

CAL POLY PARENT PROGRAM ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

Sunday, November 6, 2005
Balcony Lobby, Christopher Cohan Center
Cal Poly State University, San Luis Obispo, CA

MINUTES

ATTENDING

Council Members – Paul Bittick, John Cotter, Ed Czisny, Melanie Dreike, Gloria Edelen, Connie Katz, Ira Katz, Patricia Pasetta, Chris Patubo, Pat Patubo, Sue Richardson, Tony Richardson, Bob Rivoire, Frances Rivoire, Carolyn Thom, Thanos Trezos, Jordan Whaley
Staff – Cornel Morton, Nicky Nickelsen, Theresa Rush
Parent Guests – Ross Whitt, Terri Whitt

WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS

Frances Rivoire called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. She welcomed all and recognized the participation of the Council members during Parents' Weekend. She presented Nicky with a Parents' Weekend Certificate of Appreciation signed by the Council members. Nicky acknowledged Theresa for her hard work and coordination as well as the Council members for being available to host parents throughout the weekend.

Connie and Ira Katz and Patricia "Patti" Pasetta were acknowledged as newly appointed Council members. They will serve through July 2008. Parent guests Ross and Terri Whitt were warmly welcomed. Ross and Terri are parents of Michael and are from San Clemente, California.

Motions to approve the minutes from the April meeting were made by Tony Richardson, Gloria Edelen and Bob Rivoire. They were approved.

UNIVERSITY UPDATE

Student Affairs Division Retreat

During the division's annual retreat in October, the department directors/coordinators met for two days to review the highlights of the VPSA's initiatives underway during the 2004-05 academic year, to discuss challenges and opportunities the division faces, and to continue its strategic planning process. The highlights, challenges and opportunities reviewed were summarized in a PowerPoint presentation handout provided to members ("Student Affairs Council Retreat, Fall 2005, VPSA 2004-05 Highlights").

Quilt Drawing

The prize-drawing for the division's quilt raised approximately \$900.00 for student scholarships. Cornel thanked the Council members for contributing to this effort. The drawing was held at the division's fall gathering in September. An employee from Health and Counseling Services won the quilt.

Student Alcohol Symposium

Earlier this fall, the Dean of Students office coordinated a Student Alcohol Symposium to inform the student community about "harm reduction" and the importance of making responsible choices related to the consumption of alcohol. Programs emphasized the importance of safety and intervention on the part of friends in situations where their peers have had too much to drink. About 150 students and community members attended the day-long event which included a guest speaker, breakout sessions, information tables and training for student peer health educators, resident advisors and CSDs. A media messaging campaign was conducted by the Department of Health Services. Prizes were given away as an incentive to draw students to the event.

Red Handprint Policy

During move-in weekend this past fall, questions and concerns were received regarding the red handprints that appear on the pavement or floor in and around the residence halls and at various other locations across campus. The handprints are part of a sexual assault information campaign that was implemented within the last 10 years following a series of sexual assaults and abductions against Cal Poly students, some of which remain unsolved to this day. The handprints are painted or stenciled on the ground where sexual assaults have occurred.

Following the inquiries, the handprints located in the residential community were removed. In response, various members of the campus community expressed discontent citing that the removal of the handprints violates campus policy and weakens the effectiveness of the campaign.

This dialogue brought to light the need for a review and reiteration of the University's policy and practice related to the handprints, especially given the time that has passed since the campaign was implemented. Cornel indicated that he convened a task force, led by Elie Axelroth of Counseling Services, to undertake this effort. The task force is comprised of student, staff and faculty representatives. Cornel distributed a memo outlining the charge for the task force which include a plan of action for educating and informing the campus community (which changes annually) on the history and use of the red handprint. Cornel expects to have a draft plan of action to review by December 2. A memo with the charge was distributed.

Connie Katz inquired about to the number of sexual assaults and other crimes on campus. These statistics are available on the University Police Web site by going to: <http://www.afd.calpoly.edu/Police/> and selecting "Campus Security Report (Cleary Act)" on the menu bar at the left of the page.

Rising Cost of Textbooks

Cornel indicated that there is concern nationwide among colleges and university students, parents, faculty and administrators about the rising cost of textbooks. The General Accounting office has issued an exhaustive report on the cost of textbooks. According to the report, college textbook prices have increased at twice the rate of inflation in the last two decades - at an average of 6% per year. The cost of textbooks as well as supplies as a percentage of fees and tuition for first-time, full time freshmen was 26% at 4-year public institutions (<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d05806.pdf>).

There is a national student campaign to make textbooks affordable. More information on that is available at: www.maketextbooksaffordable.com. Cornel indicated that Frank Cawley of the El Corral Bookstore would be in the best position to answer questions related to this topic. The Council members offered the following comments in response:

Terri Whitt (guest): Citing experiences in her role as a faculty member at a community college, Terri echoed concerns about the rising cost of textbooks.

Gloria Edelen:

Carolyn Thom: Many students experience back problems as a result of carrying so many books. She indicated that some schools provide lockers.

Ira Katz: Ira suggested that Cal Poly consider having "text-less" classes. He suspects that eliminating textbooks would reduce costs, increase collaboration between faculty and students and fit well within the university's "learn by doing" model. The school district where he works is a piloting a text-free social sciences curriculum. According to Ira, most students do not read the textbooks; or, if they do, the textbooks are out-of-date as new editions released so frequently. Text-less classes might help address cost and utilization issues, as well as back problems some students experience from carrying heavy books. Ira indicated he prefers paper-free courses and

learning experiences to “professor notes”. His son Peter learned to build a musical instrument in his Music theory class at Cal Poly and now has a much better appreciation of how music came to be.

Jordan Whaley: Based on his experience, many faculty do try to provide course notes to students, print out their PowerPoint presentations or place a copy of the text on reserve to save students money. Some textbooks are listed as “recommended reading” leaving the choice of purchase up to the student.

John Cotter: Teachers should consider teaching on topics outside the normal requirements to broaden their students’ educational experience rather than relying on textbooks alone.

Frances thanked the group for their comments. Based on the level of interest in the topic, she recommended inviting Frank Cawley to a future meeting.

PARENT PROGRAM UPDAT E

Nicky Nickelsen distributed the revised Parent Advisory Council functional responsibilities. The list serves as a reference tool for prospective and current Council members.

The parent data migration to University Advancement’s Advance C/S system was completed at the beginning of fall quarter and went well. Nicky will share the results at the winter meeting.

Production for the spring *Parent Connection* newsletter will begin in January. Please mention or e-mail Nicky with topics of interest/mass appeal for inclusion in the newsletter. Council members are invited to volunteer to provide a story for the “From A Parents’ Perspective” column. Matt Calkins is revising the online version of the Parent and Supporters Handbook. There are a few updates to content and contact information. That will be posted shortly.

BUSINESS ITEMS

Discussion Item: *The Mustang Daily - What it means to be a student-run daily newspaper.*

Frances Rivoire called upon Paul Bittick, General Manager of the *Mustang Daily*, to lead a discussion about the University’s student-run daily newspaper.

Paul indicated that he offered to speak on this topic not only because of the knowledge he can share as the paper’s general manager; but, more importantly because of the common misperception that exists nationwide about the role of managers in the production of student-run college papers, especially during a time when content is being questioned. Paul explained that his role is to generate the necessary funds to publish the student newspaper on a daily basis. He emphasized that he does not serve in an advisory or editorial capacity, as is often believed. The paper’s advisor is Dr. George Ramos, the Department Chair for Journalism; however, he does not provide prior review of editorial content.

There are about 105 daily college newspapers in the nation; the *Mustang Daily* is the only student newspaper in the nation that is both produced and printed by students. The majority of the writing for the paper comes out of a Mustang Daily class. About 60% of the majors who take the class are concentrating in print journalism. The class size varies quarterly, making it a challenge at times for the students to consistently achieve the volume of stories, breadth of content and accuracy in reporting for which they strive.

Writing occurs in a lab or on an individual basis. Up until two years ago, newspaper at Cal Poly did not receive any state funds. However, the newspaper is an “Instructionally Related Activity” and has recently received \$30,000 - \$40,000 - about 8% of its budget - in state IRA funding annually. This funding, as well as an increase in advertising income, has helped the *Mustang Daily* operate within its budget.

First amendment rights, as they relate to the content of student newspapers, have rarely been debated in the courts. But, about six months ago, the Court of Appeals handed down a ruling that could give public colleges the right to censor news in supported newspapers. Cal Poly's former Provost, Dr. Paul Zingg (now President of CSU Chico), recently signed a statement insuring the independence of the Chico newspaper - the Orion, becoming the first University president in the nation to take such a stand. Currently, all of the content of the *Mustang Daily* is at the discretion of its student editors.

Conversations about the appropriateness of content have occurred; but Cal Poly's student newspaper is still not subject to prior review. Instead, students learn from their mistakes and successes. Most recently, a *Mustang Daily* reporter was found to have plagiarized her stories. And, within the past few years, there was much debate surrounding the content and tone of a sex column. The *Mustang Daily's* first sex columnist was a very talented and tasteful writer; in fact, she went on to work for MTV after graduating from Cal Poly. Unfortunately, the young man who followed her was not as sophisticated or as talented a writer. Many of his columns caused negative reactions across campus and the community. Paul indicated that since the first column was well received, the student editors wanted to continue it. It was difficult to find a student with the same caliber of writing, however. After the second writer's column proved distasteful and insulting, the student editors learned they should never compromise good writing for any type of article or topic. *Mustang Daily's* Editor in Chief is appointed by a publisher's board that is comprised of full-time journalism faculty (and, this year, one student). The Editor-in-Chief selects the remainder of the staff.

Paul emphasized the amount of work involved in producing a daily paper. Most schools with comparable enrollments produce a paper weekly or biweekly. Each year, schools can enter a national competition for college newspapers. They are judged by professionals in the field on content, design and writing. Chico State has the number one weekly newspaper.

Paul indicated that the students learn and accomplish a great deal in producing a daily paper. When they make a mistake, they are taught to follow-up accordingly, true to a learn-by-doing experience.

Plans for future presentations

Frances thanked Paul for an informative presentation. Frances indicated that hearing from each other on topics of broad interest can ensure everyone is a more informed parent representative. She hopes the result of these presentations will be a rich legacy of comments that will inform any parent who reads them about the topics the group was concerned with at a given time. Frances invited the group to offer topics they would like to hear more about. She, Cornel and Nicky will determine a topic prior to each meeting. The following topics and speakers were suggested:

COUNCIL MEMBER	TOPIC
Frances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solar Decathlon and/or other examples of student projects or coursework that address environmental issues • Student Life and Leadership opportunities • ASI President • Bookstore manager • Merit Scholarships and Financial Aid

COUNCIL MEMBER	TOPIC
Carolyn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Shakespeare museum • Registration • Cooking for good nutrition
Ira	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No textbooks
Cornel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dean of Students
Thanos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expenses - known and hidden • Study abroad - opportunities and challenges
Paul	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town/gown relations • Mayor and/or Chief of Police
Tony	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studying the nature of the city. Is it really different from 10-20-30 years ago?
Pat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking and alternatives (mid-day, valet parking)
Connie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual assault and crime prevention
Nicky	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cal Poly's enterprise projects

Frances reiterated that she wants to be sure everyone has a chance to participate by submitting and/or presenting a topic. She asked the members to continue to bring ideas forward that are relevant and of interest to the group as a whole.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Parent Information Card

Frances distributed summary of the information provided by each member on the Parent Information Cards. As stated in July, the information will be used to get acquainted with each other; and, to identify everyone's skills and interests. It will also help ensure everyone has an opportunity to be engaged between and during meetings. The information will not be shared beyond the group.

Interesting Readings List

Frances Riviere pointed out a list of interesting readings available on the adjacent table. Members are not required to read these; and, they are not part of the formal agenda, but were suggested as interesting readings people have encountered recently. Feel free to pick up a list or suggest books for listing by the next meeting. John Cotter suggested listing the readings on the Parent Program Web site.

COUNCIL MEMBER RECOGNITION

Jordan Whaley, Ag Business senior, was recognized for his year of service as a Parent Program Advisory Council member. Jordan brought a mature student perspective to the group, commenting thoughtfully on many topics presented at the meetings. Jordan was also helpful to the Parent Program beyond attending the meetings. He was available as needed, providing assistance with many events. Jordan was provided with a plaque. By way of Thanos' lead, the Council members offered to write Jordan letters of recommendation.

CLOSING REMARKS AND ADJOURNMENT

Possible dates for the winter quarter meeting are: January 21, 28 and February 11 and 18. Please notify Theresa Rush of your preferences so the meeting date can be set prior to Thanksgiving. Frances Rivoire adjourned the meeting at Noon.

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