

1 Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) at CSUSM  
2 Request for Comments  
3 Study Group on ROTC at CSUSM  
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5 There is a proposal to offer for-credit Army ROTC (Reserve Officers Training Corps) courses at CSUSM through  
6 Extended Learning. The proposal to bring ROTC courses to San Marcos has raised a number of concerns, thus the  
7 Executive Committee of the Academic Senate formed a Study Group to investigate these concerns (membership of the  
8 Study Group is at the end of this document). The study group is asking for comment from campus groups and  
9 individuals regarding these concerns. Background information and a list of concerns that the study group has identified  
10 are further below; we would appreciate your input regarding these concerns. We would also appreciate any other  
11 concerns that you may have and your overall opinion on whether CSUSM should provide ROTC courses.  
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13 How to respond:

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15 If you would like to discuss these issues with the study group, or have study group representatives attend a meeting of  
16 your department, unit, or organization, contact the Study Group to make the necessary arrangements. Written  
17 comments submitted as email attachments are also encouraged. To contact the Study Group, email the co-chair, Don  
18 Barrett ([d Barrett@csusm.edu](mailto:d Barrett@csusm.edu)), and please put 'ROTC' in the subject line of the email. All responses will be considered  
19 anonymous unless there is a specific request to be identified in the final report. So that the study group can make a  
20 recommendation regarding ROTC by mid-March, we would appreciate receiving all responses by February, 28, 2009  
21 (earlier would be appreciated.)  
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23 All members of the campus community are also invited to participate in an Academic Affairs Town Hall Meeting on  
24 ROTC on Tuesday, 2/24, from 12:00 to 12:50 in MARK 125.  
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27 BACKGROUND  
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29 ROTC (Reserve Officers' Training Corps) is a series of for-credit college courses and associated activities designed to  
30 provide students with skills and leadership training to become an officer in the U.S. military. Currently CSUSM  
31 students who are members of ROTC take their ROTC courses at SDSU (for Army), USD (for Navy and Marines), or  
32 SDSU (for Air Force).  
33

34 Federal law (the Solomon Act) requires universities to count for-credit ROTC course work that a student has taken  
35 elsewhere as towards a degree, though the law does not require a university to offer ROTC courses.  
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38 CONCERNS  
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40 Oversight: When for-credit courses and a course of study are listed in the catalog, it is assumed that the university has  
41 taken an active part in developing the direction of the course of study and in monitoring over time the delivery of the  
42 course of study. The institution, through its colleges or departments, is also assumed to have been responsible for the  
43 hiring and supervision of the faculty that teach the courses.

44 The ROTC course of study and the content of the courses are determined by the military service, though the Academic  
45 Senate can request the inclusion of additional courses in the course of study. The core ROTC program at CSUSM  
46 would involve a sequence of 3 CU courses taken every semester starting at the first year level and continuing through  
47 the senior year, for a total of 24 CU; the course of study is recognized as a minor at other CSU's though it has not been  
48 proposed as a minor here. The military personnel who teach the courses would be supervised by the military service,  
49 though the sponsoring unit (Extended Learning) could make suggestions regarding course delivery. Thus if CSUSM  
50 offers ROTC we would be offering a series of courses where the institution has much less oversight than usual  
51 regarding the content and delivery of the courses.  
52

53 Resources: The current proposal from the Army includes the regular resource requirements for offering courses –  
54 office, classrooms, recognition of the faculty, listing in the catalog as a program, and accreditation of the course work.  
55 The Army will pay all office costs (including office rent if necessary), all faculty and staff salaries, and parking. Since

56 students would be charged regular fees but there is no faculty cost, offering ROTC is a net financial gain for the  
57 university. How to distribute that net gain has not been determined, but suggestions for the distribution of it can be part  
58 of the responses to this request. Note also that ROTC students may receive scholarships.

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60 Ethical discrimination issue: It is the official policy of the U.S. military to prohibit military service by anyone who  
61 admits to a sexual orientation other than heterosexual. Thus lesbian, gays, bisexuals and transgenders (hereafter  
62 referred to as LGBT) whose sexual orientation or behavior becomes known to others cannot serve – this policy is  
63 commonly referred to as “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” (DADT). The official military policy is in contradiction to the  
64 official policy of the CSU system and of CSUSM, which is to not engage in any activity which discriminates based on  
65 sexual orientation. Thus, the essential ethical question is whether CSUSM should offer ROTC courses that may benefit  
66 some students but contradicts CSUSM policy on sexual discrimination.

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68 Following are known considerations that might be helpful in debating this ethical issue:

- 69  
70 1) Many military officers and President Obama have called for the end of DADT so that LGBT’s can openly  
71 serve in the military. Rather than issuing an executive order ending DADT, President Obama has stated that  
72 any proposal to overturn DADT will be handled through a deliberative process. It is known that the existing  
73 policy has support from many military officers and members of Congress, thus there is no guarantee that the  
74 policy will be over-turned soon.
- 75  
76 2) Participation in ROTC programs provides financial assistance to some students (except open LGBT’s) that  
77 can make college affordable for students who might otherwise not have been able to attend college. Note that  
78 students can already receive these benefits by taking the ROTC courses at other nearby campuses, offering  
79 them at CSUSM would make it easier for CSUSM students to participate in ROTC.
- 80  
81 3) Offering ROTC courses at CSUSM increases the likelihood that ROTC students will attend CSUSM and  
82 thus be influenced by the university’s commitment “to respecting and modeling the diversity of our region  
83 within a context of social justice” (<http://www.csusm.edu/academics/diversity.html>).
- 84  
85 4) An increased presence by military personnel on campus could possibly have both positive and negative  
86 effects on campus culture. On the one hand, an increased presence of the military could serve to reduce the  
87 stereotypes associated with membership in military service. On the other hand, the presence of a culture that is  
88 known for discriminating against LGBT’s could have a chilling effect on the education experiences of LGBT  
89 students as well as those students who are exploring their sexuality.
- 90  
91 5) The proposed program would be for the 6 students who are currently enrolled in Army ROTC and are taking  
92 courses at SDSU. However, the implementation of an Army ROTC program on campus is likely to have two  
93 effects that would increase overall ROTC presence on campus: a) with the convenience of taking Army ROTC  
94 courses on campus, an increase in the number of students in Army ROTC, b) an increase the demand for ROTC  
95 programs for the other services.
- 96  
97 6) If ROTC were implemented, other actions could be taken to indicate CSUSM’s perspective on its  
98 commitment to sexual orientation non-discrimination while offering an ROTC program. Such actions could  
99 include active participation by the campus in efforts to reverse DADT, catalog copy regarding the campus’s  
100 position on DADT, or other actions suggested by the campus response.
- 101  
102 8) Of the 23 campuses in the CSU system, the following 10 campuses offer ROTC courses on campus:  
103 Dominguez Hills, Fresno, Fullerton, Long Beach, Pomona, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Jose,  
104 and San Luis Obispo.

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107 Study Group Members:

108 Don Barrett (Faculty, COAS); David Barsky (Assoc VP for Academic Programs); Staci Beavers (Faculty,  
109 COAS); Victoria Hernandez (Veterans Affairs and Athletic Compliance Coordinator); Zach Morrison (ASI

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Board of Directors); Moses Ochanji (Faculty, COE); Linda Pershing (Faculty, COAS); Patty Seleski (Faculty, CoAS)