

Associated Students, Inc.
California Polytechnic State University
San Luis Obispo

Resolution #21-01

RESOLUTION CALLING FOR CAL POLY AND THE CALIFORNIA STATE
UNIVERSITY (CSU) TO INCLUDE CASTE IN ANTI-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY

- WHEREAS: The ASI Board of Directors serves as the official voice of students at California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly), San Luis Obispo, and
- WHEREAS: Caste is a structure of oppression that affects over 1 billion people across the world based in birth that determines social status and assigns “spiritual purity”¹ and
- WHEREAS: There are four main caste groups: Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras, and those outside the caste system entirely, with lower caste Shudras and those outside the caste system, known as Dalits meaning “broken but resilient” and formerly known as “untouchables”, considered oppressed by caste;¹ and
- WHEREAS: Caste-oppressed groups continue to experience profound injustices including socioeconomic inequalities, usurpation of their land, rights, and experience brutal violence at the hands of the “upper” Castes; and
- WHEREAS: 25 percent of Dalits who responded to a survey executed by Equality Labs reported facing verbal or physical assault based on their caste in the United States, one in three Dalit students report being discriminated against during their education in the United States, two out of three Dalits surveyed reported being treated unfairly at their workplace in the United States, 60 percent of Dalits report experiencing caste-based derogatory jokes or comments in the United States, and 20 percent of Dalit respondents report feeling discriminated at a place of business because of their caste in the United States;¹ and
- WHEREAS: All of these inequalities associated with caste status have become embedded in all of the major South Asian American institutions and they extend into American mainstream institutions that have significant South Asian immigrant populations, with some of the caste social locators being last names, whether a family eats meat, whether they own land in their country of origin, who they want to marry or be in romantic relationships with, and whether they are allowed to be out in their place of worship and community; and
- WHEREAS: Caste discrimination has long been overlooked by American institutions, with almost all institutions in the United States failing to protect caste oppressed people, highlighted most recently by

¹ Equality Labs Caste Survey - <https://www.equalitylabs.org/castesurvey>

the recent lawsuit against Cisco regarding caste discrimination in the workplace;² and

WHEREAS: Cal Poly has a large and growing body of international students, specifically from South Asia, making caste a global issue that impacts sites of higher education such as Cal Poly;³ and

WHEREAS: A petition calling for the inclusion of caste within Cal Poly's anti-discrimination clause was circulated and gathered over 120 signatures from students, staff, and faculty across various departments and colleges;⁴ and

WHEREAS: Various administrators, such as University President, Jeffery D. Armstrong, and Title IX Coordinator and Director of Office of Equal Opportunity, Maren Hufton, have expressed their support for the addition of caste to anti-discrimination policy and forwarded the petition to Cal Poly's support to the CSU Chancellor's Office; and

WHEREAS: Other leading universities such as Brandeis University have already recognized the importance of adding caste to its anti-discrimination policy, understanding that "caste identity is so intertwined with many of the legally recognized and protected characteristics, discrimination based on a person's caste is effectively the same";⁵ and

WHEREAS: The CSU has an executive order that prohibits discrimination on the basis of "Age, Disability (physical or mental), Gender (or sex), Gender Identity (including transgender), Gender Expression, Genetic Information, Marital Status, Medical Condition, Nationality, Race or Ethnicity (including color or ancestry), Religion (or Religious Creed), Sexual Orientation, sex stereotype, and Veteran or Military Status;"⁶ and

WHEREAS: The addition of caste within the anti-discrimination policy will make Cal Poly and the larger CSU's in compliance with the recommendations of Equality Labs, an international human rights organization;¹ and

WHEREAS: The addition of caste within the anti-discrimination policy will reaffirm and add to Cal Poly and the larger CSU's commitment to diversity, equity and support for those most systemically marginalized; and

THEREFORE
BE IT
RESOLVED:

The ASI Board of Directors urges Cal Poly and the larger CSU to include caste in its anti-discrimination policy by updating the language within Executive Orders 1096 and 1097.

2 CNN News Article: Caste - <https://www.cnn.com/2020/07/01/tech/cisco-lawsuit-caste-discrimination/index.html>

3 As Dalit scholar and thinker Dr. B.R. Ambedkar wrote, "if Hindus migrate to other regions on earth, Indian caste would become a world problem."

4 Cal Poly Petition - <https://forms.gle/TB2aw8FhFnBif1da8>

5 Inside Higher Ed Article - <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2019/12/20/university-adds-caste-nondiscrimination-policy>

6 CSU Stats - <https://calstate.policystat.com/policy/8453514/latest/> and <https://calstate.policystat.com/policy/8453516/latest/>

THEREFORE
BE IT

RESOLVED: The addition of caste as a protected category should be paired with caste competency trainings during hiring at Cal Poly and the CSU at large.

THEREFORE
BE IT

RESOLVED: This resolution will be sent to University President, Jeffrey D. Armstrong; Title IX Coordinator and Director of Office of Equal Opportunity, Maren Hufton; Interim Vice President for University Diversity and Inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer, Dr. Denise Isom; Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Cynthia Jackson-Elmoore; Vice President for Student Affairs, Dr. Keith Humphrey; Interim Vice President for University Development & Alumni Engagement and Chief of Staff, Jessica Darin; Senior Vice President of Administration and Finance and Chief Financial Officer, Cynthia Vizcaíno Villa; Vice President of Information Technology and Chief Information Officer, Bill Britton; Interim Vice President for Enrollment Management & University Strategy, James L. Maraviglia; Vice President for University Communications and Marketing, Chris Murphy; Vice President for Research and Economic Development, Renee Reijo Pera; University Counsel, Robin Webb; CEO of Cal Poly Corporation, Cody VanDorn; Interim Executive Director for Human Resources and Academic Personnel, Al Liddicoat; Academic Senate Chair, Dr. Thomas Gutierrez; Interim Dean of Students Dr. Joy Pedersen; and CSU Chancellor Joseph I. Castro.

Certified as the true and correct copy, in witness thereof, I have set my hand and Seal of the San Luis Obispo Cal Poly Associated Students, Inc. this 4th day of March 2021.

ADOPTED at the regular meeting of the Board of Directors at San Luis Obispo Cal Poly Associated Students, Inc. this 3rd day of March 2021.

Attest:

ASI Secretary

Signed:

ASI Chair of the Board

Signed:

ASI President

Authored By:

Amanda Tejeda (she/hers), ASI Board of Directors, College of Liberal Arts
manmit singh chahal (they/them)