

Adopted: February 11, 2020

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

**AS-886-20**

**RESOLUTION ON UNIVERSITY FACULTY PERSONNEL POLICIES  
SUBCHAPTER 12.2: OFFICE HOURS**

**Impact on Existing Policy: The policy enacted by this resolution supersedes CAM 370.2, established by AS-91-80. Further details about its impact on existing policy is described in the attached report. <sup>i</sup>**

- 1 WHEREAS, Cal Poly’s office hour policy was last updated in 1980; and  
2  
3 WHEREAS, Office hours in the form of regularly scheduled, direct, and immediate  
4 interaction with students remains integral to Cal Poly’s instructional  
5 mission; and  
6  
7 WHEREAS, Improvements in online communication with students has reduced  
8 some of the need for office hours; and  
9  
10 WHEREAS, Online and hybrid forms of course delivery especially warrant the use  
11 of synchronous online modes of office hours; and  
12  
13 WHEREAS, Online directories of office hours and teaching schedules facilitate the  
14 communication of office hour availability to students and the rest of  
15 the university community; and  
16  
17 WHEREAS, Office hour policies should be flexible to accommodate for varying  
18 needs of instructors and differences in the ways faculty interact with  
19 students in various instructional settings across the university;  
20 therefore be it  
21  
22 RESOLVED: The office hour policy contained in the attached report “Proposed  
23 Subchapter of University Faculty Personnel Policies Document:  
24 SUBCHAPTER 12.2: Office Hours” be established as Subchapter 12.2:  
25 Office Hours of UFPP, and be it further  
26

- 27 RESOLVED: Colleges revise chapter 12 of their personnel policy documents by Fall  
28 2020 to include office hours suited to the needs of their faculty and  
29 the students they serve, and be it further  
30
- 31 RESOLVED: Colleges and departments seek guidance from the Center for Teaching  
32 and Learning (CTLT) about best practices for the holding of online  
33 office hours, and be it further  
34
- 35 RESOLVED: Cal Poly establish a readily accessible online directory allowing the  
36 university community to access faculty teaching and office hour  
37 schedules.

Proposed by: Academic Senate Faculty Affairs Committee  
Date: November 5, 2019

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**<sup>i</sup> (1) Describe how this resolution impacts existing policy on educational matters that affect the faculty. Examples include curricula, academic personnel policies, and academic standards.  
(2) Indicate if this resolution supersedes or rescinds current resolutions.  
(3) If there is no impact on existing policy, please indicate NONE.**

**Proposed Subchapter of University Faculty Personnel Policies Document:  
SUBCHAPTER 12.2: Office Hours**

The Academic Senate Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC) is a standing Senate committee with representation from each college, the library and professional consultative services, Academic Affairs, and a student representative. FAC employs a streamlined process for Academic Senate approval of personnel policies which specifies the nature of consultation with faculty affected by proposed changes and provides a clear accounting of which policy documents have been superseded by the proposed change. FAC has used this process to construct a new University Faculty Personnel Policies (UFPP) document and is now employing the same process to revise or create new personnel policies and place them in UFPP on an as-needed basis.

In Spring 2016 FAC recommended to the Academic Senate Executive Committee that a task force be formed to draft a new university office hour policy. In Spring 2018 the office hour task force concluded its work by proposing to the Academic Senate a resolution on office hour policies. The Academic Senate voted against that resolution. FAC agreed to take on the task of drafting a new office hour policy during AY 2018-19 for inclusion in UFPP. This proposed new office hour policy underwent extensive consultative review in Spring and Fall 2019, including meetings with the following groups:

- ASI Board of Directors
- Associate Deans Council
- Provost's Leadership Council

College deans distributed draft policy text to their department chairs and heads and to interested faculty. FAC received a great deal of feedback from all these affected parties and significantly revised the policy into the form now proposed for Senate consideration.

The rest of this document addresses all the aspects of a personnel policy revision that the FAC requires of itself when it proposes such changes to the Senate:

- Summary of the proposed policy
- Account of impact on existing policy, including the existing policy text
- How the policy would be implemented
- The text of the new policy

**Summary of subchapter 12.2: Office Hours**

The proposed office hour policy comprises a subchapter of UFPP Chapter 12: Workload.

The proposed office hour policy includes a statement of the contribution office hours make to the educational mission of Cal Poly. It defines what an office hour is, specifies minimum office hours for instructional faculty, and scales office hours to instructional assignments. It requires colleges to define their own more specific office hour policies and to publish them in their personnel policy documents. The policy allows for additional required scheduled office hours to be connected to various advising functions, provides guidance about how to coordinate the mode of office hours with the mode of instruction, and covers the notification of the scheduling of office hours and of changes or cancellation

**Proposed Subchapter of University Faculty Personnel Policies Document:  
SUBCHAPTER 12.2: Office Hours**

of office hours. The policy also provides provisions for granting ad hoc exceptions and for considering the role of exceptions in shaping further revisions to office hour policies.

**Impact on Existing Policy**

Subchapter 12.2 supersedes any and all other existing university, college, and department office hour policies that are *inconsistent* with the proposed university policy. *Any subordinate policy consistent with the minimal provisions of the new office hour policy may remain in effect until that faculty unit decides to revise it.*

The Collective Bargaining Agreement includes among the professional responsibilities of faculty “maintaining office hours, and/or opportunities for student consultation connected to online teaching” (CBA 20.1b). Further policy about office hours exists at the campus level.

The current university office hour policy at Cal Poly superseded a prior and rather simple office hour policy that “...each faculty member must schedule and conduct at least one office hour each day (Monday through Friday) for consultation with students...” Campus Administrative Manual (CAM) section 370.2. In 1980 the Academic Senate revised CAM 370.2 into the current office hour policy:

“In addition to scheduled classes, each full-time faculty member must schedule and conduct at least five (5) office hours each week (not more than two hours each day) for consultation with students. The faculty members will post their office hours outside their office doors. This section does not preclude pre-arranged appointments with students. Part-time faculty and full-time faculty with reduced teaching loads will have office hours proportional to their assignments.”

CAM is no longer the governing policy document at Cal Poly. Much of CAM has been revised into provisions of Campus Administrative Policies (CAP) or distributed to a variety of other repositories of policy around campus. The provisions on faculty workload are not in CAP but instead are on the Academic Personnel website, which summarizes the office hour policy on its Working Conditions webpage as follows:

“Full-time faculty members conduct at least five office hours each week for student consultation. Part-time and full-time faculty with reduced teaching loads schedule office hours in proportion to their assignments.”

This statement is located here:

<https://academic-personnel.calpoly.edu/content/handbook/workingconditions>

Some colleges and departments include the university office hour policy in their policy documents. For instance, The Architecture Department includes the following in its list of faculty responsibilities: “[m]aintain a minimum of 5 scheduled office hours per week in a designated faculty office.”

This statement about office hours is located here:

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<https://architecture.calpoly.edu/faculty/administration/workload>

The current university office hour policy predates the proliferation of online communication by many years. Online communication has relieved some of the need for in-person contact in office hours. The Academic Senate offers this interpretation of office hours in its remarks on the university office hour policy on its FAQ webpage after quoting the original CAM office hour policy:

**“Can office hours be held online?** Many faculty will spend time responding to students email outside of office hours. The University required office hours must be scheduled so students will have access to faculty at specific scheduled times either at a scheduled location or to be held virtually at the scheduled time.”

This Academic Senate statement about office hours is located here:

<https://academicsenate.calpoly.edu/content/faq-office-hours>

The CLA policy on office hours, distributed annually to its faculty by email, explicitly includes online communication as a basis for reducing the total number of scheduled office hours:

**“OFFICE HOURS:** Pursuant to university policy (CAM 370.2), all Cal Poly faculty are expected to conduct at least five office hours each week for student consultation. For faculty with reduced teaching schedules and part time faculty, the five hours are reduced in proportion thereof with no less than one face-to-face office hour per week. Faculty have the option of offering 4 hours per week of face-to-face office hours plus 1 hour per week of alternative, but demonstrable, contact with students, such as email or other on-line communication. No prior approval is required, but the format of the alternative hour should be stated in the faculty information about office hours that is given to students, and the contact method must be demonstrable should it ever be necessary to do so. Faculty still have the option of holding 5 hours per week of face-to-face office hours. For full-time faculty, the 4-5 hours of face-to-face office hours must be spread over at least three days. In accordance with this policy, faculty do have a responsibility to respond to student emails, even if it is to let students know about regularly scheduled office hours and ways to schedule an alternate appointment.” (CLA Faculty Information Memo 9/13/2018)

### **Implementation**

*The new office hour policy would go into effect no sooner than the term following its enactment by the Academic Senate and ratification by the President. The Academic Senate may propose a later date for enactment, but that should not be later than the following Fall term after ratification by the President.*

Colleges need to formulate office hour policies. Any college with formulated and published office hour policies must consider whether their office hour policies are inconsistent with the new university policy. Any inconsistency with university policy must be resolved in their new office hour policy. College level office hour policies would be in Chapter 12 of the college personnel policy documents,

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and would be subject to approval the same way that any personnel policy is approved as per UFPP 1.5.5 and 1.5.6.

Current subordinate office hour policies that are roughly in line with the long-standing university policy from CAM 370.2 (such as those in ARCH and CLA) may remain consistent with the new office hour policy. For instance, the subordinate policy from ARCH quoted above requiring five office hours for all faculty would be consistent with a university policy requiring a minimum of less than five because the university policy does not specify a maximum. The subordinate policy from CLA quoted above would also be consistent with the new university policy in its allowance of online modes of office hours even in cases where one's entire instructional assignment is in normal classroom settings, since it also requires at least as many in-person office hours as the university requires.

**What follows is the proposed text of subchapter 12.2...**

**12.2. Office Hours**

- 12.2.1. [CITATION OF FOUNDATIONAL SENATE ACTION] This policy supersedes the previous university policy on office hours originally in CAM 370.2.
- 12.2.2. Cal Poly’s Educational Mission: “Cal Poly is committed to excellence in teaching and learning. In all disciplines, we seek to provide a student-centered, learner-focused education, facilitated by a low student-teacher ratio in classes conducted primarily by full-time, regular faculty. The cornerstone of our educational philosophy is our commitment to Learn by Doing whereby classroom instruction is complemented by practical, hands-on learning in the laboratory, the studio, and the field.” (Cal Poly Catalog)
- 12.2.3. Each faculty member must schedule and conduct office hours each week for consultation with students. One-on-one, direct, personal engagement between students and their instructors and faculty advisors in regularly scheduled office hours is a vital means of contributing to the student-centered mission of Cal Poly.
- 12.2.4. Asynchronous communication (e.g. email) with students and ad hoc appointments to meet with students are expected normal instructional duties distinct from scheduled office hours.
- 12.2.5. An office hour is one credit hour (i.e. 50 minutes) of regularly scheduled time for faculty to be available to meet in a regularly scheduled location.
- 12.2.6. Faculty with instructional assignments shall hold scheduled office hours scaled to their instructional assignments. Scheduled office hours should be held during the days and times when classes are normally scheduled, distributed across days and at times suited to the needs of students. During final exam week office hours may be rescheduled as necessary, and should be suited to the needs of the students served in the instructional assignment.
- 12.2.7. Colleges that assign duties warranting the holding of office hours shall include office hour policies in their personnel policies documents.

**12.2.8. Scheduled instructional office hours**

- 12.2.8.1. Minimum weekly office hour scheduling shall be scaled to instructional assignments as follows:

<i>Instructional WTU</i>	<i>Lecturer</i>	<i>Tenure-Line</i>
<i>&gt; 0 up to and including 4</i>	<i>1 office hour</i>	<i>2 office hours</i>
<i>&gt; 4 up to and including 8</i>	<i>2 office hours</i>	<i>3 office hours</i>
<i>&gt; 8 up to and including 12</i>	<i>3 office hours</i>	<i>4 office hours</i>
<i>&gt; 12</i>	<i>4 office hours</i>	

- 12.2.8.2. Faculty receiving assigned time for teaching large format classes shall schedule office hours according to the total WTU for the instructional assignment and assigned time related to that course.
- 12.2.8.3. Tenure-line faculty whose instructional assignments have been reduced to zero WTU but who are involved in research or other projects involving supervision of students shall hold a minimum of one regularly scheduled in-person office hour.
- 12.2.8.4. If colleges or departments have any further provisions about the scheduling of office hours, those provisions shall be defined in their personnel policy document.

**12.2.9. Scheduled advising office hours**

- 12.2.9.1. Assigned time for advising duties may have an amount of office hours defined as part of the advising function. Any advising office hours attached to assigned time shall be determined by the instructional unit that issues the assigned time and

specified in the assignment. Office hours for advising duties earning assigned time contribute to the total office hour obligation of the faculty member.

- 12.2.9.2. Department chair and head responsibilities shall include the requirements for the scheduling of advising office hours required for their assignment. Colleges shall determine the minimum office hours required for department chairs and heads.

**12.2.10. Mode of office hours**

- 12.2.10.1. Scheduled office hours should be congruent with the mode of engagement with students for the instructional or advising function that requires the scheduling of the office hours.
- 12.2.10.2. For normal classroom instruction, scheduled office hours should be held in-person in the faculty member's office. Faculty with more than one scheduled office hour may hold up to one office hour conducted in a synchronous online mode suited to the nature of the engagement with the affected students.
- 12.2.10.3. For online courses, scheduled office hours should be conducted in a synchronous online mode suited to the nature of the engagement with the enrolled students.
- 12.2.10.4. Hybrid courses may warrant an appropriate combination of in-person and synchronous online office hours.
- 12.2.10.5. Colleges and departments shall specify in their office hour policies any general allowances or requirements for alternate locations or synchronous online modes of conducting office hours.

**12.2.11. Notification**

- 12.2.11.1. Office hours shall be posted by the beginning of the second week of instruction in faculty listings on department websites. Colleges and instructional units can determine additional ways for posting office hours that conspicuously and conveniently inform the university community of when and where office hours shall be conducted, such as common boards at department offices, on placards near faculty offices, or other online directories.
- 12.2.11.2. If the university adopts a standard online directory generally accessible to the university community that is capable of presenting faculty schedules, then office hours should be posted in such an online directory.
- 12.2.11.3. Faculty should notify enrolled students and department administrators and administrative support staff of any need to cancel office hours in a timely manner appropriate to the needs of the students served by those office hours.

**12.2.12. Exceptions**

- 12.2.12.1. Exceptions to the policies about the scheduling of instructional and advising office hours should coordinate the needs of the instructor and the students given the nature of the instructional or advising assignment.
- 12.2.12.2. Exceptions require department chair/head and college dean approval.
- 12.2.12.3. Exceptions should be temporary and specific.
- 12.2.12.4. Exceptions that extend beyond a specific instructor's temporary needs should be treated as a basis for revisiting the college or department office hour policies.
- 12.2.12.5. Colleges and departments with standing needs that deviate from university policy should treat those needs as a basis for asking the Academic Senate Faculty Affairs Committee to revisit university level office hour policies.





OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

MEMORANDUM

**To:** Dustin Stegner  
Chair, Academic Senate

**From:** Jeffery D. Armstrong  
President

**Date:** February 20, 2020

**Copies:** Mary Pedersen  
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Andy Thulin  
Christine Theodoropoulos  
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Philip Williams  
Kathryn Rummell  
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Patrick O'Sullivan

**Subject:** Response to AS-886-20 Resolution on University Faculty Personnel Policies  
Subchapter 12.2: Office Hours

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I am pleased to endorse the above-entitled Academic Senate resolution with the caveat that efforts to identify a mechanism to schedule and display office hours for all faculty on campus need to transpire. This yet to be identified mechanism may require a third party software solution or support for the development of a custom solution which would require additional time and funding to implement.

Colleges as well as the library are encouraged to revise their personnel policy documents to align with Subchapter 12.2 of the University Faculty Personnel Policies (UFPP) as outlined in this resolution and supporting documentation.

Please express my appreciation to the Academic Senate members and the Academic Senate Faculty Affairs Committee for their attention to this important curricular matter.