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**California Polytechnic State University
Special Collections & Archives**

**Journalism Department
UA0056**

Collection ID: UA0056

Title: Journalism Department

Dates: 1906 - 2016

Creator: College of Liberal Arts, Journalism Department

Extent: 5LF, 3 boxes

Abstract: Documents, photographs, newspapers, and exhibit content related to the Journalism Department.

Language: English

Repository: California Polytechnic State University
Robert E. Kennedy Library
Special Collections and Archives
1 Grand Avenue
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407
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URL: <http://www.lib.calpoly.edu/specialcollections/>

Provenance: Transfer.

Accessions: 2016.0033

Processed by: Berlin Loa, 2016

Preferred Citation UA0056 Journalism Department, Special Collections and Archives, California Polytechnic State University



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Historical Note:

Founded in the 1920s, the Journalism Department is one of 16 programs in the College of Liberal Arts. The department offers a Bachelor of Science degree in Journalism with emphases available in broadcasting, multimedia, news-editorial, and public relations. A student-run news organization is a core element of the department and is representative of Cal Poly's "learn-by-doing" approach. Journalism student work in communications media including the Mustang Daily student newspaper; KCPR 91.3, the FM-stereo radio station; Central Coast PRspectives, a public relations firm; or with CPTV, Cal Poly's TV station.

While students have published a campus newspaper or other periodic journal since 1916, journalism classes were first offered in 1927 in the English Department as supplements to vocational training. Course requirements at the time included publishing in the biweekly student newspaper. In 1932 a loss in state funding prompted a significant campus reorganization; Cal Poly closed the high school, the junior college, and related programs. Journalism classes were no longer offered and *The Polygram*, a weekly campus newsletter, ceased production.

In 1938, the student newspaper returned with the new title: *El Mustang*, and in 1939 journalism courses returned under the English Department. Robert E. Kennedy, former reporter and public relations officer and future Cal Poly president, joined Cal Poly in 1940 as Head of Journalism. The coursework transformed under his leadership. By 1947 a department of English, Public Speaking, and Journalism had. Kennedy was also responsible for establishing the Agricultural Journalism Department in 1950, a visionary program that prepared Ag students for jobs as reporters and editors with rural newspapers and agricultural journals. With support from alumni, the Brock Center for Agricultural Communication was established in partnership with the Journalism Department to foster communication between the agricultural industry, the media, and the public in the 1980s.

In 1960, the Journalism Department expanded and was renamed the Technical Journalism. It offered three concentrations: Industrial Journalism, Community Journalism, and Home Economics Journalism. "Technical" was dropped from the title in 1968 and over the next two decades new concentrations in Broadcast Journalism and Public Relations were introduced. By the 1990s students were able to build unique curriculum packages to maximize their preparation for future careers in journalism.

The journalism department adopted new technologies and additional media outlets for informing the Cal Poly community throughout its history on campus. Students launched the first Cal Poly campus news website in 2006, added the Cal Poly mobile app in 2012, and fully integrated social media in 2013. The department also sponsors student chapters of the Society of Professional Journalists, Radio-Television News Directors Association, and the Public Relations Student Society of America. The department serves as headquarters for the California Intercollegiate Press Association (CIPA).



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Scope and Content:

Documents, photographs, newspapers, and exhibit content related to the Journalism Department. Correspondence to and from Ralph M. Alexander related to a journalism workshop offered in collaboration with the California Scholastic Press Association.

Arrangement:

The collection is arranged as a single series by subject, then by format. Original organization of the records has been preserved where possible. Materials may have been reorganized or rehoused for preservation and access purposes.

Related Collections:

Sources:

100 Years of Delivering the News, 14 Oct. – 9 Dec, 2016, Robert E. Kennedy Library, San Luis Obispo.

"Cal Poly Student Press to Mark 100th Anniversary" Cal Poly, undated,
<http://journalism.calpoly.edu/news/calpoly/press-anniversary>.

Cal Poly Course Catalogs, 1916 – 2000.

Access:

Collection is open to researchers by appointment only. For more information on visiting, access policies, and reproduction requests, please visit our [Reference Services](http://lib.calpoly.edu/search-and-find/collections-and-archives/reference-services/) page online at <http://lib.calpoly.edu/search-and-find/collections-and-archives/reference-services/>.

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