking for the institution.

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124 <sup>1</sup> The footnote from the 1940 Statement states: “The word ‘teacher’ as used in this document is understood to  
125 include the investigator who is attached to an academic institution without teaching duties.” Reference:  
126 AAUP: The 1940 *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure with 1970 Interpretative*  
127 *Notes*, adopted by the Council of the American Association of University Professors in April 1970 and  
128 endorsed by the Fifty-sixth Annual Meeting as Association policy,  
129 <http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/policydocs/contents/1940statement.htm>


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132 <sup>2</sup> The footnote from the 1970 Interpretative Notes on the AAUP Statement reads: “The intent of this  
133 statement is not to discourage what is ‘controversial.’ Controversy is at the heart of free academic inquiry  
134 which the entire statement is designed to focus. The passage serves to underscore the need for teachers to  
avoid persistently intruding material which has no relation to the subject.”

State of California  
**Memorandum**

To: John Soares  
Chair, Academic Senate

Date: June 22, 2009

From:   
Warren J. Baker  
President

Copies: R. Fernflores  
R. Koob  
D. Conn

Subject: Response to Academic Senate Resolution AS-693-09  
Resolution on Academic Freedom

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This is to formally acknowledge receipt and approval of the above-referenced Academic Senate Resolution.