

**CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**San Luis Obispo, California 93407**  
**ACADEMIC SENATE**

**Minutes of the**  
**Academic Senate Meeting**  
**Tuesday, March 10, 2015**  
**UU 220, 3:10 to 5:00pm**

- I. Minutes: none.
- II. Communication(s) and Announcement(s): none.
- III. Reports:
- A. **Academic Senate Chair (Laver):** Laver gave an explanation on the meaning of abstentions during meetings according to Robert's Rules of Order.  
Link to presentation: [http://content-calpoly-edu.s3.amazonaws.com/academicssenate/1/presentations/2014-2015/Abstentions\\_presentation.pdf](http://content-calpoly-edu.s3.amazonaws.com/academicssenate/1/presentations/2014-2015/Abstentions_presentation.pdf)
  - B. **President's Office (Kinsley):** Cindy Villa of University of Texas, El Paso will be joining Cal Poly as the new Vice President for Administration and Finance beginning on August 1, 2015.
  - C. **Provost:** none.
  - D. **Vice President for Student Affairs:** none.
  - E. **Statewide Senate:** none.
  - E. **CFA Campus President (Archer):** The CFA sent out the "Race to the Bottom" paper that analyzes information regarding salaries in the CSU and the effect it has on faculty and students.
  - F. **ASI Representative:** none.
- IV. Consent Agenda:
- The following were approved by consensus: (1) Proposal to decouple the General Engineering Program from the Biomedical Engineering Department and (2) approval of ARCE 476 - Architectural Engineering Building Systems.
- V. Business Item(s):
- A. **Election of officers for 2015-2016:** The following were elected as officers of the Academic Senate by acclamation: Gary Laver (Psychology and Child Development) - Chair & Kris Jankovitz (Kinesiology) - Vice Chair.
  - B. **Resolution on Changes to the Bylaws of the Academic Senate:** Gary Laver, Academic Senate Chair, presented a resolution that updates the Bylaws of the Academic Senate to follow current practices. This item will return as a second reading at the next Academic Senate meeting.
  - C. **Resolution on Information Request About Contract Ratification Votes:** Manzar Foroohar, Statewide Senator, introduced a resolution to request information from CFA regarding votes on the ratification of the contract. This item will return as a second reading at the next Academic Senate meeting.
  - D. **Resolution on Changes in Academic Senate Grants Review Committee Membership and Responsibilities:** Jeanine Scaramozzino, chair of Grants Review Committee, presented a resolution that brings the Grants Review Committee's Membership and Responsibilities into compliance with

the Chancellor's Office. This item will return as a second reading at the next Academic Senate meeting.

- E. **Resolution on Approving Assessment Process for Courses Meeting Sustainability Learning Objectives:** David Braun, chair of the Sustainability Committee, presented a resolution that charges the Sustainability Committee with developing a process to vet sustainability courses for SUSCAT. This item will return as a second reading at the next Academic Senate meeting.
- F. **Resolution on Proposed New Degree Program: Bachelor of Science in Marine Sciences:** Nikki Adams, Biological Sciences Department, presented a resolution that proposes a Bachelor of Science in Marine Sciences as a new degree program. M/S/P to move the resolution to a second reading.  
M/S/P to approve the Resolution on Proposed New Degree Program: Bachelor of Science in Marine Sciences.

VI. Discussion Item(s):

The proposal on making NR 264: Natural Resources Economics count as GE D2 was discussed. Brenda Helmbrecht, chair of the General Education Governance Board, and Rich Thompson, Interim Head of NRES, spoke on behalf of their respective sides of the proposal. The Academic Senate Curriculum Appeals Committee will discuss the information provided and will submit a decision to approve, disapprove, or return the items to committee.

VII. Adjournment: 5:00 pm

Submitted by,



Alex Ye  
Academic Senate Student Assistant

## ABSTENTIONS: A PRIMER

- ☞ An abstention is not a vote — it is a refusal to vote.
- ☞ In common situations (e.g., where a majority or two thirds *of the vote cast* is required), abstentions have no effect on the vote.

### EXAMPLE:

All 50 members are present for a meeting, but 47 abstain from voting on a motion. The motion will pass with 2 ayes and 1 no.

## ABSTENTIONS: A PRIMER

- ☞ However, an abstention will have the same effect as a no vote if the vote required is a majority of or two thirds of...
  - ◆ the members present
  - ◆ or the entire membership.

### EXAMPLE:

A motion to rescind an action and expunge it from the minutes requires a majority of the entire membership.

- ☞ Even in these situations, abstentions are not votes.

## ABSTENTIONS: A PRIMER

☞ *Robert's Rules* says,

“The chair should not call for abstentions in taking a vote, since the number of members who respond to such a call is meaningless.”

☞ The chair, however, finds meaning in calling for abstentions; they may convey a message.

☞ Furthermore, the Academic Senate has a custom of calling for abstentions.

## ABSTENTIONS: A PRIMER

- ☞ *Robert's Rules* sanctions customs that do not,  
“...conflict with the parliamentary authority  
or any written rule...”
- ☞ Consequently, with the Senate's blessing,  
the chair will continue to call for abstentions.