

Adopted: May 13, 2025

**ACADEMIC SENATE
Of
CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY
San Luis Obispo, CA**

AS-994-25

**Resolution to Call on Cal Poly’s President to Sign the American Association of
Colleges and Universities Public Statement “A Call for Constructive
Engagement”**

Impact on Existing Policy: NONE

- 1 WHEREAS, in their response to government overreach and political interference
2 in higher education, the American Association of Colleges and
3 Universities (AAC&U) distributed the Public Statement “A Call for
4 Constructive Engagement” in April 2025¹; and
5
- 6 WHEREAS, as of May 8, 2025, over 618 higher education leaders, primarily
7 university presidents and chancellors across the diverse US higher
8 education system, have signed; and
9
- 10 WHEREAS, in California alone, 17 California State University presidents, 9
11 University of California chancellors, as well as other Community
12 College and private university leaders have signed; and
13
- 14 WHEREAS, the Academic Senate of the California State University (ASCSU) passed
15 AS-3735, which requests all CSU presidents, and the CSU Chancellor
16 sign the AAC&U letter; and
17
- 18 WHEREAS, the need for unified action is urgent, as is the need to resist
19 anticipatory compliance with unlawful and anti-democratic attempted
20 control over academic freedom; and
21
- 22 WHEREAS, the message and symbolism of “A Call for Constructive Engagement” is
23 clear and rational; it represents core tenets already aligned with Cal
24 Poly’s published mission and values²; and
25
- 26 WHEREAS, the public argument put forth by the Cal Poly administration for not
27 signing the Public Statement³, “the university has no role in
28 determining public policy and therefore will not be signing on to the
29 letter,” is a *non sequitur* since the Public Statement from the AAC&U is

30 not suggesting or setting public policy but rather adopting a stance of
31 solidarity; therefore be it

32
33 RESOLVED: The Academic Senate of Cal Poly endorses the Public Statement by
34 AAC&U "A Call for Constructive Engagement"; and be it further

35
36 RESOLVED: The Academic Senate calls on the Cal Poly President to join other
37 higher education leaders in California and across the United States
38 and sign the Public Statement from the AAC&U "A Call for
39 Constructive Engagement."

Proposed by: The Academic Senate Executive Committee
Date: April 25, 2025

¹ American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), Public Statement, "A Call for Constructive Engagement," April 2025, <https://www.aacu.org/newsroom/a-call-for-constructive-engagement>.

² Cal Poly's Mission and Values statements on the President's web page, April 2025, <https://president.calpoly.edu/welcome-cal-poly>.

³ Mustang News, "Jeffrey Armstrong declines to sign statement against Trump's 'overreach'," April 24, 2025, <https://mustangnews.net/cal-poly-president-jeffrey-armstrong/>

Public Statement

A Call for Constructive Engagement

APRIL 22, 2025

This statement was developed in collaboration with university and college presidents and other educational leaders across the country, after national meetings convened by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) and the American Academy of Arts & Sciences.

As leaders of America's colleges, universities, and scholarly societies, we speak with one voice against the unprecedented government overreach and political interference now endangering American higher education. We are open to constructive reform and do not oppose legitimate government oversight. However, we must oppose undue government intrusion in the lives of those who learn, live, and work on our campuses. We will always seek effective and fair financial practices, but we must reject the coercive use of public research funding.

America's system of higher learning is as varied as the goals and dreams of the students it serves. It includes research universities and community colleges; comprehensive universities and liberal arts colleges; public institutions and private ones; freestanding and multi-site campuses. Some institutions are designed for all students, and others are dedicated to serving particular groups. Yet, American institutions of higher learning have in common the essential freedom to determine, on academic grounds, whom to admit and what is taught, how, and by whom. Our colleges and universities share a commitment to serve as centers of open inquiry where, in their pursuit of truth, faculty, students, and staff are free to exchange ideas and opinions across a full range of viewpoints without fear of retribution, censorship, or deportation.

Because of these freedoms, American institutions of higher learning are essential to American prosperity and serve as productive partners with government in promoting the common good. Colleges and universities are engines of opportunity and mobility, anchor institutions that contribute to economic and cultural vitality regionally and in our local communities. They foster creativity and innovation, provide human resources to meet the fast-changing demands of our dynamic workforce, and are themselves major employers. They nurture the scholarly pursuits that ensure America's leadership in research, and many provide healthcare and other essential services. Most fundamentally, America's colleges and universities prepare an educated citizenry to sustain our democracy.

The price of abridging the defining freedoms of American higher education will be paid by our students and our society. On behalf of our current and future students, and all who work at and benefit from our institutions, we call for constructive engagement that improves our institutions and serves our republic.

Signed,

- \ Andrés Acebo, Interim President, New Jersey City University
- \ Salvador D. Aceves, President, Regis University

- \ Kenneth Adams, President, LaGuardia Community College
- \ Kimo Ah Yun, President, Marquette University
- \ Jonathan Alger, President, American University
- \ Barbara K. Altmann, President, Franklin & Marshall College
- \ Carmen Twillie Ambar, President, Oberlin College
- \ Suzanne Ames, President, Peninsula College
- \ Mahyar A. Amouzegar, President, New Mexico Tech
- \ Michelle J. Anderson, President, Brooklyn College
- \ James J. Annarelli, President, Eckerd College
- \ Michael D. Anthony, President, Prairie State College
- \ Joseph E. Aoun, President, Northeastern University
- \ Jana Argersinger, President, Margaret Fuller Society
- \ Virginia "Ginny" Arthur, President, Metro State University
- \ Roslyn Clark Artis, President, Benedict College
- \ Cheryl Aschenbach, President, Academic Senate for California Community Colleges
- \ Valerie Sheares Ashby, President, University of Maryland, Baltimore County
- \ Dennis Assanis, President, University of Delaware
- \ Michael Avaltroni, President, Fairleigh Dickinson University
- \ Lynn Babington, President, Chaminade University of Honolulu
- \ Rick Bailey, President, Southern Oregon University
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- \ Sanda Balaban, Executive Director, Project Pericles
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- \ Andrew W. Barnes, President, Pennsylvania College of Art and Design
- \ Denise A. Battles, President, SUNY Geneseo
- \ Ian Baucom, Incoming President, Middlebury College
- \ Erika D. Beck, President, California State University, Northridge
- \ Jeff Bellantoni, Interim President, Woodbury University
- \ Allan Belton, President, Pacific Lutheran University
- \ Hubert Benitez, President, Saint Peter's University
- \ Mary Beth Benner, Executive Director, American Society for Bioethics & Humanities
- \ Joanne Berger-Sweeney, President, Trinity College (CT)
- \ Rebecca M. Bergman, President, Gustavus Adolphus College
- \ Peter Berkery, Executive Director, Association of University Presses
- \ Jesse M. Bernal, Incoming President, Western Connecticut State University
- \ Jay M. Bernhardt, President, Emerson College
- \ Michael A. Bernstein, President, The College of New Jersey

- \ Joe Bertolino, President, Stockton University
- \ Audrey Bilger, President, Reed College
- \ James Birge, President, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts
- \ Erik J. Bitterbaum, President, SUNY Cortland
- \ Mary M. Black, Acting President, Millikin University
- \ Brock Blomberg, President, California Institute of Integral Studies
- \ Robert E. Bohrer II, President, Hiram College
- \ Sarah Bolton, President, Whitman College
- \ Mary H. Bonderoff, President, SUNY Delhi
- \ MJ Borgia, Executive Director, International Studies Association
- \ Leon Botstein, President, Bard College
- \ Eric Boynton, President, Beloit College
- \ Vincent Boudreau, President, The City College of the City University of New York
- \ Lola W. Brabham, President, The Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities
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- \ Aminta H. Breaux, President, Bowie State University
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- \ Laurie A. Carter, President, Lawrence University
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- \ Teik Lim, President, New Jersey Institute of Technology
- \ James M. Limbaugh, President, West Los Angeles College
- \ Haifan Lin, President, Federation of Asian Professor Associations
- \ Charles W. Lindsay, President, Elmira College

- \ Hilary L. Link, President, Drew University
- \ Linda Livingstone, President, Baylor University
- \ Lisa A. Lori, President, Marywood University
- \ Jim Lucchese, President, Berklee College of Music
- \ P. Wesley Lundburg, President, San Diego Miramar College
- \ Timothy G. Lynch, President, College of Staten Island, CUNY
- \ Patricia A. Lynott, President, Rockford University
- \ Richard Lyons, Chancellor, University of California Berkeley
- \ Heidi Macpherson, President, SUNY Brockport
- \ John Maduko, President, Connecticut State Community College
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- \ Lynn Mahoney, President, San Francisco State University
- \ Daniel Mahony, President, Southern Illinois University
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- \ David May, President, Bellevue College
- \ Gary S. May, Chancellor, University of California, Davis
- \ Anne E. McCall, President, The College of Wooster
- \ Cheryl McConnell, President, Saint Joseph's University
- \ Mark McCormick, President, Middlesex College
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- \ Lester McCorn, President, Paine College
- \ Barbara McDonald, President, The College of St. Scholastica

- \ Michael McDonald, President, Great Lakes Colleges Association
- \ Michael McDonough, President, Raritan Valley Community College
- \ C. Andrew McGadney, President, Knox College
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- \ Shari McMahan, President, Eastern Washington University
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- \ Marty Meehan, President, University of Massachusetts
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- \ Mildred A. Mihlon, President, Felician University
- \ Scott D. Miller, President, Virginia Wesleyan University
- \ Paula F. Milone-Nuzzo, President, MGH Institute of Health Professions
- \ Kristi S. Mindrup, President, Western Illinois University
- \ Leslie Minor, Interim Superintendent/President, Taft College
- \ Marie Lynn Miranda, Chancellor, University of Illinois Chicago
- \ Jennifer Mnookin, Chancellor, University of Wisconsin–Madison
- \ Robert Mohrbacher, President, Centralia College
- \ Edward Montgomery, President, Western Michigan University
- \ Chris Moody, Executive Director, ACPA-College Student Educators International
- \ Tomas Morales, President, California State University San Bernardino
- \ Milton Moreland, President, Centre College
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We continue to accept signatures from current leaders of colleges, universities, and scholarly societies. Last updated at 5:00 p.m. ET on May 14, 2025. Currently, there are 646 signatures.



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MUSTANG NEWS

NEWS

Jeffrey Armstrong declines to sign statement against Trump's 'overreach'

Almost every university implicated in antisemitism hearings signed this statement.

by Krithi Sankar
April 24, 2025



Portrait of Cal Poly President Jeffrey D. Armstrong. Dylan Head / Courtesy of Cal Poly

Cal Poly President Jeffrey Armstrong will not sign a **joint statement opposing “unprecedented government overreach”** in American higher education, confirmed by University Spokesperson Matt Lazier Wednesday. The overreach refers to the unrelenting power the Trump administration wields over universities for what it said are inadequate responses to rising antisemitism.

“Cal Poly cares deeply about its programming, faculty and academic freedom,” Lazier said in an email to Mustang News. “However, the university has no role in determining public policy and therefore will not be signing on to the letter.”

The statement represents a unified condemnation of the challenges universities face under the Trump administration. Over 400 presidents and leaders at institutions of higher education have signed this statement from the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), published Tuesday morning.

Cal Poly joins a growing number of universities under fire for their handling of antisemitism and pro-Palestinian activism. Some institutions have seen **federal funding freezes** and **demands for institutional reform**.

On May 7, **Armstrong will testify** in front of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce to discuss the state of antisemitism on campus. Armstrong will become one of ten current and former university leaders who have been called to testify, joining the likes of Columbia University and Harvard University.

Top leaders of universities brought to testify about antisemitism on campus signed this statement, except Cal Poly and DePaul University.

The statement conveys that American universities aim to be beacons of free speech, economic mobility and innovation, but these roles are now threatened by federal actions.

Fifteen Cal State campus presidents and nine UC campus chancellors have signed the statement as of Thursday morning. UCLA is the only California public university that signed on and was also involved in a previous antisemitism hearing from the House Committee on Education and the Workforce.

A day before the statement was released, Harvard University President Alan Garber defied the Trump administration in **a campuswide message** on Monday. The message catalyzed presidents from Princeton, Stanford and Columbia universities to resist as well, **The Harvard Crimson reported**. In response, the Trump administration froze \$2.2 billion in federal funding to Harvard. Harvard has since filed a lawsuit over attempts to limit campus activism, **the Associated Press reported**.

AAC&U initially closed signatures Monday night but roughly 200 signatures have been added since the statement's initial publication.