

Cal Poly Parent Program Advisory Council Meeting

October 27, 2002

University Union Conference Room
Cal Poly State University, San Luis Obispo, CA

MINUTES

Attending

Council Members – Kirk Brewer, Perilla Brewer, Mary Cox, Mike Cox, Connie Friel, John Friel, Pat Keeley, Betty Long, Bobbe Michallik, Walter Michallik, Barbara McRae, Diane Ryan, Tony Ryan, Crystal Williams, Suzie Yost

Staff – Dr. Cornel Morton, Nicky Nickelsen

Guests – Carol Oelker

Welcome/Introduction

Diane Ryan called the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m. She thanked the Council for a successful Parents' Day event and expressed appreciation for hosting parents throughout the day at registration, the BBQ and Wine Tasting and Evening with the Arts Reception. Carol Oelker, a guest and local parent was introduced and welcomed. Carol's son Gary is enrolled in the College of Architecture and Environmental Design. Introductions were made by all in attendance.

Diane Ryan expressed appreciation to Evann Gastaldo and Autumn Pearson, the Parent Program Student Assistants whom the Council was able to meet yesterday during the Parents' Day festivities.

Diane Ryan welcomed Dr. Morton, Vice President for Student Affairs, and expressed, on behalf of the Council, appreciation for his interest in the success of students at Cal Poly.

University Update

Dr. Morton thanked the Council for the warm welcome and commented on how he has been pleasantly engaged in getting to know the campus and the community during the past two months. He briefly referenced his background at Kent State University. He expressed enthusiasm about his experiences thus far in his new role at Cal Poly and appreciation for the important role parents play in fostering student success.

Dr. Morton indicated that, during his fall conference address, President Baker encouraged staff and faculty to focus attention on three important initiatives: Student Success, Diversity and Campus Climate and Community Relations. Dr. Morton indicated programs that place priority on these issues are currently being planned or are already underway within the Division of Student Affairs.

As an example, Dr. Morton mentioned that he has established a CARE team which is scheduled to meet weekly to review incident reports - incidents being defined as mental, medical or emotional needs. The purpose of the team is to formalize student support services and it is comprised of staff from various departments including Health & Counseling Services, Student Life & Leadership, University Police as well as representatives from academic areas of the University. The goal of the team is retention related – namely to make a difference between whether a student remains at Cal Poly or leaves. Many students have no incidents, but the CARE team is positioned to assist those that do need assistance at any time, in being successful. Faculty members have a critical role in observing student behavior and identifying concerning characteristics. They, as well as staff, are in a good position to determine if a

student appears to be aloof, despondent or depressed and are to be informed of the CARE team should they feel it is appropriate to make a referral.

Dr. Morton also discussed the formation of the Council on Student Success. The Council serves as a monitor of student success chaired by the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. It is not a micro-managing sort of organization, but rather a group coordinated to review, discuss and generate thoughts about student success at Cal Poly.

Dr. Morton indicated that each department within the Division is being asked to address the goals of student success, diversity and civility. Directors are submitting monthly reports on what their department is doing in the name of student success, improving relationships and providing an environment that encourages diversity in thinking and expression and promoting civility and mutual respect. Directors will attend a retreat together next month to share thoughts on and discuss goals and in each of these areas.

The formation of a Student Quality Advisory Committee is also planned. Coordinated through Associated Students Inc. (ASI), it will serve as an advisory group to the Vice President. It will meet biweekly to discuss the delivery of quality services to students and make recommendations regarding improvements in those services. Services may be defined as broadly as the level of ease with which students make their way through the university, or as specifically as how convenient it is for students to get hard copies of a specific document or assistance during a phone call. Students are being sought to serve on the committee. The goal is to attract a representative group of students who may not already be significantly involved in the life of the university in some other way.

To address the Campus Environment/Community Relations initiative, Dr. Morton began by mentioning that a number of individuals are involved in finding ways to work with the media and the local community to improve and strengthen university/community relations. One part of a discussion involved how other institutions are using networking technology that ties that form closer ties between the university and nearby cities, forming electronic villages that foster valued relationships.

Also relating to the above topic, Dr. Morton discussed the status of housing construction on campus. He distributed a packet of information about Cerro Vista compiled by Cal Poly's Director of Housing & Residential Life, Preston Allen.

John Yost raised the issue of adequate parking suggesting the amount of parking for students needs to be improved. Dr. Morton explained where students living in Cerro Vista will park and indicated that the University is looking at the parking issues. It hopes to address parking in a variety of ways including holding parking permit lotteries, restrictions on parking for first year students living on campus and encouraging public transportation.

Connie Friel raised the question about who drives the demographics & growth of higher education, adding that with increasing enrollment and classes already at capacity, it is questionable how many more students, universities such as Cal Poly can accommodate. Dr. Morton indicated that most CSUs are at capacity in terms of enrollment. This year 10,000 more students enrolled than expected. 100,000 students are expected to enroll in the CSU over the next 10 years. There is a balance between ensuring that the infrastructure is in place to accommodate the students and still provide an accessible and affordable education. The CSU has historically been a low cost accessible quality system in California higher education. They hope to remain that way, but many factors in the political machinery determine how many students enroll. The State budget also plays a crucial role. As an example, on the housing issue alone, Dr. Morton shared that with the addition of Cal Poly's new housing, it will be among

the top three residential communities in the CSU system - and it has been many years since housing has been built on the Cal Poly campus.

Discussion Items by Functional Areas

Communications:

Diane Ryan indicated the spring 2003 newsletter would likely be mailed in February or March and requested topics to include. Information on housing and Open House will be included as well as an update on the fee initiative. Suggestions for topics from the Council included information on the Greek system, the CARE team, tips to help students plan for summer employment, graduation information, senior project and studying abroad. A volunteer was also requested for the Parents' Perspective article. Nicky Nickelsen will follow-up with an e-mail request.

Nicky Nickelsen asked the Council members to contact her with any suggestions regarding usability of the e-mail network and reporting tool. In the future, upgrades may be made to the database and it would be helpful to know what features might make the reporting easier to use. It was suggested that there be a way to copy all the addresses in the database list and paste them into the e-mail program. Currently, addresses must be copied and pasted one at a time.

Nicky Nickelsen also called for suggestions about approving the web site navigation and content, asking the Council to provide thoughts to be considered during a possible future revision.

Leadership Development:

Nicky Nickelsen indicated that she has access to lists of volunteers in each of the areas indicated on the web site: e-mail network coordinator, council member, events volunteer, NSWEs volunteer. The database allows her to print reports each month listing parents who have signed up to help. This has been a good tool for identifying and following up with parent volunteers. This is how John & Connie Friel, Crystal Williams and Pat Keeley were identified for the Council and how the Parent Program was able to involve 15 new volunteer parents for Parents' Day. She would like to develop a way to track volunteer participation when changes are made to the database.

Events:

Diane Ryan asked the Council to provide feedback about WOW Parent Orientation Weekend and Parents' Day, specifically, what they felt went well and what might be improved.

WOW: The Council felt it was helpful to have a booth set-up all day and, this year on Sunday as well as Saturday. The laptop was good to have so that parents could sign up for the e-mail network immediately, but suggested a mouse be available next time to help make data entry easier. A shady area or some sort of cover was suggested to ensure parents could read the screen on the laptop easier throughout the day.

Connie Friel discussed suggestions for effective hosting including being clear and concise when providing parents with information, allowing them to ask questions and being selective about how much information to provide by observing their non-verbal cues. Nicky Nickelsen indicated that Connie drafted the list of hosting tips that was e-mailed to each of the Council members and thanked her for providing such a comprehensive, helpful, list.

PARENTS' DAY: Overall, the Council felt the day was successful, commenting on the increased attendance and the variety of activities available to participate in. The BBQ lunch was nice and the wine tasting, well organized. Suggestions included:

- More specific check-in procedures for volunteers at the BBQ – organized by Athletics

- A central parent check-in location at the BBQ – separate from check-in for the actual event – to handle parents who start their day at the BBQ. This might help avoid lines if parents don't show up for morning registration & the morning events – which are designed to stagger their arrival at the BBQ & Wine Tasting.
- Consider an outdoor, informal welcome or no main Parents' Day welcome
- Improved signage at the BBQ and Wine Tasting
- The parade went well, but some parents were frustrated that those who had reserved seats did not show and they were told reserved seating was full. Mary Cox indicated that when the parade began, she and Mike invited those parents to sit in the untaken seats.
- The later start time of the game or dinner plans may have affected attendance somewhat at the evening reception. Nicky Nickelsen explained that one of the challenges of organizing Parent Program events is organizing them around the major Homecoming festivities we like to participate in which are set by Athletics and Alumni Relations. (Parade, BBQ, Wine Tasting, Football Game).
- Providing a map of campus. This was included in the parents confirmation packets sent in the mail – along with a schedule - but should be provided the day of the event in the future.

The Council discussed charging for free events so that parents would be more likely to attend them. Nicky Nickelsen indicated that she and Dr. Detweiler discussed this, but thought it best not to charge \$1 or \$2 here and there for those events, but to add a few dollars to the BBQ to cover expenses for the chairs at the parade, etc. The Council also discussed a general reservation fee for morning events - \$5.00 – or perhaps a package price.

The dates of Open House were announced – April 25-27. The Parent Program will again plan to provide an informational booth in the UU similar to WOW on Friday. A booth is planned on Dexter Lawn for Saturday. The Council meeting is also normally held at that time.

Barbara McRae was acknowledged for her efforts to connect parents in Sonoma County through her parent coffees – in addition to the e-mail messages she sends. Barbara shared information about discussion at the coffees and parent responses. It has generated interest by another parent to consider a coffee in another area near Sonoma.

The College of Agriculture is sponsoring an event called the Brawley Cattle Call in November. Imperial and Riverside county College of Ag parents were invited to this event.

Fund Development:

Nicky Nickelsen indicated that the first series of fall Parent Fund letters were mailed and the second will drop in December. Dr. Morton, Nicky Nickelsen and Evann Gastaldo visited the Parent Fund callers during the week they were calling parents to thank them for their efforts to generate support for the University.

Adjournment

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for February 1, 2003. Information will be forthcoming. Diane Ryan adjourned the meeting at 12:30 p.m.

Please forward additions or corrections to calpolyparent@calpoly.edu. Thank you.
Respectfully submitted,

Nicky Nickelsen