ACADEMIC SENATE
Executive Committee
REFERRAL FORM

CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, POMONA

Date:	11/19/2025
To:	Select Senate Standing Committee or Enter Ad Hoc Committee
From:	Academic Senate Executive Committee
Subject:	Academic Senate Referral
Classification	**AP-017-256**
Title of Referral:	**Electrical and Computer Engineering Department Split**
Background:	See attached referral request form. Additional background provided by the Executive Committee: None.
Recommended resources:	See attached referral request form and supporting documentation. Additional resources recommended by the Executive Committee: Deans, Associate Deans, Department Chairs, Psychology and Sociology Faculty Members For the Committee's Report on this referral, please list in separate sections, the resources recommended and resources actually consulted. If a resource was not consulted, briefly state why.
Review and recommend:	Review and recommend as appropriate.
Date required for presenting committee report to the Executive Committee:	3/11/2026

Your Name: Ashley Ly

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Title of Referral: Electrical and Computer Engineering Department Split

Names and Titles of proponents:

Keywords: Electrical, Computer, Engineering, Department, Split

Is there a deadline by when this referral needs to be considered by the Academic Senate?

Deadline Date:

Justification for deadline:

BACKGROUND:

Electrical and Computer Engineering Department Overview

The Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE) Department has long supported two distinct yet closely related degree programs: Electrical Engineering (EE) and Computer Engineering (CPE). The EE program was established in 1960. The CPE program was introduced in 2000, with some additional tenure lines added soon after. Both programs were structured to share faculty and resources. The department also offers an MS in Electrical Engineering. Both undergraduate programs successfully received ABET reaccreditation in 2023. With enrollment growth and the development of new academic programs, described in more detail below, the department's structure must adapt to better serve students and faculty. Establishing independent Electrical Engineering and Computer Engineering departments will streamline operations, improve student advising, and allow for more focused program development, ensuring both fields continue to grow and align with industry and educational needs.

Between 2015 and 2024, the total number of undergraduate ECE majors grew by approximately 40%, with each program increasing at an average annual rate of 5%. During this period, both programs have been impacted, which has meant that this growth has been controlled.

Applications to both undergraduate programs have remained consistently high over the past decade, with Electrical Engineering experiencing a 70% increase in applicants since 2021. To accommodate this growth, the department's full-time equivalent faculty (FTEF) expanded by an average of 1.4 per year between 2019 and 2024, resulting in a 30% overall increase, with much of this growth driven by a 65% increase in the FTEF from temporary faculty.

Justification and Rationale for Separation

The proposal for the department split originated from discussions among ECE faculty during the Spring 2024 and Fall 2024 semesters. These discussions considered various academic and administrative factors, ultimately leading to a vote by tenure-line faculty, including FERP faculty. The results of the vote were strongly supportive of the split (16 yays, 4 nays, and 1 abstention), reflecting a collective agreement that restructuring would enhance student learning experiences, improve academic support, and better align with the university's mission and strategic goals.

Academic Growth and Program Expansion

The department's significant growth and steady increase in annual enrollment have made it increasingly complex to manage. Additionally, the department is actively developing a BS in Software Engineering and an MS in Computer Engineering, both of which are included in the university's Academic Master Plan. These programs will further drive enrollment growth, making the split essential for better oversight, improved faculty alignment, and streamlined program management. Importantly, the increase in the number of degree programs would significantly challenge a single department's ability to manage the number and diversity of temporary faculty.

Distinct Focus Areas

EE and CPE have distinct academic and industry focus, for example EE on communications, signal processing, and power systems, and CPE on embedded systems, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and computing. After the split, the two departments will have the opportunity to focus on portions of the currently-shared curriculum of most relevance to their specific degrees. Splitting the department will enhance research focus, industry collaboration, and curriculum development in each field.

Improving Curriculum Management and Student Advising

Managing a rapidly growing and diverse curriculum has made it more challenging to provide students with personalized advising and academic support. Splitting the department will ensure that students receive guidance from mentors specialized in their respective fields, leading to clearer academic pathways and better career preparation. Dedicated leadership for each program will also allow for more responsive curriculum development and resource allocation, creating a more focused and supportive learning environment tailored to student success.

Alignment with University Mission and Values

This restructuring supports Cal Poly Pomona's core mission by enhancing experiential learning through tailored lab experiences and research opportunities, fostering innovation with specialized research initiatives and industry collaborations, and improving student success through focused advising and well-defined academic pathways. By creating distinct departments, the split departments can better serve students, strengthen faculty expertise, and advance its commitment to hands-on learning.

Program Quality, Enrollment Growth, and Workforce Demand

Maintenance of Program Quality and Accreditation

The proposed split will maintain the high academic standards and accreditation of both programs while enhancing their ability to evolve and meet student needs. The BS in Electrical Engineering and BS in Computer Engineering are already independently accredited by ABET, which evaluates degree programs rather than departments. As a result, regardless of departmental restructuring, both programs will retain their accreditation status and continue to meet national standards of excellence.

To ensure a smooth transition, both newly formed departments will collaborate to support existing programs and courses, ensuring that student progress is not disrupted. While the curriculum will remain the same initially, the separation will allow for more flexible and responsive curriculum development over time, enabling each department to better adapt to industry advancement and evolving educational needs.

To support the sustainability of the newly independent departments, the Dean has assured faculty that the necessary resources will be allocated to maintain their long-term success. These supports include staff (ASC) and additional faculty lines.

Resource Consideration Post-Split

Department Chair and Office

Following the split, each new department will have its own Department Chair and department office. The current ECE department office will be used by one of the newly formed departments, while the other department will receive a new office space, with the Dean supportive of this plan.

Shared Resources, Labs, and Equipment

The current ECE laboratories and equipment will be shared between the newly formed EE and CPE departments to ensure continuity in teaching and scholarship. Faculty have discussed and agreed on lab allocations, granting preferential access to specific labs based on each department's academic focus and the equipment available in each space. The Electrical Engineering department will have priority access to labs 9-119 and 9-503, while the Computer Engineering department will have priority access to labs 9-111 and 9-507. Despite these preferential allocations, all labs and equipment will remain accessible to both departments, ensuring that students benefit from a broad range of resources to support their learning and scholarship.

Faculty Office Assignments

All current ECE faculty members will retain their offices in Building 9, regardless of which department they choose to join.

Courses

Faculty reviewed the existing ECE courses and determined an initial allocation between the two departments. As a result, two new course prefixes will be created: EE (Electrical Engineering) and CPE (Computer Engineering). Faculty reached an initial agreement on the distribution of both undergraduate and graduate courses, while also identifying cross-listed courses to ensure that students from both programs can access key interdisciplinary coursework. Since the department does not currently offer service courses, no other programs within the university will be affected by this split.