



CAL POLY

SUPERVISOR INTEGRATION GUIDE

Cal Poly Employee and Organization Development

Learn by Doing

PURPOSE

To equip Cal Poly supervisors with the knowledge, mindset and practical tools to effectively lead their teams through the Cal Poly – Cal Maritime Academy integration.

The session emphasizes empathy, clear communication, fostering connection, inclusion and equity, supporting supervisors in navigating operational and cultural change while building team trust and cohesion.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Clarify your role as a supervisor.
- Lead with empathy, transparency, and integrity.
- Communicate effectively and consistently.
- Foster equity, inclusion, and collaboration.
- Develop self-awareness and adaptive leadership skills.
- To help supervisors manage direct reports.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- After completing this self-paced guide, supervisors will:
- Understand your role and demonstrate improved confidence in communicating institutional changes.
- Apply empathy-based leadership and inclusive language in daily interactions.
- Strengthen cross-campus relationships and collaboration.
- Implement actionable steps to support team cohesion, collaboration and equity.
- Create personal action plans for ongoing self-awareness and leadership growth.
- Tailor your approach to foster connection, communication and feedback.

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UNDERSTANDING THE INTEGRATION CONTEXT

KEY IDEA

Integration is both an operational and cultural transition

SUPERVISOR ROLE

Translate institutional goals into team guidance

Supervisors bridge institutional goals with daily realities. Supervisors are the vital link between institutional leadership and frontline employees. During the integration, their role expands, and supervisors must be able to interpret broad institutional goals and translate them into day-to-day actions that make sense on the ground. Supervisors should recognize that integration involves one campus (Cal Poly Maritime Academy) folding into the structure, systems, and culture of another (Cal Poly). This process can feel disorienting, especially for employees from the Solano campus who may see their familiar norms replaced.

TIPS FOR ACTION

1. Use narrative framing to explain the why of integration

- Use narrative framing to explain institutional direction: “Here’s *why* the integration happened and how it will position us for future growth.”
- Provide operational context: When policies change, explain the *why* behind the change.
- Check out: Ted Talk with Simon Sinek, [“Start with Why -- How Great Leaders Inspire Action”](#)

2. Contextualize macro policy changes

- Explain policy rationale. Contextualize macro policy changes.

3. Balance consistency with empathy toward legacy norms

- Balance consistency and sensitivity to legacy practices: Apply expectations fairly while acknowledging that legacy employees may need more time or support to adapt.
- Information can be found on the California State University Maritime Academy Integration website. There you will find guidelines, FAQs, resources, an Integration Toolkit and how to contact the Integration Team.

*See: [California State University Maritime Academy Integration](#) and [Integration Toolkit](#)

REFLECTIVE PROMPTS

What changes most affect your team?

How can you translate institutional goals into team guidance and explain the 'why' of integration to your employees?

ACTION PLAN

How will you apply this concept in your team?

How will you align team direction with institutional goals while balancing consistency and empathy for legacy norms?

LEADING WITH EMPATHY AND CLARITY

KEY IDEA

Combine transparency with empathetic awareness

SUPERVISOR ROLE

Be honest, consistent, and emotionally attuned

Supervisors must balance compassion with directness. Avoid minimizing the emotional toll of the transition, especially for those at the Solano campus who may feel their contributions or identity are being erased. At the same time, supervisors must represent Cal Poly's larger institutional goals with clarity and not shy away from tough conversations. Their role is to offer stability by being transparent about what is changing and what is still undecided (the uncertainty). Encourage sharing of effective legacy practices to retain institutional memory.

TIPS FOR ACTION

1. Name the disruption

- Name the disruption: "This is a big shift, and it's okay if it feels unsettling."

2. Communicate uncertainty without avoiding it

- Communicate uncertainty without avoiding it. Be honest about uncertainty: “We don’t yet know how X will look, but I promise to share updates as I get them.”

3. Invite best practices from Cal Maritime employee’s past approaches

- Invite best practices from Cal Maritime employee’s past approaches. Show curiosity about the Cal Maritime team’s history: “Can you walk me through how your team approached this in the past?”

*See: [Transparency and Empathy Template.docx](#)

REFLECTIVE PROMPTS

How can you name the disruption and communicate uncertainty confidently?

What practices help you show empathy without losing direction?

ACTION PLAN

How will you apply this concept in your team?

How can you invite best practices from Cal Maritime’s past approaches?

BUILDING TRUST THROUGH COMMUNICATION

KEY IDEA

Communication should feel two-way, timely, and consistent

SUPERVISOR ROLE

Stay consistent and present, even when updates are minimal

Supervisors should use plain, frequent communication and foster feedback loops. Supervisors should prioritize communication that feels two-way, not top-down. They must make space for feedback and ensure information flows consistently, without institutional jargon. Employees should always know when and how to expect updates. Even if there’s “nothing new,” the act of showing up and staying present reinforces stability. Even when no updates exist, regular

presence maintains trust. Using a Teams channel for updates and dialogue can support connection.

TIPS FOR ACTION

1. Hold listening sessions at the Solano campus

- Host listening sessions: Schedule drop-ins at the Solano campus and ask simple, open-ended questions.

2. Send regular updates in plain language

- Send weekly updates using the same tone, format, and timing.
Use plain language and avoid jargon or acronyms when introducing new tools, policies, or structures.

3. Avoid jargon or acronyms when introducing new systems or tools

- Actions and advice should be spearheaded by your division leader

* See: [Listening Session Template.docx](#)

REFLECTIVE PROMPTS

What channels do you use for consistent communication?

How do you ensure your team feels heard?

ACTION PLAN

How will you apply this concept in your team?

When will you apply these strategies to ensure communication is timely, consistent and two-way?

Can you commit to specific deadline in the coming weeks?

SUPPORTING THE SOLANO CAMPUS

KEY IDEA

Onboarding includes culture, not just tasks

SUPERVISOR ROLE

Make legacy Cal Maritime employees feel seen

Employees at the Cal Poly Solano campus may feel invisible or left behind. Supervisors can reduce isolation by considering designating a “champion” to help guide, support, and advocate for those Solano employees during the early phases. Support should go beyond task instructions. Integrated employees at the Solano campus need orientation to Cal Poly’s culture: its unwritten norms, values, and expectations.

TIPS FOR ACTION

1. Assign a liaison for feedback

- Appoint a team liaison or champion who checks in regularly and documents questions or concerns. Assigning a liaison could either be a person or a mechanism for collecting feedback. An example of a mechanism could be a Microsoft Form where employees can submit their feedback or questions related to the integration to relay to leadership to disseminate or take action on, as appropriate. The key is to take appropriate action.

2. Hold casual orientation huddles to share norms

- Host informal orientation huddles to review values and expectations. An example could be to review Cal Poly’s Civility Statement.

3. Recognize wins publicly

- Highlight early successes: “Your team met the new reporting deadline! Thank you for adapting so quickly!”

*See: [Orientation Huddle Template.docx](#)

REFLECTIVE PROMPTS

How can you increase visibility for Solano employees?

What onboarding activities could bridge both campuses?

ACTION PLAN

How will you apply this concept in your team?

How will you assign a liaison for feedback? (person or mechanism)

FOSTERING TEAM COHESION

KEY IDEA

Shared identity must be co-created, not imposed

SUPERVISOR ROLE

Facilitate integration through collaboration

Cohesion is not achieved by simply asking the folks at the Solano campus to "fit in". Cohesion emerges from shared work and identity. Supervisors must create opportunities for shared ownership of culture and should blend teams and use inclusive communication. For Example, holding team meetings virtually so all can participate (Solano and SLO campuses).

Additionally, the creation of a team group chat in Teams is great for updates, collaboration, and team building. Utilize tools like SharePoint to share documents and best practices. Team identity should evolve with input from employees at both campuses. Cohesion grows through collaboration, shared goals, visibility and recognition. Supervisors must intentionally break down silos and create spaces where every voice is valued.

TIPS FOR ACTION

1. Create mixed-campus project teams

- Create joint project teams with employees from both campuses.

2. Involve all employees in planning and social practices

- Incorporate integrated employees into social events, planning sessions, and team-building rituals. Possible quarterly/annual in-person team building meetings (alternating campuses).

3. Use inclusive language ('our team,' 'combined unit')

- Use inclusive language: "our team," "this combined unit," rather than "your side" or "our side."

REFLECTIVE PROMPTS

How can you create opportunities for shared ownership?

What inclusive language reinforces unity?

ACTION PLAN

How will you apply this concept in your team?

How will you cultivate collaboration and mixed-campus projects?

ALIGNING EXPECTATIONS & PRACTICES

KEY IDEA

Alignment should be transparent and phased

SUPERVISOR ROLE

Partner with HR for equitable rollout

Policy alignment is necessary but should be phased gradually and thoughtfully. Supervisors must ensure transparency when operational practices change and should avoid surprises that erode trust. Partner with HR to clarify expectations and ensure all policies are accessible, understandable, and equitably applied.

TIPS FOR ACTION

- 1. Start with high-priority items such as compliance and legal needs**
 - Roll out changes in stages, starting with compliance or legal priorities.
- 2. Centralize documentation**
 - Document everything in an easily accessible format (e.g., SharePoint)
- 3. Use strategic messaging to explain rationale**
 - Use strategic messaging to explain rationale. Communicate the “why” behind changes: “This evaluation process ensures consistency across the university.”

REFLECTIVE PROMPTS

Which practices need clearer communication?

How will you ensure consistent understanding across locations and explain rationale?

ACTION PLAN

How will you apply this concept in your team?

How will you partner with HR for an equitable rollout?

How will you strategize prioritization? What compliance and legal matters need to be addressed first?

MANAGING RESISTANCE & MORALE

KEY IDEA

Resistance is normal but how you respond matters

SUPERVISOR ROLE

Acknowledge, empathize, and reaffirm purpose

Change can trigger fear, grief, or skepticism. When there is uncertainty people will often fill in those gaps with fears. Supervisors should expect, not fear, resistance. What matters is how they respond. When morale dips, supervisors must acknowledge emotions while reinforcing the purpose behind the transition. Supervisors must expect emotional reactions and validate concerns while linking change to growth opportunities. Scheduling one-on-one check-ins with impacted employees will make all the difference.

TIPS FOR ACTION

1. Validate concerns without defensiveness

- Validate concerns without defensiveness: “It makes sense this would feel frustrating.”

2. Link change to new opportunities

- Connect change to opportunity: “This integration allows for new leadership pathways.”

3. Check in one-on-one with impacted employees

- Schedule one-on-one conversations with key employees who may be struggling.

*See: [Managing Resistance Template.docx](#)

REFLECTIVE PROMPTS

What resistance are you observing?

How can you reframe resistance as feedback or opportunity?

ACTION PLAN

How will you apply this concept in your team?

How can you check in on impacted employees?

How can you ensure you are validating employees without defensiveness?

ENSURING EQUITY & INCLUSION

KEY IDEA

Equity means recognizing unique needs, not treating everyone identically

SUPERVISOR ROLE

Promote fairness and visibility

Equity is not uniformity. Supervisors should assess the unique needs of the integrated campus and provide resources accordingly, while ensuring all employees feel value and fairness across the team. Recognition is key. The Solano campus employees must be visible in promotions, awards, and leadership pipelines. Language and representation matter.

TIPS FOR ACTION

1. Review recognition practices for inclusion

- Audit award nominations and recognition processes for inclusion.

2. Use unifying terms (“legacy” or “combined” vs. “main” or “satellite”)

- Replace hierarchy terms like “main” or “satellite” campus with “Cal Poly Solano campus” or “Cal Poly San Luis Obispo campus” or unified terms like “combined team” or “university-wide”.

3. Gather feedback on inclusion efforts

- Invite feedback on whether inclusion efforts are landing effectively.

*See: [Equity and Inclusion Template.docx](#)

REFLECTIVE PROMPTS

How inclusive are your current recognition efforts?

What changes could promote fairness and visibility for your team?

ACTION PLAN

How will you apply this concept in your team?

How will you address unique individual needs and gather feedback on inclusion?

LEVERAGING TOOLS FOR HYBRID TEAMS

KEY IDEA

Technology can unite dispersed teams when used intentionally

SUPERVISOR ROLE

Ensure employee training and comfort with digital tools

Digital tools are essential in bridging physical distance. Supervisors should model hybrid readiness by supporting digital tool proficiency. Supervisors must ensure all employees are trained and supported in using communication, project management, and documentation platforms. Supervisors should model hybrid readiness by supporting digital tool proficiency.

There are many tools available to Cal Poly employees to support hybrid teams. Use Microsoft Teams or Zoom as a communication platform and utilize meeting schedulers such as Microsoft Bookings. Shared workspaces and documents can be used for collaboration, such as SharePoint. Utilize project trackers, like Microsoft Planner, for equitable participation. Using

technology to track and assess workflow, essentially making work visible, is essential to the success of hybrid teams. Review role clarity and performance expectations through a tech-supported lens. Ensure that evaluation tools and trackers reflect the team's hybrid reality.

TIPS FOR ACTION

1. Offer tool tutorials and check-ins

- Offer tool walkthroughs and tech check-ins to ensure proficiency.

2. Encourage video use in virtual meetings

- Encourage video use in virtual meetings to build human connection.

3. Align evaluations with hybrid workflows

- Clarify performance metrics

*See: [Hybrid Teams Technology Template.docx](#)

REFLECTIVE PROMPTS

Which hybrid tools strengthen team connection?

What support might your team need to use them effectively?

ACTION PLAN

How will you apply this concept in your team?

What strategies will you use to train, set expectations, establish communication norms and intentionally engage your employees in using communication tools?

Ideas for Expectations and Communication Norms:

- Being logged in and available for communication on Teams/Zoom Chat during work hours.
- Utilizing a digital project management tool, such as Microsoft Teams to make work visible and aid in collaboration.
- Using shared workspaces and documents, such as SharePoint.
- Using MS Bookings and/or Outlook to schedule meetings.
- Having a standard of “cameras on” to ensure engagement. Setting an expectation to communicate when not feasible (e.g., connection issues, distracting environments, having a bad day).
- Creating group chats (encourage use of emojis and memes-work can be fun).
- Identifying what is appropriate for a group chat, personal chat or email.

Ideas for Connection:

- Virtual meetings including team building activities (icebreakers, games, assessments).
- Holding optional virtual coffee hours
- Asking employees what they would like to talk about in one-on-one meetings (personally or professionally).
- Listening actively when employees share something personal, showing empathy and care, and offering appropriate resources and follow-up.
- Remembering what employees have shared about themselves and reference them
- Asking if employees would like birthdays and/or work anniversaries acknowledged (Zoom gatherings to celebrate with fun backgrounds or virtual greeting cards).
- Asking how employees like to be recognized.
- Creating opportunities to celebrate wins and give appreciation (e.g., a group chat for kudos - use Teams certificate feature for recognition).

*See: [Employee Interests Form.docx](#)

DEVELOPING SELF-AWARENESS

KEY IDEA

Supervisors must be willing to grow with change to lead effectively

SUPERVISOR ROLE

Reflect, seek feedback

Supervisors lead best through self-awareness. Supervisors must lead themselves before they can lead others. Self-awareness is essential, and they should routinely reflect on their biases, assumptions, and decision-making patterns. Leaders solicit feedback and striving for improvement and ongoing leadership development isn't optional.

TIPS FOR ACTION

1. Use reflection prompts to challenge assumptions

- Use reflection prompts regularly: "Am I making space for integrated voices?"

2. Seek feedback from all team members

- Seek feedback from both employees at both campuses (approached may vary depending on the team and the individual).

3. Attend training to strengthen skills

- Pursue training in change management, cross-cultural communication, hybrid supervision and leadership.

*See: [Challenging Assumptions Template.docx](#)

REFLECTIVE PROMPTS

What feedback would help you grow as a leader?

Which habits support or hinder your effectiveness?

ACTION PLAN

How will you apply this concept in your team?

How will you seek feedback?

Possible Strategies for Seeking Feedback:

- 360 evaluations—a structured process where an employee receives confidential, anonymous feedback from multiple sources, including their manager, peers, direct reports, and sometimes clients.
- A virtual suggestion box (be sure to take action on items placed in the suggestion box). Microsoft Forms is available for this.
- One-on-one meetings are great opportunity to invite feedback (remember not to get defensive, be open and listen/seek clarity, validate and create psychological safety).
- Hold an open forum to invite feedback.

Use your best judgment considering your team and individual needs.

ACTION PLAN

KEY IDEA

Learning becomes transformation only when it translates into action. Knowledge gained in this guide is just the first step — the next is deciding how you'll use it to lead differently, communicate more effectively, and foster positive change.

SUPERVISOR ROLE

Strategically apply the learning to develop an action plan

Strategically apply the learning from this guide to take actionable steps to effectively lead your team through the integration. As a leader it is important to invest in your continuous leadership development. It is also important that you have discussions with your employees about their own professional development and provide equitable opportunities for them to develop their skills, knowledge and abilities. Based on research, we recommend 3-4 hours per month for each employee to dedicate themselves to professional development. Cal Poly's

strategic plan places our people first! Strategic Priority 2 is to cultivate the excellence of all employees. Drilling down to Goal 2D: Promote professional development opportunities for all employees. As mentioned earlier in the workshop, as a leader it is your responsibility to align with the strategic goals of the institution.

TIPS FOR ACTION

1. Develop an Action Plan to apply the learning from this guide

- In the Action Plan table below define your actionable steps towards applying the learning from this guide. This is broken down to ensure you have an action item for each of the five learning objectives.

2. Take advantage of available professional development opportunities

- Visit the [Learn and Grow](#) website where you can find all the learning opportunities available to Cal Poly employees. Here you can find workshops and resources for Leadership and Employee Development.
- Check out the available Toolkits, such as the [Change Management Toolkit](#), [Working Remotely Toolkit for Managers](#) and [Working Remotely Toolkit for Employees](#).

3. Apply the SMART Goals model

- As you build out your action plan apply the SMART Goals model outlined in the table below.
- Break your action plan into steps. Set deadlines and commit to action. At each step, celebrate your win and build momentum towards your next step in your action plan.

REFLECTIVE PROMPTS

What are your short-term and long-term professional development goals? (e.g., regarding the integration)

What skills, knowledge, and abilities do you need to reach these goals?

How can you help your employees identify their goals and gain the skills, knowledge and abilities they need to meet those goals?

ACTION PLAN

What training or professional development opportunities can you engage in to gain the desired skills, knowledge and abilities?

What training or professional development opportunities can your employees engage in to gain their desired skills, knowledge and abilities?

What step(s) can you take today towards your action plan?

SMART GOALS: Specific Measurable Achievable Relevant Time-bound	Specific: Goals should be well-defined and unambiguous so that you know exactly what you're aspiring to. Measurable: Goals should have a clear way of identifying whether you've achieved them, or if not, how close you came to them. Achievable: Setting a goal that you can realistically achieve is key to achieving it. If you feel a goal is not achievable it can be overwhelming and demotivating. Keep yourself motivated and propel yourself forward by setting reasonable goals. It is helpful to break your goals down into steps. We are wired to achieve goals with immediate rewards. Celebrate wins each step of the way. Relevant: Your goals should be relevant to you—either to improve and excel in your current role, or to align with your long-term aspirations and values. Think of this as the <i>why</i> of your goal. Time-bound: Set a deadline for your goals so you can stay on track. Be specific with deadlines for each step of your goal and truly commit to action. Make your learning and growth a priority. Make this investment in yourself. You're worth it! Our organization will also be enriched through your contributions.
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ACTION PLAN

Your Role & Alignment	
Lead Change & Build Trust	
Communication & Team Cohesion	
Inclusion & Collaboration	
Awareness & Self-Development	
Other Action Items	

RESOURCES

Integration Website	California State University Maritime Academy Integration
Website	Learn and Grow
Leadership Training	Principles of Supervision Chairing for Success CSU Leadership Academy
Toolkits	Integration Toolkit Change Management Toolkit Working Remotely Toolkit for Managers Working Remotely Toolkit for Employees
Videos	Start with Why -- How Great Leaders Inspire Action Simon Sinek
Templates	Transparency and Empathy Template.docx Listening Session Template.docx Orientation Huddle Template.docx Managing Resistance Template.docx Equity and Inclusion Template.docx Hybrid Teams Technology Template.docx Employee Interests Form.docx Challenging Assumptions Template.docx
Human Resources Policies and Procedures	Civility Statement

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Human Resources	Human Resources Website
Integration Team	cpcmintegration@calpoly.edu
Scheduling and Sharing Between Campuses	Scheduling and Sharing Between Campuses
Employee and Organization Development	learnandgrow@calpoly.edu