

CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, POMONA

ACADEMIC SENATE

Resolution Reaffirming Support for the University Ombuds Office and Calling for Transparency, Communication, and Immediate Reestablishment

- WHEREAS: In 2022, the Academic Senate passed a resolution calling for the establishment and staffing of a University Ombuds Office, recognizing it as a vital, independent, neutral and confidential resource to support faculty, staff and students in addressing conflicts and concerns; and
- WHEREAS: Following extensive discussion, the formation of a working group and multiple national searches, the University successfully established the Ombuds Office, representing a significant institutional investment and a commitment to shared governance and campus well-being; and
- WHEREAS: A joint Academic Senate and administration working group, following extensive research and consultation with national experts, identified the need for a conflict resolution resource grounded in established Ombuds principles, including independent, neutrality, and confidentiality; and
- WHEREAS: The working group's findings emphasized that trust, confidentiality, and independence are foundational to the effectiveness of such an office and must be preserved in any model adopted by the University; and
- WHEREAS: The working group's findings emphasized the need for adequate staffing and resources to ensure the effectiveness of the Ombuds Office, yet the office was established without dedicated staff support, limiting its capacity to fully realize its intended function and to meet the needs of the campus community; and
- WHEREAS: Recent changes affecting the Ombuds Office occurred without adequate prior consultation with the Academic Senate or advance communication to the broader campus community; and
- WHEREAS: The absence of timely, proactive, and sufficiently detailed communication regarding changes to the Ombuds Office contributed to confusion, concern and a decline in institutional trust; and
- WHEREAS: The manner in which these changes have been implemented raises broader concerns regarding transparency, consistency and the role of shared governance in decisions that affect core campus resources and climate; and

WHEREAS: The effectiveness of a University Ombuds Office depends on its adherence to established principles of independence, neutrality and confidentiality, and substantial deviation from these principles would fundamentally alter the nature and function of the office; and

WHEREAS: The Ombuds Office serves a distinct and essential role that cannot be fulfilled by existing administrative units such as Faculty Affairs, CAFE, Student Affairs or HR/EODA, as those entities do not provide the same level of independence, neutrality, and confidentiality required under the International Ombudsman Association's Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics; and

WHEREAS: The current absence of this resource, particularly without a clear transition plan, risks exacerbating existing concerns about campus climate, morale, and the availability of safe and trusted avenues for conflict resolution, especially for members of historically underrepresented and vulnerable communities; therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate reaffirms its strong support for a fully staffed, independent University Ombuds Office operating in accordance with the International Ombudsman Association's Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics as expressed in its 2022 resolution and echoes the 2022 ASCSU Resolution.Calling.for.the.Establishment.of.Ombudsperson.Positions.at.Every.CSU.Campus; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate respectfully calls upon the University administration to provide clear, transparent, and sufficiently detailed follow-up communication, as needed, to ensure the campus community fully understands the rationale for recent changes affecting the Ombuds Office and the path forward, including clarification of interim resources available to faculty, staff, and students, and to support the restoration of trust across the campus community; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate calls for the immediate reestablishment of the Ombuds Office and the initiation of an expedited search to fill the Ombudsperson position; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the University reaffirm its commitment to maintaining the Ombuds Office as an independent, neutral, and confidential resource and to ensuring that its structure, reporting lines, and operational protections reflect these principles and are not substantively altered in ways that would compromise its core functions; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate be meaningfully consulted in the development of any future policies, structural changes, or decisions affecting the Ombuds Office, in keeping with principles of shared governance; and be it further

RESOLVED: That this resolution be distributed to the President of Cal Poly Pomona, all Vice Presidents and Associate Vice Presidents in Academic Affairs, the Chairs of the CSU Academic Senates, and be posted on the Academic Senate website.