

Cal Poly to Implement Out-Of-State Fee to Improve Access for Low-Income and First-Generation California Students

SAN LUIS OBISPO — Cal Poly today announced that it will implement a new fee aimed at increasing access to academically qualified low-income and first-generation undergraduate students in California. The funds will improve the quality of the university's Learn by Doing education by creating greater access to Cal Poly for a broader range of qualified prospective students, resulting in a more diverse and intercultural on-campus experience for all students.

The Cal Poly Opportunity Fee will be assessed on all newly enrolled out-of-state undergraduate students starting in fall 2019 and will be phased in over four years. All current students will be exempt from the fee.

The new fee will result in the expansion of the Cal Poly Scholars program and provide financial assistance for high-achieving California students who meet Cal Poly's rigorous academic admission requirements but can't afford to attend the university.

"The Cal Poly Opportunity Fee will improve our already renowned Learn by Doing education by opening our doors to hundreds of academically excellent students who otherwise would not have the opportunity," Cal Poly President Jeffrey D. Armstrong said. "The diverse backgrounds and experiences these students will bring to Cal Poly will benefit all of our students and our entire campus community. And our state will benefit in turn from the hands-on experience, problem-solving acumen and collaborative spirit these scholars will bring to their careers after graduation."

Armstrong said Cal Poly will leverage these funds with donations from alumni, faculty, staff, parents of students, employers, foundations and corporations, as has previously been done with the Cal Poly Scholars program.

After the Cal Poly Opportunity Fee was first proposed in winter 2018, the university sought feedback from the campus community to help determine whether to move forward. This process provided university leadership with invaluable perspective and input from nearly 10 percent of the student body, as well as faculty and staff and other members of Cal Poly's campus community.

The revised plan announced today incorporates numerous modifications based on that feedback.

The Cal Poly Opportunity Fee is modeled off the university's successful Cal Poly Scholars program, which provides students from California partner high schools with scholarships for up to five years, a technology package, proactive advising and other support. The program has improved retention rates among first-generation and low-income students as compared to their peers who did not participate in the program.

With the Cal Poly Opportunity Fee and associated donations, the university intends to serve exponentially more students with financial need.

By increasing access to Cal Poly for students from lower-income families, the university also stands to increase the diversity of its student population, said Jozi De Leon, Cal Poly's chief diversity officer and vice president for diversity and inclusion.

"We have a moral obligation to open our doors to the broadest cross-section of California's academically qualified students as we can," De Leon said. "These new funds go a long way in meeting that obligation. And a more diverse student body will only help in our efforts to maintain a campus community that is inviting and welcoming to all."

The Cal Poly Opportunity Fee will provide financial aid to low-income and first-generation California students, including first-year and transfer undergraduates from all six of Cal Poly's colleges. The financial aid will cover all campus-based fees that are not currently covered by other financial aid programs (the estimated minimum amount of financial support for fall of 2019 is \$3,400, and may be higher pending donor participation). The funds initially will be aimed at the lowest income bracket among prospective students but will be expanded to provide support to students from a broader range of lower-income levels.

In addition to financial assistance, Cal Poly will provide grant recipients with proactive advising and other academic support. All recipients of the fund will be required to live on campus their first two years at Cal Poly (transfer and other students can seek exemptions).

The Cal Poly Opportunity Fee will be assessed beginning in fall 2019, when incoming out-of-state students will pay an additional \$2,010 a year. Those students will pay the same annual fee during their undergraduate tenure at Cal Poly. Each subsequent incoming class of out-of-state students will pay an increased amount through 2022.

The percentage of out-of-state students admitted to Cal Poly will continue to be capped at 15 percent, which is the current level.

Other changes made to the proposal based upon input from the campus community include:

- The proposal will only apply to undergraduate out-of-state students. Graduate students will not pay the Cal Poly Opportunity Fee. Conversely, in-state graduate students will not be eligible to receive support.
- The fee paid by each subsequent incoming class of out-of-state students will not exceed an additional \$2,010 for any given year, and the maximum amount assessed during the pilot program (the next four years) is \$8,040 a year.
- Fifty percent to 70 percent of the fee will go directly to financial assistance for qualified California students. Of the remainder, 15 to 20 percent will go toward student support and advising, with a portion of the funds supporting all students based on advisory committee recommendations; and 15 to 25 percent will be used to hire additional

tenure-track faculty. Students, including Cal Poly's Associated Students Inc., will play an important advisory role in decisions involving expenditure of funds, including student support and support for tenure-track faculty.

About Cal Poly

Founded in 1901 and part of the renowned California State University system since 1960, Cal Poly is a nationally ranked, four-year, comprehensive polytechnic public university located in San Luis Obispo, California. Known for its Learn by Doing approach, small class sizes and open access to expert faculty, Cal Poly is a distinctive learning community whose more than 21,000 academically motivated students enjoy an unrivaled hands-on educational experience that prepares them to lead successful personal and professional lives. For more information, visit www.calpoly.edu

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