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MEDIA ADVISORY - Cal Poly President's Statement on Quarters/Semesters

To: Assignment editors and reporters

What: Statement to campus from Cal Poly President Jeffrey D. Armstrong, regarding quarters vs. semesters

When: March 11, 2013

More details: Armstrong appointed a task force in September to investigate what would be involved in switching Cal Poly to a semester-based academic calendar from its current quarter-based system. Armstrong sent the letter below to the campus community today, providing an update on his discussions with CSU Chancellor Timothy P. White and presidents of other CSU campuses currently on quarter calendars.

Dear Cal Poly Community:

Over the past several weeks, I have had several thoughtful conversations with Chancellor White and the other five CSU presidents whose campuses are now on quarters. In those conversations, I presented the Semester Review Task Force report and recommended that Cal Poly not convert to semesters at this time.

As you would expect, the presidents expressed a wide range of views about the positives and negatives of both quarters and semesters, with all of us recognizing that it has been the CSU's strong desire for several years to have the entire system on a common calendar. Following discussion, there was a clear understanding by Chancellor White and all presidents that the benefits of a common calendar outweigh individual campus preferences.

The Chancellor is finishing his consultations with the various campuses, as well as with the statewide Academic Senate, and is moving toward a decision that the quarter-based campuses should convert to semesters in phases. In consideration of the different perspectives on this matter – including the Cal Poly Semester Review Task Force report and the supporting votes by the Academic Senate, ASI Board of Directors, and the students' campuswide referendum – Cal Poly would not convert to semesters until the other campuses have gone forward. If all goes as expected, Cal Poly would begin the process of converting to semesters by the end of the decade.

At the CSU systemwide level, this phased approach will enable the CSU to defray 75 percent of each campus's expected reasonable costs associated with converting to semesters.

This gradual phasing in will give Cal Poly plenty of lead time to identify and capture what is best about quarters and retain those elements in the new calendar. Also, without the urgency of an immediate conversion to semesters, Cal Poly can proceed full pace on our key strategic imperatives of increasing graduation rates, improving the campus climate for diversity, and successfully launching a comprehensive capital campaign.

I know that feelings about quarters vs. semesters on our campus run strong. However, given the direction we have received, this is a reasonable approach. I understand and support the Chancellor's direction and look forward to joining you in demonstrating that Cal Poly will continue to excel under semesters just as it has under quarters. I will keep you informed as this process develops. As well, we will continue to provide information on commonly asked questions at: <http://president.calpoly.edu/semesterreview/>.

Thank you for all you do in making Cal Poly a great university.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey D. Armstrong

President



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