



# CSUEU Style Guide

## A-to-Z Guide to CSUEU Word Style

### General notes:

- *This guide applies to CSUEU publications and most forms; it doesn't necessarily apply to contracts or other legal documents. For instance, legal contracts as well as organizational constitutions and bylaws often capitalize such common nouns as the Employer, the Union, the Board, the Agreement, etc., but in normal text and correspondence, such words are always lower case*
- *Use em dashes — and en dashes – instead of a floating hyphen or double hyphens*
- *Avoid all-caps for emphasis; use italics instead*
- *Avoid multiple exclamation points for emphasis; use italics instead*
- *% - avoid in most cases. See “percent” below*
- *Use just one space between sentences. Two spaces were standard in the era of typewriters, but one space is now the standard with the advent of word processing*
- *Note that our VP titles use “for”: VP for Finance, VP for Organizing, VP for Representation*
- *Use the active voice as much as possible; for instance, “CSUEU members ratified the contract” rather than “The contract was ratified by CSUEU members”*

acronyms – use in second reference only after first spelling out the entire term, followed by the acronym in parentheses. Avoid using acronyms in the first paragraph and instead begin using them starting with the second paragraph and beyond. Example: “The California State University Employees Union (CSUEU) and Academic Professionals of California (APC) are just two of several California State University (CSU) unions.”

administrative staff – not capped

adverb and adjective phrases – see “hyphenated adverbs and adjectives”

affect – see “effect/affect”

African American – preferred for first mentions, no hyphen

all-caps – avoid ALL-CAPS most of the time, as it's considered to be the equivalent of shouting angrily at someone. Exceptions include company names and headlines.

all-BUC meeting – hyphenate “all-BUC”

all-committee meeting – hyphenate “all-committee”

a.m. - not A.M., AM, am, etc.

& [ampersand] - avoid except in firm names where a firm uses it, such as AT&T and most law firms

area codes – always in parentheses: (916) 319-4800, not 916.319.4800 or 916-319-4800

article titles from newsletters and magazines– use quote marks

Assembly – always capped when referring to the state Assembly

Assemblyman – for men; capped only when appearing immediately before a person's name

Assemblymember – for women; capped only when appearing immediately before a person's name

at-large – hyphenated

At-Large Member – capped only when appearing immediately before a person's name; see "titles". No hyphen between "large" and "member."

BA – no periods

bargaining team – not capped

bargaining unit – not capped when referring to bargaining units in general, and capped when referring to specific units: "This bargaining unit represents graphic designers." "I'm a member of Bargaining Unit 13." "Outsourcing threatens the future of Unit 5."

Bargaining Unit Council - capped

black [after "African American" on first mention, can use interchangeably] [not capitalized]

Correct: We represent many black workers

board – never capped unless part of a formal title: "The board took a vote" or "The CSU Board of Trustees is meeting now."

book titles – in italics

bullet points – in a list with bullet points, omit commas, semi-colons, or any other punctuation at the end of each line. Exception: periods are acceptable to separate two or more sentences inside a single bullet point; in this case, use periods for all the bullet points in that same group. Start each line with a capital letter, unless each line is finishing a sentence:

In the last year, CSUEU has

- negotiated a new contract
- visited legislators' regional offices

bylaws - not by-laws, By-laws, etc. Not capped, even when referring to CSUEU's bylaws document

campus – always lower case

campus names – use the CSU's guidelines (see note below)

campus-wide – hyphenated

Cal Poly – two words; see the "CSU Campus Names" section below

Capitol – capitalized when referring to the state Capitol building

carryover – one word when a noun, two words when a verb: "You have a carryover of four days"; "We need to carry over five vacation days."

cents – spell out; "He spent 15 cents"; not "He spent 15¢" or "He spent \$0.15"

chair - not chairperson, chairman, or chairwoman; capped only when immediately preceding a person's name: Communications Committee Chair Debbie Blair

Chancellor's Office – avoid; instead, use “the Office of the Chancellor”  
chapter – capitalize when used with the chapter number, but leave in lower case when the chapter number isn't invoked: “CSU Monterey Bay Chapter 322 general meeting”; or:  
“The CSU Monterey Bay chapter general meeting”; try using the chapter number in first reference  
chapter bargaining unit representatives – not capped  
charting – always lower case  
check-in – hyphenated when used as an adjective: “We need to improve our check-in process.”  
chicano[a] - use Latino[a], avoid chicano[a] unless the specific individual or organization uses it.  
childcare – one word  
Classification and Qualification Standards - capped  
click here - try to avoid this phrase for hyperlinks and instead link to a word or phrase within a sentence  
CO – avoid; the preferred reference is to “the Office of the Chancellor”, spelled out  
commas – in a list, separate the last two items with a comma: “Statewide titles include president, VP for representation, and VP for finance”  
committee – not capped unless part of the name of a specific committee  
common sense – two words most of the time: “This proposal makes common sense”;  
hyphenation is OK when used as a compound adjective: “This is a common-sense solution.” Never combined into one word, even though SEIU International sometimes does so.  
compound adjectives – see “hyphenated adverbs and adjectives”  
Congress – generally capped  
congressional – generally not capped  
contracting out – use sparingly, as “outsourcing” is the preferred term  
cost-of-living – hyphenated when used as an adjective: “Our salary hikes aren't keeping up with cost-of-living increases.”  
council – capped only when referenced with a bargaining unit: “Bargaining Unit Council 7 met yesterday.”  
counterproposal – one word, no hyphen or space  
co-worker – preferably hyphenated, but omitting the hyphen is acceptable  
CSU Los Angeles – Avoid; use “Cal State L.A.” instead  
CSU Sacramento - Avoid; use “Sacramento State” instead  
CSUEU – not C.S.U.E.U. or the CSUEU  
CSUEU E-News – hyphenated; capitalize the “E” in “E-News”; include “CSUEU” in first reference - not necessary in second reference  
CSU Employees Union – recommended in first reference when the audience might be unfamiliar with the union; when the audience might also be unfamiliar with the CSU, as with reporters outside California, spell out the full name in first reference: California State University Employees Union. Note that there is no apostrophe after “Employees.”  
dates – do not use “th,” “st” or “nd” after date numbers. Exception: if these endings are part of an event title, such as “March 4<sup>th</sup> Day of Action”  
directory – not capped

dollars – “We spent \$23 million for the computer”; not “We spent 23,000,000 dollars for the computer” or “This is a 24 billion dollar liability”; never hyphenate

Dr. – avoid using; instead, in first reference, follow the person’s name with his or her degree: “John Miller, PhD” or “Alice Smith, MD”. Use only the last name from second reference on.

East Coast - capped

e-board – hyphenated, not capped

effect/affect – use “affect” when discussing impacts: “These layoffs will affect many members.” When in doubt, use the verb “impact” instead.

e.g., - [“that is” or “for instance”] always include the two periods followed by a comma

election procedure – never capped

ellipses – three dots preceded and followed by a single space ... Use to indicate deletion of text within a quote. There’s no space before or after an ellipsis when it’s used for any other reason, such as a sentence trailing off...

e-mail – hyphenated

E-News – hyphenated; capitalize the “E” in “E-News”; preferably use the entire phrase “CSUEU E-News” in first reference

ensure [meaning to make certain] - Not “insure” or “assure”; correct: “We must ensure the success of this program.”

executive board – not capped

executive officers – not capped

expense claims – not capped

everyday (adj.), every day (adv.)  
Correct: Clerical workers are everyday heroes.  
Correct: He wore his everyday clothes to the meeting.  
Correct: Clerical workers are heroes every day.

FAX – capped

federal – not capped unless the word is part of a formal title: “We use Federal Express for all mail to federal addresses.”

federal government – not capped

fee payer – no hyphen

flier – meaning “leaflet”; not: flyer

flyer – do not use; use “flier” instead

Friedrichs – no apostrophe

full time – not hyphenated when an adverb (“I work full time”) but hyphenated when an adjective (“I have a full-time job”)

gay people [not homosexual (adj.) or homosexual(s) (n.)].  
Also: lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender [LGBT] or, alternatively, add “inquiring” with a small “i” [LGBTi]

general election – not capped

General Fund – always capped when referring to the state’s General Fund

goodbye/good-bye – either hyphenated or not is OK; hyphenated is the traditional spelling

grass roots (n.), grassroots (adj.)

Correct: This should be a grassroots campaign.  
Correct: The movement came from the grass roots.  
half time - not hyphenated when an adverb (“I work half time.”) but hyphenated when an adjective (“I have a half-time job.”)  
hard-working - hyphenated  
headlines – Cap Each Word Except for Articles and Prepositions  
headquarters/CSUEU headquarters – not capped  
healthcare – one word, not hyphenated  
higher education – never hyphenated  
Hispanic – always capitalized; best used in second reference, using “Latino/a” in first reference  
homosexual – see “gay people” above  
how’s/how’d – never use  
hyphenated adverbs and adjectives – avoid hyphenating descriptive phrases using adverbs (typically words that end in -ly): “This is a rarely used resource.” It’s standard, on the other hand, to hyphenate phrases using adjectives, known as compound adjectives: “This is a first-ever effort”; “This is a book on gender-neutral language.”  
in house - hyphenated when an adjective: “This was an in-house job.”  
In-Range Progression – capitalized; “In-Range” is hyphenated  
Internet – capitalized for all uses  
insure – use only when referring to insurance (“We decided to insure the house for earthquakes”); use “ensure” in most other contexts (“We must ensure reliable state funding of the CSU system”)  
jump-start - hyphenated  
Know Your Rights – capped when referring to CSUEU’s series of “Know Your Rights” fliers  
landscaper – avoid this term, as it isn’t a formal classification term; instead, try using the appropriate classification term, such as “gardening specialist” or “groundsworker”  
Latino [always capitalized], Latina [if we know the person is female]  
lay off (v.), layoff (n.)  
Correct: This company is going to lay off its workers.  
Correct: The workers are worried about layoffs.  
Correct: Twenty workers were laid off yesterday.  
lead – lower case unless immediately preceding someone’s name; see “titles”  
Leg Committee – never use as an abbreviation for the Legislative Committee  
legislator – never capitalized  
legislator identifiers – in first reference, follow the name with a parenthetical note beginning with the party affiliation, designated as either D or R, followed by the key city in the district: “Sen. Ted Lieu (D-Torrance) wasted no time responding to the allegations.”  
liaison - note the spelling; that second “i” is often omitted  
lists - separate the last two items in a list with a comma: “Statewide titles include president, VP for representation, and VP for finance”. When listing names: arrange names in alphabetical (or some other logical) order, never in random order. If the author is one of the names, the reference to the author should come last: “The task force included Pat Gantt, Mike Geck, and me.”

listserv – no “e” at the end

literally – avoid in general and particularly for emphasis: “The meeting was literally humungous!”

Lobby Day – capitalized; always singular, even though the event typically carries over two days

long-term – hyphenated when an adjective (“This is a long-term problem”); not hyphenated when a noun (“This will cause problems over the long term”)

longtime – one word when used as an adjective (“She’s a longtime activist”) and otherwise two words (“We’ve waited a long time”)

loud and clear – not hyphenated unless the phrase is used as an adjective

LRRs and SLRRs plural – no apostrophe: “This applies to all LRRs.”

LRRs and SLRRs possessive – use an apostrophe before the final “s” if referencing just one LRR or SLRR, after the final “s” if referencing two or more. “Our LRR’s expertise was clear.” “SLRRs’ responsibilities are wide.”

magazine titles – italicized

mailroom – one word

management – not capped

May Revise/May Revision – this refers to the governor’s annual revision each May of the state budget that he or she originally presented the previous January; cap “Revise”/cap “Revision”

MD – no periods

Medi-Cal – [the California version of Medicaid] with a hyphen and capital “C”

meet and confer – not capped; do not abbreviate as “M&C” or “meet & confer”

member – use specifically for CSUEU members only; use “represented employees” to refer to all CSUEU-represented employees

member applications – not capped

mic – short for “microphone”; incorrect: “mike”

multi-year - hyphenated

nationwide – no hyphen

networking – always lower case

new year – not capped unless referring to the holiday

New Year’s Eve/Day - capped

newspaper titles - italicized

no one – two words, no hyphen

nonetheless – one word, no hyphens

nonprofit – no hyphen

non-union – hyphenated

not-for-profit - hyphenated

now’s – never use

numbers – spell out one through ten, and use Arabic numerals from 11 on. When numbers begin a sentence, they’re spelled out. Starting with the number 1,000, include a comma after the first digit: “We collected 5,274 signatures.”

Office of the Chancellor – this is the preferred reference, not “Chancellor’s Office” or “CO”

officer/officers – never capped: “Statewide officers will be elected this June.”

ongoing – one word, with no hyphen  
online – one word, with no hyphen  
Oriental - do not use; correct: Asian  
outdated – no hyphen  
outpatient – no hyphen  
outsource, -ed, -ing – no hyphen; this is currently our preferred term instead of “contracting out”  
overtime – no hyphen  
overworked – no hyphen  
part time - not hyphenated when an adverb (“I work part time”) but hyphenated when an adjective (“I have a part-time job”)  
pay stub – two words  
percent – always spelled out, never %, except in charts/graphs/tables or if the symbol is part of a widely used slogan, such as the Occupy movement’s “1%” and “99%”  
PhD – no periods  
phone numbers – Use parentheses for area codes  
p.m. - not PM, P.M., pm, etc.  
policy file – not capped  
possessives – of words ending in “x”, use apostrophe “s” (example: Cox’s); of words ending in “s”, use the apostrophe only (example: the campus’ studentbody)  
pre-empt, pre-empted  
president – see “titles” below. Correct: “Bill Clinton was the president of the United States.”  
“Say goodbye to President Reagan.”  
price tag – two words  
private sector – never hyphenated  
proposition – not capped  
protesters - not “protestors”  
public relations – reserve use for initiatives involving outreach to reporters and editors  
public sector – never hyphenated  
publications – titles in italics (including reports and white papers)  
punctuation inside ending quote marks - periods and commas go inside ending quotation marks, not outside (the latter is customary primarily in legal and medical documents).  
quotations are usually in the present tense unless part of a speech or a particular event.  
“We can only reach this goal if we all work together,” says Mary Kay Henry, president of SEIU.  
“We can only reach this goal if we all work together,” President Henry told the delegates at last week’s national conference.  
quote marks –titles of campaigns, reports, brochures, fliers, songs, TV shows, games, and any other creative works other than books go inside quote marks. Periods and commas go inside ending quotation marks, not outside. Avoid using quote marks for sarcastic effect; instead of *the governor’s “remedy”* try *the governor’s so-called remedy*.  
rank and file (n.), rank-and-file (adj.)  
Correct: They elected officers from the rank and file.  
Correct: Their officers were rank-and-file workers.

re-elect/re-elected - hyphenated

reopener – no hyphen

reorder – no hyphen

right-to-work – hyphenated

roadmap – one word

seasons – do not cap winter, spring, summer or fall unless it's part of a title or formal name

second reference – generally use the last name only, unless it's a personality profile, obituary, or some other feature article for which the first name seems more appropriate

secretary-treasurer - always hyphenated

SEIU - not S.E.I.U. or the SEIU

Senate – always capped when referring to the state Senate

sexual orientation – never “sexual preference”

s/he - avoid except in contract language and legal documents. Avoid awkward he-or-she traps by rewording.

Awkward: When an employee arrives, he or she should begin working.

Better: When employees arrive, they should begin working.

Awkward: Each employee must do his or her part.

Correct: All employees must do their part.

sick-out - hyphenated when used as a noun: “Our contract doesn't allow us to conduct a sick-out.”

side letter – two words, never capped

sign-in – hyphenated when used as an adjective: “We have a new sign-in process.”

SLO – spell out in first reference: San Luis Obispo

slow-down – hyphenated when used as a noun: “Our contract doesn't allow us to conduct a slow-down.”

so-called – use without quotation marks

Social Security – always capitalized

socioeconomic – no hyphen

spokeswoman, spokesman – these are preferred words; avoid “spokesperson” except when referring to groups made up of both spokeswomen and spokesmen. Always one word, not broken into two words.

spreadsheet – one word

state abbreviations – either spell out the full name or use the AP's traditional abbreviations below, not the two-letter USPS abbreviations, with the exception of address labels.

Correct: New York, California, Illinois, Ohio

Correct: N.Y., Calif., Ill., Ohio

Never: NY, CA, IL, OH [except in labels]

Correct: Ala., Ariz., Ark., Calif., Colo., Conn., Del., Fla., Ga., Ill., Ind., Kan., Ky., La., Md., Mass., Mich., Minn., Miss., Mo., Mont., Neb., Nev., N.H., N.J., N.M., N.Y., N.C., N.D., Okla., Ore., Pa., R.I., S.C., S.D., Tenn., Vt., Va., Wash., W.Va., Wis., Wyo.

Eight states are never abbreviated: Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas and Utah.



state budget – not capped  
state Capitol – “state” is not capped, “Capitol” is capped  
state of California – “state” is not capped unless referring to a formal agency title (“This practice has a high hidden cost for the state of California.”)  
statewide – one word, no hyphen  
statewide committee – never capped: “We’re examining the statewide committee structure.”  
statewide elections – never capped: “As of yesterday, statewide elections have begun.”  
statewide officers – never capped. When listing all four titles, list in the order of succession:  
    president, VP for organizing, VP for finance, VP for representation  
step-by-step – hyphenated when used as an adjective: “The CSUEU Step-by-Step Probation Guide”  
steward – not capped  
steward’s council – not capped  
student body – two words  
subcommittee – one word, no hyphen  
supermajority – one word  
super PAC – “super” is not capped; no hyphen  
systemwide – one word  
takeaway – no hyphen  
take-home pay - hyphenated  
taxpaying (adj.) - no hyphen  
television show and movie titles – in quote marks  
third party (n.), third-party (adj.)  
    Correct: He considered voting for a third party.  
    Correct: Obtaining a third-party endorsement is a good idea.  
thru – do not use; spell out “through”  
time and a half  
    Correct: We were paid time and a half for working Saturday.  
    [Try to avoid awkward forms such as “time and one-half,” “1-1/2 time,” etc.]  
time frame – two words  
time line – two words  
Titles of newspapers, magazines, movies, books, plays, operas, and albums go in italics. Titles of reports, brochures, fliers, songs, and campaigns go in “quotes.”  
    Correct: We all sang “The Star-Spangled Banner.”  
    Correct: *The Exorcist* gave me nightmares.  
    Correct: He read *A Farewell to Arms* on the train.  
    Correct: I fell asleep during the performance of *Macbeth*.  
    But: The new SEIU report is called “Drugs on the Job.”  
    But: Have you read the new pamphlet “Common Sense”?  
titles – Capped only if they immediately precede a person’s name: “CSUEU President Pat Gantt” or “He is the vice president for representation”. An exception is the abbreviation VP, which can be capped wherever it appears in the sentence. For those with an MD or PhD, avoid using “Dr.”; instead, in first reference, follow the person’s name with his or her

degree: “John Miller, PhD” or “Alice Smith, MD”. Use only the last name from second reference on.

trustee/trustees – Never capped unless part of a formal title: “The trustees took a vote” or “The CSU Board of Trustees is meeting now.”

union – never capitalized except in legal documents, such as contracts, unless part of a formal title

unit – see “bargaining unit”

up to date (adv.), up-to-date (adj.)  
Correct: This will get us up to date.  
Correct: We have an up-to-date plan.

URLs – italicized in most cases as a way of separating them from the rest of the text; never underlined, in quotes, or all-caps.

username – one word

U.S. – include the periods

vice chair – no hyphen

vice president – no hyphen

voter registration – always lower case

walk-out - hyphenated when used as a noun: “Our contract doesn’t allow us to conduct a walk-out.”

Washington, D.C. – use the comma and periods

webcam – one word

webcast – one word

web page - two words; never as one word

website - preferably one word, following current AP style, but using two words is acceptable

weekday – one word, no hyphen

well-being – hyphenated

West Coast – capped

white - meaning Caucasian – not capped, just as “black” isn’t capped.  
Correct: The union has both black and white workers.  
Not: The union has both Black and white workers.  
Not: The union has both black and White workers.

white-collar - compound modifier – hyphenated  
Correct: They are white-collar workers.  
Not: They are white collar workers.

Wikipedia – avoid referencing or using as a named source

winter – use only in reference to the first two or three months of the year

workday – one word, no hyphen

workforce – one word, no hyphen

workgroup – one word, no hyphen

working class (n.), working-class (adj.) “She’s a member of the working class and lives in a working-class neighborhood.”

workload – one word, no hyphen

workplace – one word, no hyphen

worksite – one word, no hyphen  
work-study program – hyphenated  
workweek – one word, no hyphen  
worldwide – one word, no hyphen  
write in (v.), write-in (n., adj.)

Correct: Let's write in her name on the ballot.

Correct: She conducted a write-in campaign.

Correct: She received a lot of write-ins.

X-ray – always with a capital “X” and hyphenated

## CSU Campus Names

### *General notes:*

- *Campus presidents at both Sacramento and Los Angeles prefer “Sacramento State” (without “University” at the end) and “Cal State L.A.” (including the periods); the less preferable alternatives are “California State University Sacramento” (reserved for formal documents) and “California State University Los Angeles”. They avoid “CSU Sacramento” and “CSU Los Angeles” because of branding issues.*
- *The words “State” and “Polytechnic” come in a different order in the campus names at San Luis Obispo and Pomona. Whenever possible, spell out the full names of these two campuses as follows:*

*California **State Polytechnic** University, Pomona*

*California **Polytechnic State** University, San Luis Obispo*

Following is a list of approved campus names:

- Cal Poly Pomona (no comma) or California State Polytechnic University, Pomona
- Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo (with a comma) or California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo
- California State University Bakersfield
- California State University Channel Islands
- California State University Chico
- California State University Dominguez Hills
- California State University East Bay
- Fresno State
- California State University Fullerton
- Humboldt State University
- California State University Long Beach
- Cal State L.A.

- California State University Maritime Academy (in first reference); Cal Maritime (in second reference)
- California State University Monterey Bay
- California State University Northridge
- Sacramento State
- California State University San Bernardino
- San Diego State University
- San Francisco State University
- San Jose State University
- California State University San Marcos
- Sonoma State University
- California State University Stanislaus
- Office of the Chancellor

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