

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

Resolution #23-07

RESOLUTION URGING THE CAL POLY CORPORATION
TO COMBAT FOOD INSECURITY MORE EFFECTIVELY

- 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: According to the 2022 Basic Needs Report, it was reported that 39% of the Cal Poly Community experiences low or exceptionally low food security,¹ and
- WHEREAS: In the academic year 2021-22, the Cal Poly Food Pantry had 9,367 visits, and as of May 8, 2023, there were 18,650 visits in the 2022-23 year so far, serving 3,917 students, or 19% of the student body.² It averages 200 student visits per day, and 1000 visits per week,³ and
- WHEREAS: Campus Dining introduced the Food Pantry to their vendors, and the Food Pantry orders from them with delivery provided by Campus Dining. One of these vendors, VitCo, provides 40 frozen meals weekly to the food pantry, with requests from the Food Pantry to increase that donation;⁴ the Cal Poly Corporation (CPC) is also looking at the option to ask VitCo to expand that donation,⁵ and
- WHEREAS: The Food Pantry receives funding from the state to run operations; there is no additional direct funding from the CPC and all food purchased is through donated funds,⁶ and
- WHEREAS: The food purchased by the Food Pantry averages \$6,600 per week, with each student served receiving about \$5 each; future plans for the Food Pantry are to advocate for a central “basic needs” hub, and expand both their resources and hours,⁷ and
- WHEREAS: Dining plan contracts are mandatory for first-year students to sign, and any unused funds will be forfeited unless a community plan is purchased for the following year,⁸ with the cheapest 2023-24 community plan costing \$275,⁹ and
- WHEREAS: Answering why students do not get a refund for unused dining dollars at the end of each year, the CPC claims that the fiscal

¹[2022 Cal Poly Basic Needs Report](#)

²[Food Pantry Presentation at the ASI Board of Director’s Workshop #23-24, May 8th, 2023](#)

³[Confirmed by Kari Howell, the former Basic Needs Coordinator](#)

⁴[Confirmed by Kari Howell, the former Basic Needs Coordinator](#)

⁵[Confirmed by Andrea Burns, Cal Poly Corporation Associate Executive Director](#)

⁶[Confirmed by Kari Howell, the former Basic Needs Coordinator](#)

⁷[Food Pantry Presentation at the ASI Board of Director’s Workshop #23-24, May 8th, 2023](#)

⁸[Cal Poly Dining First Year Dining Plans FAQ](#)

⁹[2023-24 Cal Poly Dining Community Dining Plans](#)

impact of refunding students at year-end would increase the cost of each dining plan,¹⁰ and

WHEREAS: According to the CPC, allowing the transfer of funds year to year without a purchase of a new plan would disincentivize continuing students to engage with campus dining; the CPC relies “on students spending all their meal plan dollars, or forfeiting their unused balance to cover the sunk costs of the program,”¹¹ and

WHEREAS: As for the reason purchasing a dining plan is required for students to keep their dining dollars, the CPC also claimed that since accounts close as the dining system resets each year, “A new plan... is required as it creates an account to roll the funds on to,”¹² and

WHEREAS: For the 2021-22 academic year there were 4,655 students with First Year Dining Memberships. At the end of the year 3,872 had a balance. Of those, roughly 1,472 did not roll their balance over to 2022-23. The average balance remaining was \$227, totaling approximately \$334,144 that was forfeited,¹³ and

WHEREAS: When dining dollars are forfeited, that money goes into the CPC’s reserves, which they use to fund the construction of Vista Grande, 1901 Market Place, and other CPC operations, and any changes to where that funding goes would be up to the CPC Board of Directors and the University,¹⁴ and

WHEREAS: In a presentation to the Board of Directors in the Fall of 2022, the CPC claimed they donated \$200,000 “to Cal Poly Cares to help eliminate hunger,”¹⁵ however, Joy Pedersen, who oversees Cal Poly Cares, said that food is not typically covered unless there are other extenuating circumstances,¹⁶ and

WHEREAS: The CPC later clarified that “The \$200K mentioned in this presentation is \$150K in meal plan discounts for student athletes, and \$50K in contributions towards Mustang Meal Share (\$10K in an outright donation, \$40K matching funds),”¹⁷ and

WHEREAS: Campus Dining partners with Student Affairs to administer the Mustang Meal Share Program, which allows students and outside people to donate their dining dollars or cash to fellow students, and the CPC only currently matches 50% of donations from outside sources,¹⁸ and

WHEREAS: The CPC is planning to completely revamp Mustang Meal Share next year, with a goal in mind of providing 50,000 meals next year.

¹⁰[Confirmed by Andrea Burns, Cal Poly Corporation Associate Executive Director](#)

¹¹[Confirmed by Andrea Burns, Cal Poly Corporation Associate Executive Director](#)

¹²[Confirmed by Andrea Burns, Cal Poly Corporation Associate Executive Director](#)

¹³[Confirmed to Mustang News by Aaron Lambert, Cal Poly Corporation Communication Specialist](#)

¹⁴[Confirmed by Andrea Burns, Cal Poly Corporation Associate Executive Director](#)

¹⁵[Cal Poly Corporation Presentation at the Board of Directors Workshop #23-04, October 10th, 2022](#)

¹⁶[Confirmed by Joy Pedersen, Dean of Students](#)

¹⁷[Confirmed by the Cal poly Corporation’s Response to this Resolution’s Draft](#)

¹⁸[Confirmed by Andrea Burns, Cal Poly Corporation Associate Executive Director](#)

Basic Needs would still administer the program, and it would function administratively similar to the current program,¹⁹ and

WHEREAS: The meals would be in the form of a meal voucher that would be redeemable at select locations, such as VG Express, Balance, Mustang Station, and the Campus Market salad bar and grill. It would ensure a full meal per gift card, with guidance toward nutritious options,²⁰ and

WHEREAS: The CPC is planning to provide 85%²¹ of the new Mustang Meal Share Program, with the rest coming from donations, which the CPC will not match in the current way as the donations will be matched by converting funds to meals,²² and

WHEREAS: The Campus Dining Advisory Committee advised that Campus Dining consider a grant program like University Housing's support to low-income students and increase meal voucher donations,²³ and

WHEREAS: Campus Dining serves 20,000 meals per day in their venues,²⁴ and

WHEREAS: In the Fall 2022 Campus Dining survey, 49% of respondents said they skip meals when they do not purchase meals on campus, while 68% bring meals, snacks, and beverages from home,²⁵ and

WHEREAS: In that same CPC survey, about 58% percent of respondents said they wanted to spend less than \$75 per week on food, or about \$825 per quarter;²⁶ the minimum first-year dining plan costs \$1995 to \$2195 per quarter,²⁷ and

WHEREAS: In the Guest Satisfaction section of the CPC survey, respondents indicated that they were dissatisfied with the value of their meal plans and the value for price paid of dining programs at Cal Poly,²⁸ and

WHEREAS: A senior project for the Economics Department was written in the Spring of 2018 which analyzed the effect of Cal Poly partnering with Chartwells on the prices of brand name items at the Campus Market on Campus. The paper compared these items' prices with ones from a local Vons in San Luis Obispo, and San Jose State University's (SJSU) Village Market with a nearby Safeway in San Jose,²⁹ and

WHEREAS: That paper found that Campus Market had a median markup of 45.11% over the local Vons. SJSU's Village Market had a median

¹⁹[Confirmed by Andrea Burns, Cal Poly Corporation Associate Executive Director](#)

²⁰[Confirmed by Andrea Burns, Cal Poly Corporation Associate Executive Director](#)

²¹[Confirmed by the Cal Poly Corporation's Response to this Resolution's Draft](#)

²²[Confirmed by Andrea Burns, Cal Poly Corporation Associate Executive Director](#)

²³[Campus Dining Advisory Committee 2022 Annual Report](#)

²⁴[Confirmed by Andrea Burns, Cal Poly Corporation Associate Executive Director](#)

²⁵[CPC Dining Survey Fall 2022](#)

²⁶[CPC Dining Survey Fall 2022](#)

²⁷[Cal Poly Dining First Year Dining Plans 2023-24](#)

²⁸[CPC Dining Survey Fall 2022](#)

²⁹[Cal Poly Dining: Effects of Privatization by Payton Thatcher, Spring 2018](#)

markup of 29%, a difference of the markups of 16.11% more markup from the Campus Market,³⁰ and

WHEREAS: The CPC decided they will work with the private company Chartwells Higher Education to manage the day-to-day operations of Campus Dining starting July 1st, 2023,³¹ without consulting student government beforehand, and

WHEREAS: Chartwells Higher Education settled a \$19.4 million lawsuit with the Washington, D.C. Public School District due to them causing “DC Public Schools to pay millions more for the school meal programs than it should have paid and that the school meal programs suffered many problems under Chartwells’ management, such as repeated instances when ‘food was delivered late, the number of meals was insufficient or the food was of poor quality or spoiled,’”³² and

WHEREAS: A meeting was held on April 17th between the authors of this resolution and representatives of the CPC to discuss these issues³³ and

WHEREAS: The authors of this resolution were advised by the CPC against “recommending tactics that will result in increasing the cost of the meal plans,” with the key to addressing food insecurity lying in students donating more dollars to the Mustang Meal Share,³⁴ and

WHEREAS: The recommendations below to direct the forfeited money from student accounts to the Food Pantry, The Mustang Meal Share Program, or in other ways to directly fight food insecurity on campus, or allow funds to roll over without a community plan and to employ a grants program similar to housing were estimated to cost approximately \$5.4 million according to the CPC, with \$2 million for the grants program and the rest split between not requiring a continuing plan or in directed the forfeited funds to other areas,³⁵ and

THEREFORE
BE IT

RESOLVED: The ASI Board of Directors urges the CPC to forgo any meal plan price increase based on any of the recommendations made throughout this document and requests they communicate with ASI Student Government if there are any changes to meal plan costs going forward, and

FURTHERMORE
BE IT

RESOLVED: That the Board of Directors urges the CPC to direct all forfeited money from student accounts to the Cal Poly Food Pantry yearly, to the Mustang Meal Share Program, or in other ways to directly fight food insecurity on campus, or allow funds to roll over without

³⁰[Cal Poly Dining: Effects of Privatization by Payton Thatcher, Spring 2018](#)

³¹[Cal Poly Corporation Report to the ASI Board of Directors Meeting 23-10, February 15, 2023](#)

³²[Philips and Cohen Statement following the Chartwells Higher Education Settlement](#)

³³[Evidenced from email communication between the authors and CPC representatives](#)

³⁴[Confirmed by Andrea Burns, Cal Poly Corporation Associate Executive Director](#)

³⁵[Confirmed by the Cal Poly Corporation’s Response to this Resolution’s Draft](#)

a community plan, and to do this efficiently so as to not raise meal plan costs, and

FURTHERMORE
BE IT
RESOLVED:

The reasons given for why a new account cannot be made for dining dollars to move to seems to be flimsy at best, and the CPC is appropriating hundreds of thousands of dollars from Cal Poly Students to their reserves, and

FURTHERMORE
BE IT
RESOLVED:

The CPC Arguing that students sign a contract and thus agree to have their dining dollars forfeited is invalid due to meal plans being mandatory for first years, and

FURTHERMORE
BE IT
RESOLVED:

First-year dining plans should not be mandatory, and there should be options that are similar in line to what students want to spend per quarter, according to the CPC's own surveys, which could negate the issue of cost increases of each meal plan and

FURTHERMORE
BE IT
RESOLVED:

The CPC should be clearer about its own efforts to combat hunger on campus, and should do far more than rely on individual donations from students and outside supporters, and

FURTHERMORE
BE IT
RESOLVED:

While 40 meals a week to the Food Pantry and 50,000 yearly proposed free meals are substantive and appreciated, they do not go far enough in combating food insecurity, and pale in comparison to the 20,000 daily meals Campus Dining serves, and

FURTHERMORE
BE IT
RESOLVED:

The CPC and University should give a substantial amount of funding to the food pantry, so that it can fulfill its future goals, regardless of whether they change the policy of forfeiting students dining accounts, and

FURTHERMORE
BE IT
RESOLVED:

The CPC should match student donations at the same rate that they match outside donations to the Mustang Meal Share program, both currently and with the future program, and

FURTHERMORE
BE IT
RESOLVED:

The future Mustang Meal Share program should not be administered with a set number of meals but with the direct funds given in the current model. The CPC should not police the diets of low-income students, and

FURTHERMORE
BE IT
RESOLVED:

If there is no change to the policy of changing how funds are forfeited, the CPC should employ a thorough grants program in accordance with the Campus Dining Advisory Committee's

recommendations, without substantially raising the rates of meal plans,³⁶ and

FURTHERMORE
BE IT

RESOLVED: Campus Dining should work to bring their food costs in line with student cost expectations, and drastically bring down prices in the campus market so that they are not unnecessarily higher compared to relatively comparable grocery stores, and

FURTHERMORE
BE IT

RESOLVED: Campus Dining should not be managed by Chartwells Higher Education, which has examples of previous failures to provide high-quality, affordable food, at least without a campus-wide vote, and

FURTHERMORE
BE IT

RESOLVED: This resolution be sent to University President Jeffrey D. Armstrong, Cal Poly Corporation Chief Executive Officer Cody VanDorn, Cal Poly Corporation Associate Executive Director Andrea Burns, Cal Poly Corporation Chair of the Board of Directors Cynthia Vizcaíno Villa, Cal Poly Corporation Chief Financial Officer Dan Banfield, Cal Poly Corporation Director of Campus Dining Jess Dozier, Dean of Students Joy Pedersen, Director of Wellbeing & DEI Kari Mansager, Assistant Director of Wellbeing Kara Samaniego, Food Pantry Coordinator Taffy Gonzalez, President of the California State Student Association Krishan Malhotra, and Co-Chairs of the Campus Dining Advisory Committee Aaron Fernandes and Jo Campbell.

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 8th day of June, 2023.

ADOPTED at the regular meeting of the Board of Directors at San Luis Obispo Cal Poly Associated Students, Inc. this 31st day of May 2023.

Attest:

ASI Secretary

Signed:
ASI Chair of the Board

Signed:
ASI President

³⁶[Campus Dining Advisory Committee 2022 Annual Report](#)

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