

CAL POLY ~~REPORT~~ RETORT

California Polytechnic State University
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407

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Survey Stats:

How regularly do you read the *Cal Poly Report*?

- Often: 89%
- Sometimes: 11%
- Never: less than 1%

Most people skim headlines and read only a few articles.

On average, how many different articles do you read in each issue?

- 0 articles: less than 1%
- 1-2 articles: 30%
- 3-4 articles: 40%
- 4+ articles: 30%

Do you read "Dateline," which lists campus events?

- Often: 42%
- Sometimes: 49%
- Never: 9%

How often do you read or find useful the "Position Vacancies" section?

- Often: 47%
- Sometimes: 35%
- Never: 18%

Do you find the information in the newsletter slanted too much toward...

- Faculty: 12%
- Staff: 1%
- Administration: 10%
- Fairly balanced: 77%

What do you think of the "tone" of the publication?

- Too formal: 9%
- Too "folksy": 1%
- About right: 90%

Should the *Report* "promote" the university or try to be as neutral as possible?

- Should promote: 33%
- Should be neutral: 67%

Do you see too much coverage of fund-raising activities?

- Too much: 14%
- Too little: 7%
- About right: 79%

(over)

You spoke. We listened.

Report content, schedule changing in response to survey

This special report by the Communications Office carries the results of the *Cal Poly Report* survey we sent out during spring quarter. We received 501 responses. Thanks for sending us your thoughts.

We are also using this *Retort* to respond to some of your comments.

First, so we're all on the same page, so to speak, we'd like to point out that the purpose of the *Cal Poly Report* is to report concisely on campus news and issues that might be important to employees universitywide. It is written for that campuswide audience. The *Report* also gives staff and faculty members a place to exchange pertinent information and opinions.

You might have noticed that the publication has a new look, which is just one of the changes we plan to make in the coming months. For instance,

Some like it hot: Good news for those who want to hear more about complex and even controversial campus issues. We have begun a regular – not necessarily weekly – column that addresses some of the stickier matters we often hear about. The first such column appeared Sept. 19 and addressed event parking fees. We will try to give you the full story, not just one side. Look for the "Hot Topic of the Week" in coming issues on such topics as the parking garage, enrollment trends, and the Performing Arts Center.

'Piece of Mind:' Feel like venting? As mentioned in earlier editions of the *Cal Poly Report*, we have started a column that gives you a chance to speak your mind, express your opinion, or provide information about university matters.

Questions and comments are invited. Complaints or compliments are also welcome. To make the column a success, though, you need to tell us what's on your mind. Be responsible for what you write, but don't be shy. Work with us, people.

Some things never change: The majority has spoken. We will keep the name *Cal Poly Report*.

The sooner the better: A number of you say you'd like to receive the *Cal Poly Report* earlier in the week so that if something is happening on campus over the weekend, you can plan accordingly. We hope to move to a Wednesday distribution sometime during fall quarter. That will, of course, change deadlines somewhat. We'll keep you informed.

Why the long wait? A number of you ask why so much time is needed between copy deadline (Friday at 1 pm) and the publication date (the following Friday). First, we rewrite a majority of the articles. (To those who express concern about that, please see the next item.) Then we do the page layout and design, which takes most of Friday afternoon. The editors are then given the copy to proofread – usually late Friday afternoon or early Monday morning. The copy is corrected, pasted up and sent to Reprographics Tuesday morning. This gives Reprographics time to print the *Report* and the Mail Center time to distribute it. When we move to a Wednesday distribution, we'll try to shorten the lead time to Thursday at 10 am for the following Wednesday's edition.

Uh, uh uh! Don't touch that copy: Some of you have been unhappy with our rewriting your copy. We rewrite copy mainly to conform to journalistic style in order to give the *Report* a direct, consistent, easy-to-read style. This sometimes means articles are shortened or "tightened up," "fluff" or anything not essential to the story is removed, and the "news" is moved to the top of the article. We also rewrite material to give the *Cal Poly Report* a friendlier, less bureaucratic tone. If an article is rewritten and is inaccurate, please let us know. Believe it or not, we do strive for accuracy above all. If you submit highly technical copy and would like to see how it will appear, please allow an extra day, and we'll be happy to e-mail or fax the revised text to you. When you do submit copy, remember, the news comes first, and be sure to include the who, what, where and when. (The why is often not essential to the story.) And please remember that the article will be read by a wide audience, and writing in plain, simple English is the best way to reach everyone.

The black hole: Some say they have sent us copy and it simply vanished – poof! – never to be published or seen again. We have never intentionally left out any submissions. To safeguard against this, after you've faxed, e-mailed or mailed us copy, call ext. 6-1511 to be sure we have received it. And if you send us copy and you don't see it published in the

Report, tell us. Perhaps we had to hold the article for a future issue because of space limitations. Or maybe it did fall into a black hole.

Getting to know you: Many of you express a desire to see photos and articles about campus people. Because we think the *Report* should contain information of a campuswide nature, we plan to run occasional articles on employees whose jobs tend to have a universitywide impact or who've done something we think you'd be interested in. We will try to include photos, when appropriate; however, this probably won't be a regular feature.

Give us some Credit, please: To those of you who don't like *The Credit Report* and miss seeing the Who, What, Where, When section in the *Cal Poly Report*: We had some compelling reasons for making the change. We were faced with increasing copy for the *Cal Poly Report* because of more programs, events, speakers and such. The Who, What, Where, When section was only included when space allowed. Items sent in were published on a first-come basis, and we often ended up holding items until the end of a quarter. When people asked us what date an item would appear, we didn't have an answer. When someone would ask us in which issue a particular item ran, we had a difficult time locating the item. *The Credit Report* makes the

scheduling predictable and reliable and allows for easy reference.

Take this job and ... pub(lish) it: We called on Mike Suess, director of faculty affairs to answer the question: "Why do we have to publish all those position vacancies?" He replies: "The *Cal Poly Report* is the house organ for the university. All Cal Poly vacancies, as required by the Affirmative Action plan, are listed. We have relied on the evidence of such publicized vacancies for a number of grievances and lawsuits. The liability issue should be sufficient in and of itself to continue to list these positions." So, okay.

By the way: Yes, we are on the Web. From Cal Poly's home page, click on "What's New(s)," and then on "Publications." Yes, you can e-mail your items. Send them to polynews@polymail. If you send it with a Word attachment, it needs to be for Windows (not for Macs).

As is the case in most endeavors, a group effort can go a long way toward improving a product. Please tell us about news of a campuswide nature in your area or department. Let us help publicize your events. Help us help you.

Finally, only one individual wrote that our entire operation was a waste of time. Perhaps that person might want to consider attending the next seminar on "Overcoming Negativity in the Workplace."

Oh, and about humor, or lack thereof, in the *Report* ...

... Survey Stats:

Have you accessed the *Cal Poly Report* via the Cal Poly Home Page on the Web?

Often: less than 1% Sometimes: 8% Never: 91%

Would you read longer, "feature" stories on campus activities or personalities?

Activities, Yes: 2% Personalities, Yes: 1% Either: 44% Neither: 53%

Would you like to see short biographies of faculty/staff/administrators from time to time?

Yes: 67% No: 33% With a photo: Yes: 61%