

University Housing: How Residence Halls Changed Student Life at Cal Poly

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By

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I. Introduction

In 2014, Cal Poly President Jeffrey Armstrong submitted a “Letter to the Editor” in *The Mustang News* in which he described his vision for the future of Cal Poly housing. “As we contemplate our long-term vision for Cal Poly, we are shifting our culture to become a predominantly residential campus. In the foreseeable future, Cal Poly will house more than half — perhaps as many as two-thirds — of its students in university housing.”¹ Armstrong continued, claiming that this move of opening up around 1,400 new spaces for freshman living on-campus was “good for students,” and that he hoped these living arrangements would foster more engaged students, better academic and behavior performance, as well as a “positive change for the residents of San Luis Obispo.”²

Throughout the years, Cal Poly used university housing as a tool to expand and promote a greater environment for all students living in residential, on-campus housing. As seen through the building of complexes like Poly Canyon Village, Cerro Vista Apartments, and the future “Grand Avenue Site,” Cal Poly’s aim with university housing is to create a “broad and inclusive campus learning experience where its members embrace core values of mutual respect, academic excellence, open inquiry, free expression and respect for diversity.”³ However, Cal Poly’s goals for students living on campus, just like many universities across the United States, was not always as focused on this goal of creating a “broad and inclusive campus learning experience.”

¹ Jeffrey Armstrong, “Letters to the Editor,” *Mustang News*, April 28, 2014, accessed January 30, 2016, <http://mustangnews.net/grand-avenue-housing-project-is-next-important-step/>.

² Armstrong, “Letters to the Editor.”

³ Cal Poly University Housing Student Affairs, *University Housing Resident Handbook and Community Standards Guidelines*, 5, accessed January 30, 2016, <http://content-calpoly-edu.s3.amazonaws.com/housing/1/documents/UH%20Handbook%202015-2016.pdf>.

In the United States collegiate system, university housing has always had an influence on the dynamic on campuses. Philip Lee, a Harvard Graduate Instructor and Historian, shows that college administration and their implementation of dorm life operated *in loco parentis*, acting as a legal guardian or caretaker for college students, and ultimately, deciding what was best for students and their personal lives.⁴ The concept of *in loco parentis* is a concept of parental control that has been observed by several historians on college campuses during the 19th century and into the 20th century. Administrations developed curriculum and rules for students based on the principle that students were too immature to take care of themselves and make their own decisions,⁵ so it was up to the university to educate them on the things they felt were most important. And while the classical college curriculum tried to teach them how to behave in a more sophisticated manner, many students would use the times in the dorms to let loose from the strict rules of the university.⁶

This relationship of *in loco parentis* stayed within the student dynamic at universities across the country up until the 1960s, and Cal Poly was no exception to this philosophy. Power and decision making at college campuses across the country tended to work unilaterally and usually without question, and housing for these students tended to work within the same power structure with colleges instilling “restriction rather than freedom” and “residence with appointed bounds.”⁷ At Cal Poly, though this philosophy of *in loco parentis* was never officially

⁴ Philip Lee, “The Curious Life of *in loco parentis* in American Universities,” *Higher Education in Review* 8 (2011): 66, accessed February 9, 2016, http://scholar.harvard.edu/files/philip_lee/files/vol8lee.pdf.

⁵ Susan R. Komives and Dudley B. Woodard, “The Development of Student Affairs,” *Student Services: A Handbook for the Profession*, no. 5, (2011): 66, accessed February 9, 2016, <https://goo.gl/eXO0Av>.

⁶ Roger L. Geiger and Julia Ann Bubolz, “College As It Was in the Mid-Nineteenth Century,” in *The American College in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Roger Geiger (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2000), 83.

⁷ Lee, “The Curious Life,” 67.

acknowledged or stated, it nonetheless rang true on campus and nationwide and was represented in the structure of the dormitories and student life within the school.

Before the 1960s, Cal Poly could not accommodate any more than 1200 students in residential housing at a time.⁸ The school even went as far as to bar women's attendance from 1929 to 1956 due in part to lack of adequate facilities to house them there.⁹ These types of policies and the stringent rules placed upon residents at Cal Poly before the 1960s reflected the national college mood; however, after 1960, the national mood of student life changed. Many universities across the country denounced the *in loco parentis* power structure as being outdated and antiquated, and gradually more progressive movements swept across the country.¹⁰ At every university changes began for various reasons, and at Cal Poly the impetus for this change was the introduction of new university housing as well as new university housing policies. The advent of the Red Brick dormitories in 1960 as well as the introduction of the Sierra Madre and Yosemite Residence Halls started a slow and subtle shift of its administrative goals from that of *in loco parentis*—a paternalistic and strict approach to handling on-campus students—into the “residential college” experience of integrated student living and learning. It is from these two differing time periods that one can see the importance university housing had in changing Cal

⁸ *California State Polytechnic College Bulletin: Catalog 1955-1956*, 14-15, accessed February 9, 2016, <http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/catalogs/54/>.

⁹ “Speech given by Robert E. Kennedy at the Householder’s Meeting,” August 31, 1955, 144.03, Robert E. Kennedy Papers, Special Collections and Archives, California Polytechnic State University.

¹⁰ Michael Moffatt, “College Life: Undergraduate Culture and Higher Education,” *The Journal of Higher Education*, Vol 62. No. 1 (Jan-Feb., 1991), 49, accessed February 9, 2016, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1982100?seq=6#page_scan_tab_contents.

Poly from a stringent, rule-based campus into one marked by student freedom and vibrant campus life.

II. *In Loco Parentis* in the American University

The principles of *in loco parentis* at universities in America first came to fruition through the structure left behind by old British common law traditions.¹¹ Lee argues that it is these traditions that shaped the American college experience from the mid-1800s to the 1960s as universities “assumed...responsibility over their students’ lives that went well beyond academics.”¹² This trend of authoritative power at the university level was widely recognized and even upheld by court cases such as *People v. Wheaton College* in 1866, in which The Supreme Court of Illinois described university influence as “A discretionary power...given [to college authorities] to regulate the discipline of their college in such a manner they deem proper...we have no more authority to interfere than we have to control the domestic discipline of a father in his family.”¹³ In a thesis by Craig Forrest at the University of Missouri-Columbia, it is highlighted that between 1866 and the 1910s, “courts consistently ruled that college students did not have constitutional right[s] to due process,”¹⁴ and it is from court cases such as these that the role and influence of the American college as an institution of moralistic character-building was born. College campuses across the country at this time maintained fairly small student populations,¹⁵ and were able to more easily wield their influences through rules such as

¹¹ Lee, “The Curious Life,” 67.

¹² Lee, “The Curious Life,” 67.

¹³ Lee, “The Curious Life,” 68.

¹⁴ Craig Forrest, “The Demise of *In Loco Parentis* in American Higher Education: Campus Rules and Student Behavior at the University of Missouri, 1866 to 1975” (M.A. thesis, University of Missouri-Columbia, 2013), 12, accessed February 26, 2016, <http://tinyurl.com/z8qqxat>.

¹⁵ Forrest, “The Demise of *In Loco Parentis*,” 13.

restrictions on social events, curfews, regulations of free speech, and socialization.¹⁶ This was seen at several prominent universities across the country including Harvard, Columbia, Yale, and even Princeton.¹⁷ Many of these policies stemmed from the belief that students in college were immature and needed to be taught how to behave like well-functioning members of society; moreover, the belief that students were immature also stemmed from the fact that at this time, students could not vote were not seen as adults, but rather as children.¹⁸

This attitude towards students, however, began to fundamentally shift at the start of the 1960s, and with it, so did student life on campus. As noted by Moffatt in his assessment of student life at Rutgers, the university, “like other American colleges, officially renounced *in loco parentis* authority in the late 1960s.”¹⁹ During this time, college attendance exploded with higher education enrollment increasing 49% in the 1950s and 120% in the 1960s.²⁰ A national wave of political activism ranging from protests against the Vietnam War to the Civil Rights Movement uprooted the ideals of *in loco parentis*, with administration unable to control new founded student activism and increases in diverse student demographics. And with student activism taking a major role in American colleges, many students began advocating for greater student rights to due process at schools.²¹ Students began to challenge the role of administrators as parental figures and their roles in controlling the aspects of their lives that included socializing and whom they could hang out with, when, and where.

¹⁶ Lee, “The Curious Life,” 67.

¹⁷ Forrest, “The Demise of *In Loco Parentis*,” 14.

¹⁸ Forrest, “The Demise of *In Loco Parentis*,” 15.

¹⁹ Michael Moffatt, “College Life,” 49.

²⁰ Thomas D. Snyder, ed., *120 Years of American Education: A Statistical Portrait*, (National Center for Education Statistics, 1993), 65-66, accessed February 27, 2016, <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs93/93442.pdf>.

²¹ Lee, “The Curious Life,” 72.

With this change, many college administrators tried to adapt their previous roles of *in loco parentis* into ways in which they could still cultivate students and help them grow into functioning adults. It is from this, that many colleges began to make use of the “residential college model” of education.²² This model focused on creating a learning environment in which students could be taught both formal and informal multidisciplinary and academic teachings through the use of campus housing and in-residence faculty.²³ Through residential housing, many schools after the 1960s replaced *in loco parentis* with a new way of educating students that focused on enriching the pulse of student life on campus. “Residence halls” became the focus for many schools as the new way to broaden the scope of what higher education meant, acknowledging that the experience of college learning happens beyond the reaches of the classroom.²⁴

III. Cal Poly and *in loco parentis*: 1900-1960

Like the other colleges of this time, Cal Poly also had policies that fell along the lines of *in loco parentis*. The California State Polytechnic University was founded in 1901 as a Polytechnic school dedicated towards cultivating men and women of the local area into educated workers in agriculture and other technical fields.²⁵ In Cal Poly’s early years, the school’s aim was to supply “an institution which will give boys and girls a training in the arts and sciences

²² James Penven, et al., “The Past, Present, and Future of Residential Colleges: Looking Back at S. Stewart Gordon’s ‘Living and Learning in College,’” *Journal of College and University Student Housing* vol. 39/40, no. 2 (2013): 116, accessed February 26, 2016, <http://tinyurl.com/hyuqlou>.

²³ Penven, et al., “The Past, Present, and Future,” 118.

²⁴ John H. Schuh, ed., *Educational Programming and Student Learning in College and University Residence Halls* (International: Association of College and University Housing Officers, 1999), 52.

²⁵ *The Polytechnic Journal*, January 1906, Special Collections and Archives, California Polytechnic State University, 5, accessed February 27, 2016, <http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=polytechnicjournal>.

which deal peculiarly with country life—the life of the home, the far, the orchard, the dairy, and the shop.”²⁶ Moreover, Cal Poly used the size of the student population and their campus housing during these years as a means to regulate the activities of the students as deemed necessary by *in loco parentis* ideals. On-campus housing in particular during the early 1900s for both boys and girls was fairly strict. In a housing memo to students in the boy’s dormitory, administration laid out expectations of the dorm: “student occupants are under the supervision of the officer in charge who is a resident of the building...the dormitory is a self-governing military unit in accordance with the United States Military Regulations.”²⁷ Cal Poly’s housing regulations were more along the lines of a “boarding school” with the limited number of rooms subject to daily inspections so that boys would conduct themselves as “gentlemen,” as the statutes emphasized.²⁸

Though those kinds of rules were not uncommon for the times, Cal Poly was forced to exert its power in 1929 when the state officially disallowed women from attending the university. Though this was at first met with initial resistance by many in the community, the state legislature that mandated this rule ultimately upheld and enforced this barring of women from attending Cal Poly, and the school abided by these rules.²⁹ In the years subsequent to this, Cal Poly used the restrictions placed upon them by the state as well as circumstances of the time in order to practice unilateral power over students and their lives on campus.

²⁶ *The Polytechnic Journal*, 5.

²⁷ *On Campus Housing/Boys Dormitory: Circular of Info and Statues of CA*, 1917, 214.01, Special Collections and Archives, California Polytechnic State University.

²⁸ *On Campus Housing/Boys Dormitory*, 1917.

²⁹ Nancy Loe, et al., *The First Hundred Years* (San Luis Obispo: Robert E. Kennedy Library, California Polytechnic State University, 2001), 35.

Much like the education of Cal Poly at the time, student events were closely monitored by staff with rules as to how to properly conduct oneself.³⁰ In fact, Cal Poly's infrastructure as a technical school, from both student policy to education, was so well established by the 1940s, that during the time when Cal Poly was used in conjunction with a Naval Flight Preparatory School for World War II, administration determined that "because the college was so essentially related to basic National production needs in peace, it required no change in policy, training approach or methods to become an educational arsenal for war."³¹ Through all of these events, it was clear that Cal Poly's main objectives in operating *in loco parentis* focused mainly on making sure that students were provided with the technical skills needed to become well-functioning workers for their local communities. The practical skills they learned in the classroom were complimented with strict supervision and guidance in their small, on-campus dormitories on how to become well-mannered adults, and this model for developing well-educated workers stayed with Cal Poly for much of the first half of the 20th century.

As time progressed, Cal Poly's culture of rigid rules and overly-traditional values began to show slight signs of progress as the years went on. In the 1956, President Julian McPhee decided that Cal Poly would once again allow women to enroll and live on campus again. In an address given by the Vice President at the time, Robert E. Kennedy, administration voiced its concern about how Cal Poly was established in 1901 with the purpose of allowing both sexes the opportunity to furnish their mental training in the arts and sciences, and how since 1929 they

³⁰ Earl Williams, "The California Polytechnic: Regulations and Directions for School Functions," *The Polygram* (San Luis Obispo), January 13, 1928, accessed February 26, 2016, <http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1192&context=studentnewspaper>.

³¹ *California State Polytechnic: Circular of Information and Announcement of Courses*, 1943-1944, 3, Special Collections and Archives, California Polytechnic State University, accessed January 27, 2016, <http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1039&context=catalogs>.

were unable to meet those requirements due to the “lack of adequate facilities” to house both males and females.³² With women being allowed back on campus during the 1956 academic school year, administration had to figure out how to begin accommodating for a projected goal of enrolling 2700 men and 900 women on campus,³³ a far cry from any numbers the school could previously support in their on-campus dormitories. Cal Poly did not want to place the burden of student expansion on the homeowners and the city of San Luis Obispo, so in 1960 they opened new residence halls known as South Mountain dormitories, a new student housing complex that had been under development for a few years,³⁴ in order to accommodate for the new influx of students. Though the introduction of these new dorms did not lead to any immediate changes in the way that Cal Poly handled their students, the expansion of the diversity and size of the student population due to the introduction of new housing from 1956-1960 started a slow chain of events that eventually shifted Cal Poly’s dealing with students from the classic *in loco parentis* model to more of a modern educational approach to handling residents on campus.

IV. Cal Poly and the Introduction of Residence Halls: 1960-1970

With the South Mountain Residence Halls—later known as the Red Bricks—opening their doors in 1960 and women allowed back on campus, Cal Poly stayed consistent in their role as *in loco parentis* in maintaining previous standards over the lives of students living on campus through the rules set forth by the residence halls. Not only were men and women separated in the Red Brick living quarters—only women were allowed to live in the Santa Lucia and Trinity

³² *Speech given by Robert E. Kennedy, 1955.*

³³ *Speech given by Robert E. Kennedy, 1955.*

³⁴ “Nine Years Growth...,” *El Mustang* (San Luis Obispo), April 29, 1960, accessed January 19, 2016, <http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1928&context=studentnewspaper>.

Halls while men lived in Muir, Tenaya, Sequoia, and Fremont Halls and other previous established males' halls³⁵—but they also had very specific rules set in place by administration.

The halls had a “points” infraction based system as well as “campuses,” which were the equivalents of detentions, as a means for punishing unacceptable behaviors.³⁶ Dress guides were provided for both men and women at the time of how to dress on what days; moreover, visitation and curfews between co-eds, as seen by the separation by dorms, was highly regulated.³⁷ Just as they had done before, Cal Poly tried to maintain regulation of their relatively small, but ever growing, student population through the rules they placed upon living quarters for students. However, the model of *in loco parentis* the university had used for its 60 years of existence, began to show signs of being outdated and challenged.

Many students during the early sixties spoke out against the stringent rules that the university placed upon students, especially those regarding co-ed visitations and curfews. In an editorial written by the managing editor at the time, Betsy Kingman of the *El Mustang* news spoke out about the stringent curfews placed upon students by administration. Kingman lamented that curfews starting at 10:30 pm restricted students from attending social activities that went even just fifteen minutes past, even going as far as to call out administration for having the impression of coeds as being “irresponsible” according to their policies.³⁸ In 1963, the student sentiment against ‘outdated’ policies came to an apex when the Student Affairs Council sent a

³⁵ *California State Polytechnic College Bulletin: Course Catalog 1962-1963*, July 1962, 37-38, Special Collections and Archives, California Polytechnic State University.

³⁶ *Campus Cues*, 1966-1967, 670, Special Collections and Archives, California Polytechnic State University.

³⁷ *Campus Cues*, 1966-1967.

³⁸ Betsy Kingman, “Extend the Coed Curfew,” *El Mustang* (San Luis Obispo), November 20, 1962, accessed January 19, 2016,

<http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2092&context=studentnewspaper>.

proposed resolution to the Dean of Students in order to protest the suspension of two female students by the University for attending an off-campus barbeque. At the time, women were not allowed at any type of event where males were involved, and the Student Affairs Council brought together a case for amending that rule.³⁹ Though this was in direct challenge to the administrative authority of Cal Poly, Everett Chandler, the Dean of Students at the time, allowed for the Student Affairs Council to make the rules more reasonable so as to allow responsible students the freedom to act maturely.⁴⁰ After doing due diligence and consulting with other universities, the Student Affairs Committee and the Associated Student Body released a resolution to allow persons over 21 to freely visit friends off campus regardless of opposite sex while persons under 21 were to abide by the normal college visitation rules set forth by the university on campus.⁴¹

Though this change in visitation hours was small at the time, it would mark the first successful challenge by students of Cal Poly's *in loco parentis model*, and also showed students that Cal Poly administration would be willing to change that model within reason, a big change from the days of absolute authority wielded over students in the early parts of its history. This sentiment of administrative leniency and listening directly to student concerns was something that President Kennedy focused on during this time.⁴² Kennedy felt that it was extremely important for administrators at Cal Poly to understand changing student ideals and for administration to be adaptable to these changes. Cal Poly's Administration created a culture

³⁹ *The Special Resolution Committee on Coed Discipline*, 1963-1964, 670.1, Coed Discipline, Special Collections and Archives, California Polytechnic State University.

⁴⁰ *The Special Resolution Committee*, 1963-1964.

⁴¹ *The Special Resolution Committee*, 1963-1964.

⁴² Robert E. Kennedy, *Learn By Doing: Memoirs of a University President: A Personal Journey with the Seventh President of California Polytechnic State University* (San Luis Obispo: California Polytechnic State University, 2001), 295-296.

during the 1960s that cultivated very healthy student-administration relationships and marked a change in the way Cal Poly had previously dealt with student issues.

V. Cal Poly's Expansion: 1970-1980

As the decade progressed, Cal Poly's regulations over students still remained relatively similar to the rules in place before the 1960s, but pressure for empowerment by students was building. It could be seen at other schools across the country. Students were beginning to protest for their rights as individuals, and as Cal Poly had seen with its own influx of students, the growing number of college students nationwide was beginning to have huge impacts on the role of the *in loco parentis* model across the country. The Red Brick dorms had changed student life at Cal Poly in allowing women to come back onto campus as the dynamic of students was changed from a small school of several hundred boys to a school that could accommodate up to 2,000 students at a time—one-third of which were female.⁴³ Student life was starting to become much more vibrant and outspoken at the turn of the 1970s, and the death knell for the old guard of administrative regulations on students came with the advent of Yosemite and Sierra Madre towers.

The Yosemite and Sierra Madre towers were first officially introduced as residence halls and opened in the fall of 1973.⁴⁴ With the opening of these halls, Cal Poly was able to house up to 3,000 students on campus.⁴⁵ Once again, Cal Poly had fairly large influx of students living on-

⁴³*California State Polytechnic College Bulletin: Course Catalog 1969-1970*, 18, Special Collections and Archives, California Polytechnic State University.

⁴⁴*Your Choice of Housing Facilities*, 1974, 57, Special Collections and Archives, California Polytechnic State University.

⁴⁵*California State Polytechnic College Announcements: Course Catalog 1973-1975*, July 1973, 62, Special Collections and Archives, California Polytechnic State University.

campus at Cal Poly, and with that influx came the problem of finding a way to separate housing by coeds and controlling the behaviors of the students. By this time, most of Cal Poly's housing rules and its role as *in loco parentis* had been dramatically reduced by 1975. Dress codes and curfews were all but gone, with the only rules in place between genders that persisted were much less stringent visitation hours: 10am-12am on weekdays, and 10am-2am Friday and Saturday.⁴⁶ Committees like ASI and the Student Affairs Council also had made their presence known on campus, giving more power to the students, at the same time as the passing of the 26th Amendment in 1971 which lowered the voting age, and thus the standard for 'adult' age, down to eighteen years.⁴⁷ All of these factors combined to empower student rights on campus and led administrators at Cal Poly to rethink their facilitation of student life, and with it student housing on-campus. So starting in 1974, Cal Poly introduced coed living situations in all dorms,⁴⁸ and by 1978 all limitations on coed visiting hours⁴⁹ and living restrictions⁵⁰ had been completely lifted into what we see presently.

Moreover, it is around this time that Cal Poly made the official switch from the *in loco parentis* to the Residence Hall model of helping cultivate student lives. Instead of trying to be the stand in parent for students living on-campus, Cal Poly introduced the Learning Living Programs as well as the Connections Learning Communities in the Red Bricks and Towers. These models replaced trying to control aspects of student life, and instead focused on cultivating "a place to

⁴⁶ *Living on Campus, 1975-1976*, 57, Special Collections and Archives, California Polytechnic State University.

⁴⁷ "Amendment XXVI: Right to Vote at Age 18," National Constitution Center, accessed March 9, 2016, <http://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution/amendments/amendment-xxvi>.

⁴⁸ *Your Choice of Housing Facilities*, 1974.

⁴⁹ *Living on Campus, 1978-1979*, 241.01, Special Collections and Archives, California Polytechnic State University.

⁵⁰ *Housing List*, 1978, 241.03, Special Collections and Archives, California Polytechnic State University.

live and learn together”⁵¹ as well as having students intentionally engaging on interactions with people similar to them.⁵² It is from the expansion of housing and the switch of the university to the residence hall education program that Cal Poly began to experience the start of a more inclusive, vibrant, and modern version of student life more like what we see in the present history.

VI. Conclusion: A Modern Perspective

After the towers were built, Cal Poly continued expanding its campus throughout the years to accommodate more and more students and continued to mold its vision as a campus that cultivated a culture of learning and independence in student life. Cal Poly introduced Cerro Vista apartments in the fall of 2003 as on-campus student apartments⁵³ which emphasized a “Transitions” theme of education for transfer and first-year students looking for a community which fostered independence and off-campus style living.⁵⁴ These expansions at the turn of the century showed the full transformation of the university into what Cal Poly President Warren Baker deemed as a “residential college” in which the campus environment gives them the time and resources to find their interests and cultivate their passions: a true “Learn by Doing” experience.⁵⁵ Recognizing the importance of residents learning and living on campus, Cal Poly

⁵¹ “Living Learning Program,” Cal Poly: University Housing, accessed February 28, 2016, http://www.housing.calpoly.edu/content/res_life/llp.

⁵² “Connections Learning Community,” Cal Poly: University Housing, accessed February 28, 2016, http://www.housing.calpoly.edu/content/res_life/connections.

⁵³ *Cal Poly Student Catalog 2003-2005*, 44, Special Collections and Archives, California Polytechnic State University, accessed February 28, 2016, <http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1086&context=catalogs>.

⁵⁴ *Cal Poly Student Catalog 2011-2013*, 310, Special Collections and Archives, California Polytechnic State University, accessed February 28, 2016, <http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1098&context=catalogs>.

⁵⁵ *Cal Poly Student Catalog 2003-2005*, 5.

also instated the Poly Canyon Village apartments in the fall of 2009, focused on housing college sophomores⁵⁶ and expanding the college by about three thousand more students.⁵⁷

So it is through these housing developments, that Cal Poly has managed to nurture and cultivate student life by allowing for residents to experience college as both a living and learning experience. As Cal Poly progressed through its history, the university found it necessary and appropriate to make the changes to its administrative policies which allowed for students to practice their rights as adults and experience the full extent of independence on campus. In Cal Poly's 2011 mission statement, the school prioritized its focus on ensuring that both faculty and students were partners in fostering a learn-by-doing environment centered around discovery⁵⁸, a far cry from the history of college *in loco parentis*.

So looking forward to our own future, as Cal Poly begins its plans to open new housing on Grand Avenue in 2018, a project that will no doubt add thousands of more students to on-campus housing, it is important to note how much residential life and Cal Poly's transformation to a residential college has affected students time here at this university. With Cal Poly trying to shift its culture towards a predominantly residential campus, and with hopes of housing up to two-thirds of all students in on-campus residence halls,⁵⁹ one can see the positive effects that expansion of residential life has had on student life and the diversity of its population throughout its history. The effects have not gone unnoticed by current President Jeffrey Armstrong:

⁵⁶ *Cal Poly Student Catalog 2009-2011*, 33, Special Collections and Archives, California Polytechnic State University, accessed February 28, 2016,

<http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1089&context=catalogs>.

⁵⁷ "Cal Poly San Luis Obispo Poly Canyon Village," Best Practices 2011, accessed February 28, 2016, <http://greenbuildings.berkeley.edu/pdfs/bp2011-calpoly-village.pdf>.

⁵⁸ *Cal Poly Student Catalog 2011-2013*, 1.

⁵⁹ Armstrong, "Letters to the Editor."

“our residence halls are more than dorms; they offer academic and social support programs that are key to early academic success...changes are afoot at Cal Poly — ones we believe will benefit both our campus and our community. But some things will never change: We remain committed to Learn By Doing, student success and excellence, and we recommit ourselves...to keep San Luis Obispo the vibrant and inviting community we all cherish.”⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Armstrong, “Letters to the Editor.”

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Cal Poly Student Catalog 2003-2005. 2003, 5, 44. Special Collections and Archives, California Polytechnic State University. Accessed February 28, 2016. <http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1086&context=catalogs>.

Cal Poly Student Catalog 2009-2011. 2009, 33. Special Collections and Archives, California Polytechnic State University. Accessed February 28, 2016. <http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1089&context=catalogs>.

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California State Polytechnic College Announcements: Course Catalog 1973-1975. July 1973, 62. Special Collections and Archives, California Polytechnic State University.

California State Polytechnic College Bulletin: Course Catalog 1955-1956: 14-15. Accessed February 9, 2016. <http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/catalogs/54/>.

California State Polytechnic College Bulletin: Course Catalog 1969-1970. 1969-1970, 18. Special Collections and Archives, California Polytechnic State University.

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