

Resolution #24-02

RESOLUTION TO RECOMMEND AN AMENDMENT TO THE CAL POLY  
ACADEMIC SENATE CLASS ATTENDANCE 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: Students are currently limited in their ability to be granted an excused absence pertaining to immediate mental health concerns provided the existing Academic Senate Policy<sup>1</sup>, and

WHEREAS: The current Academic Senate Class Attendance Policy<sup>1</sup> states that excusable reasons for class absence include:

1. "Illness with a doctor's statement
2. Injury, illness, death, or any extenuating circumstances of close relatives (to include but not limited to natural, adopted, and/or in-law children, parents, legal guardians, siblings, grandparents, grandchildren as well as spouses or partners)"

WHEREAS: The Cal Poly Student Health Advisory Board (SHAC), a campus entity established to discuss and provide recommendations regarding student health and well-being needs, produced a statement<sup>2</sup> raising additional concerns with the current requirement of a "doctor's statement" that reads:

"While a doctor's statement is desired in the event of student illness, some students may not feel comfortable making a doctor's appointment for a variety of reasons including financial concerns, personal/cultural values, and previous medical-related trauma."

WHEREAS: In addition, the cited Academic Senate Policy<sup>1</sup> does not specify the inclusion of mental health concerns within the definition of "Illness".

WHEREAS: Faculty that refer to the Class Attendance Policy<sup>1</sup> may dismiss mental health concerns as inexcusable with the existing policy<sup>1</sup>. This limits a student's autonomy when assessing if their mental health condition is a valid extenuating circumstance.

WHEREAS: The State of California amended Section 48205 of the Education Code<sup>3</sup> relating to student health in October of 2021 to specify

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1 "Class Attendance." Academic Programs and Planning, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo.

2 Confirmed by Madeline Foti, SHAC President.

3 California Senate Bill 14, Chapter 672, Section 49428.15.

mental and behavioral health as being encompassed under “illness”. The bill reads, “within the meaning of an absence due to a pupil’s illness, [is] an absence for the benefit of the pupil’s mental or behavioral health”;

WHEREAS: The Spring 2022 National College Health Assessment (NCHA)<sup>4</sup> reports that 76.0% of Cal Poly San Luis Obispo students have experienced moderate to serious psychological distress.

THEREFORE  
BE IT

RESOLVED: That the Board of Directors hereby requests the Cal Poly San Luis Obispo Academic Senate to take the necessary actions to amend the Class Attendance Policy as follows;

THEREFORE  
BE IT

RESOLVED: In item (1) of the Class Attendance Policy, “doctor’s statement” should be stricken and replaced with “healthcare provider’s statement” to read, “Illness with a healthcare provider’s statement.”

THEREFORE  
BE IT

RESOLVED: The term “Illness” within the Class Attendance Policy may be footnoted and should read, “(1) Illnesses may include concerns related to mental health.”

FURTHERMORE  
BE IT

RESOLVED: The addition of mental health language within the Academic Senate Class Attendance Policy should align with the recent update of the SB-14 class attendance policy within the State of California.

FURTHERMORE  
BE IT

RESOLVED: The broader requirement of a “health care provider’s statement” allows a wider range of professionals to issue a statement serving as means for an excused absence.

FURTHERMORE  
BE IT

RESOLVED: This resolution will allow the University to serve as a pioneer for the legitimization and recognition of mental wellbeing within higher education by adopting the proposed revisions.

FURTHERMORE  
BE IT

RESOLVED: This resolution be sent to University President Dr. Jeffrey D. Armstrong; Chair of the Cal Poly Academic Senate, Dr. Jerusha Greenwood; Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs Health and Wellbeing, Tina Hadaway-Mellis; Vice President for Student

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<sup>4</sup> “CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY SAN LUIS OBISPO Executive Summary Spring 2022.” American College Health Association National College Health Assessment III..

Affairs Dr. Keith Humphrey; and Provost Dr. Cynthia Jackson-Elmoore.

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 21 day of February 2024.

ADOPTED at the regular meeting of the Board of Directors at San Luis Obispo Cal Poly Associated Students, Inc. this 21 day of February 2024.

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
ASI Secretary

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Signed:  
ASI Chair of the Board

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Signed:  
ASI President

Authored By:

Jett Palmer, Board of Directors, Bailey College of Science and Mathematics  
Emily Prince, Secretary of Health and Wellbeing, Bailey College of Science and Mathematics