

California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

University Policy: Advisory Student Referendum For Campus-Based Mandatory Student Fees

Preface

Executive Order No. 1102 titled “The California State University Fee Policy” states that it is the President’s responsibility to ensure that appropriate and meaningful consultation occurs prior to increasing or requesting the Chancellor to establish campus-based fees.

Campus constituencies such as the academic senate, associated students organization, and staff will be consulted through their designee on the Campus Fee Advisory Committee (“CFAC”). In addition, an advisory student referendum or an acceptable alternative mechanism of consultation with the student body¹, as determined by the President, is required prior to increasing campus-based, mandatory fees that must be paid to enroll in or attend the university (“Category II”) fees or requesting the chancellor to establish a new campus-based Category II or III fee. If an alternative method is employed, it must be a more effective means of achieving appropriate and meaningful consultation. Both methods of consultation are advisory to the President.

Advisory Student Fee Referendum

An advisory student referendum gives all members of the student body the opportunity to voice their opinion through a secret ballot. Student participation is important because the majority of ballots cast will determine the outcome of the advisory fee referendum. An advisory student fee referendum may be supervised by the University or the associated students organization as determined by the President. The entity conducting the referendum shall fund all associated costs.

¹ Per Executive Order 1102, alternative consultation mechanisms are not permitted before establishing a student body association fee, before initially establishing a student body center fee, or before increasing a student body association fee (Education Code §89300).

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CFAC Responsibilities

CFAC's role is to advise the President on specific fee proposals. Once the President has determined that a fee proposal should be subject to a student fee referendum, CFAC has specific responsibilities relative to the referendum as delineated in Executive Order 1102: Those responsibilities are:

- Issue a Voter Pamphlet: The committee shall issue a voter pamphlet which contains an objective analysis of the proposed fee action and advocacy statements for and against the proposed fee action.
- Determination of Pro and Con Statements: The committee shall solicit and determine the specific statements of advocacy to be included in the pamphlet.

The University has delegated responsibility to the Vice President for Student Affairs for conducting and supervising student fee referenda. Requirements for advisory student fee referenda are set forth in Executive Order 1102 and are applicable to referenda supervised by both ASI and the University.

Referendum Policy:

The following referendum policy applies to referenda conducted by the University.

- Authority to Conduct a Referendum: The President has the authority to call an election to obtain advice from the student body on a proposal to establish or adjust a campus based Category II fee.
- Eligible Voter: All matriculated, registered students are eligible to vote. Eligible voter also includes any non-matriculated student who is required to pay full registration fees to attend state-supported classes at Cal Poly.
- Voter Pamphlets and Communications: The University shall make the voter information pamphlet available on the Internet. The information pamphlet will

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contain an objective statement about the fee proposal prepared by the University's Budget and Finance staff. The information pamphlet will also include statements of advocacy (pro and con) submitted on the proposed fee action. The CFAC shall solicit and advise the President on specific statements of advocacy to be included in the voter pamphlet. The failure of advocates' to submit pro or con statements will not preclude publication of the information pamphlet.

- **Notice:** Copies of the voter pamphlets and ballot shall be available to the students via the Internet thirty (30) days prior to the election. The thirty-day notice period shall exclude academic holidays to ensure an adequate review period. Information regarding the dates, times, and electronic voting instructions shall also be posted via the Internet thirty (30) days prior to the election. If the campus newspaper is published during this period, the dates, times, and electronic polling instructions shall be published in the campus newspaper once a week for at least two weeks prior to the election.
- **Timing:** Advisory student fee referenda preferably should be conducted during the winter and/or spring quarter. Generally, referenda should not be held prior to student census.
- **Internet-Based Polling:** The University has implemented an electronic, Internet based form of voting known as eVote whereby students can vote from anywhere at anytime via the Cal Poly portal during polling hours of operation. This includes eligible students who are not attending classes at Cal Poly, (e.g., study abroad students or students on co-op, etc.)
- **Polling Hours:** Internet-based polling will be available for two (2) consecutive days from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- **Election Supervision:** The election shall be supervised by the University in order to ensure that the process is fair and honest and that the participants conduct themselves appropriately. Supervision of the election process, and development of election procedures, shall be the administrative responsibility

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of the Vice President for Student Affairs, unless the President makes a different delegation of authority.

- **Ballot Form:** Ballot language for an advisory student fee referendum may be proposed by the requester but will be subject to University legal and policy review before final approval.
- **Ballot:** Only one electronic vote shall be allowed to each eligible voter.
- **Conduct:** No electioneering by signs, active campaigning, or solicitation of votes shall be permitted within 100 feet of physical polling locations. Students using eVote (Internet polling) shall not engage in collusion or any acts or behaviors that compromise the integrity of the student referendum. Students charged in violation of this section shall be subject to judicial action administered by the Office of Student's Rights and Responsibilities.
- **Results:** The University shall designate a non-partisan group to provide a count of the internet-based votes. The results shall be tabulated immediately after the closing of the polls. The number of "yes" and "no" votes shall be certified to the President.
- **Implementation:** Approved adjustments to Category II fees shall be implemented effective the subsequent fall quarter.