

Academic Senate Chair Candidate Statement

Phyllis R. Nelson

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It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve as vice chair of the Cal Poly Pomona Academic Senate for the past two years. I hope to have your support to continue that service as chair.

The Senate leadership is invited to many conversations as the representatives of the faculty. If elected chair, I am committed to bringing the faculty perspective to those venues where the Senate leadership is the only such voice in the room. I have seen the Senate evolve from a contentious and argumentative body to the professional and effective organization it is today. The credit for that evolution goes to a number of past chairs. It would be an honor to continue their work. To be effective, the chair and vice chair will need your support, and also to hear from you when there are issues of importance to you and your constituencies. I look forward to working with you in reviewing and revising the university's policies and procedures to make sure that they support our students and provide clear guidance to faculty, staff and administrators.

Successful shared governance requires mutual respect, a commitment to substantial dialog, and the willingness to forge creative, mutually acceptable policies and procedures. There are natural and unavoidable differences in viewpoint between faculty and administrators, as well as between members of the various colleges and departments. My experience is that differences can be resolved when everyone takes the time to listen as well as speak. The concerns of all parties need to be stated clearly and respected. Achieving this goal requires that the Senate be a forum for discussion and resolution based on the essential work of the standing committees. I am committed to conducting the business of the Senate as a forum for such respectful, if at times difficult debate.

During my service as a senator, I have not only learned about the process of shared governance, but have also met many faculty, staff and administrators whom I would never have come to know through my regular academic duties. Those relationships have made me realize how few opportunities regularly bring the campus community together. I hope that the new campus master plan includes more convenient spaces for a half hour coffee break with a colleague from outside one's own area. I value the casual conversations before and after Senate meetings, the friends I have made while working on Senate business, and the broader view I have gained of the full Cal Poly Pomona community.