

Cal Poly Parent Program Advisory Council Meeting

April 21, 2001

Business Building, Room #104
Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, CA

MINUTES INCLUDING ALL ADDENDUMS

Attending:

Council Members – Carol Ahlem, Kirk Brewer, Perilla Brewer, Jerry Holcombe, Sally Holcombe, Ellie Jorritsma, Barbara McRae, Gary Pechersky, Rosalee Pechersky, Diane Ryan, Tony Ryan, Christine Young

Parent Visitors – Mary Cox, Betty Long

Staff – Dr. Bob Detweiler, Judy Nussbaum, Nicky Nickelsen

Welcome/Introduction

Jerry Holcombe called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. He welcomed Mary Cox and Betty Long, and all attendees introduced themselves.

Minutes

The January 20th meeting minutes were approved as written by Christine Young, Ellie Jorritsma and Carol Ahlem.

University Update

Bob Detweiler recognized Carol Ahlem, Christine Young and Jerry Holcombe for their recent contributions of time, energy and support of the University and its programs. Carol hosted a very successful parent/alumni event in Hilmar in March, Christine has been active with both the Alumni Association and Parent Council hosting events at her San Luis Obispo home, and Jerry has provided exceptional leadership and guidance to the Council and the Program this past year as Chair.

Bob discussed three priorities the University is addressing: class availability and how it relates to student success, and housing, and alcohol. Cal Poly is proud of the fact that, of 58% of its 1999-2000 graduates who responded to a recent Career Services survey, 96% reported full time employment or attending a graduate or professional school. **A full report of the survey including information by major is available by logging on the Career Services web site at www.careerservices.calpoly.edu and clicking on the 1999-2000 Graduate Status Report.**

Although the graduate rate is the best in the CSU and Cal Poly's students are UC quality students, only 63% to 65% actually graduate. The University is paying particular attention to what it can do to increase student success. The goal is to insure that students finish their degree, not losing time due to inaccurate or insufficient guidance. The University is considering implementing "Degree Works," a software program that assists students in mapping out the courses they need to complete their degrees.

Bob indicated that Cal Poly has announced its Centennial Campaign goal of \$225,000,000. Being a polytechnic university requires maintaining good architecture, engineering and biotech programs. These programs are very costly to administer. Cal Poly has raised half of its goal and hopes to raise the remainder over the next three years. Community Service Learning is also a priority and an important part of student success. Cal Poly has doubled the funding and staff to provide related classes and programs.

Cal Poly opened the bids for the 800 bed student housing development scheduled to open, Fall of 2002. Ground breaking will occur in May at the Poly Canyon site. \$32.5 million was the Universities budget. \$37 million was the low bid and the last agreed upon price was \$35.5 million. State funds pay only for land and not for parking, recreation or housing.

To increase our level of competitiveness for the best students, the university is hoping to set up a \$10 million endowment, with \$500,000 per year going to merit scholarships.

Socially, alcohol abuse is a problem among Cal Poly students. The University is concerned that students not become victims of alcohol poisoning, DUI's and other related safety issues. The University imposes sanctions against clubs and programs that involve alcohol abuse, and offers counseling to students with alcohol related problems.

All Council members voiced concerns about housing in San Luis Obispo, focusing on rent control and the safety of off-campus rentals. Concerns included:

- **Rent control.** Kirk Brewer asked if any discussion has been initiated regarding this issue. Bob indicated that Cal Poly has an agreement with Mustang Village and Stenner Glen to rent a specified number of rooms to Cal Poly Students. Rent is approximately \$375 to \$400. However, there have been no discussions with rental companies, landlords, or the City regarding rent control. Carol Ahlem gave examples of circumstances where the prices for condos have risen unbelievably within one year.
- **Jump Start.** A Council member raised the question regarding the Jump Start Program. The question was whether students enrolled in the program receive housing. The program is for summer students who are admitted for Fall. They do receive housing.
- **Safety Issues.** Council member discussed safety issues including faulty or unsafe wiring in homes, and sorority houses and landlords that fail to take care of facilities.
- **Housing construction outside the City limits.** Rosa Lee Pechersky inquired as to whether discussion has taken place between Cal Poly and external developers about the feasibility of constructing off-campus apartments outside the city limits. Dr. Detweiler indicated that he was having dialogue with Cuesta College about joint venture approaches. This question was asked in the context of discussion about San Luis Obispo's policy on slow-growth or no growth.

Betty Long advised the group that there is a web site that informs renters about actions to take if they experience housing violations. Bob Detweiler indicated ASI has a program that provides legal counsel to students.

Tony Ryan indicated that at one of the Cuesta orientations, a City administrator discussed housing violations and safety issues with students. Mary Cox suggested an off-campus housing packet be made available for students at the end of their freshman year. Cal Poly's housing department does provide a packet such as this. It was suggested safety information be included in this packet

ACTION ITEMS from this discussion: Parent Program to meet with Cal Poly's housing director and San Luis Obispo's City Manager to address the above concerns. These issues should be considered as topics for upcoming newsletters and added to the Web site as items accessed through a "hot button." A guest speaker from the City on the topic of safety will be considered for an upcoming Council meeting.

Council Resource Binders

Nicky Nickelsen briefly reviewed the contents of the new Council members' resource binders. A revised organizational chart, based on the January meeting discussions as well as discussion between the Council Chair and Parent Program staff, was presented to the

group. The focus group descriptions have now been designated “functional responsibilities.”

Council Updates

Communications: The Council would like to see a “meatier” newsletter for Fall Quarter that addresses issues important to parents. The Parent Program will use the space they have for fall to focus on issues and resources. Newsletter space can sometimes be an issue. Invitations to campus events are usually included in newsletters to minimize the postage costs associated with printing and mailing. However, this may change if a separate publication is created for Parents’ Day registration.

The new Parent Program magnets are in and were available for the weekend’s festivities. Help line calls have increased since the newsletter was mailed and the Program is planning to develop a better tracking and reporting system that will be used to analyze the types and frequency of calls.

The efforts of the staff in the next several months will be devoted to re-designing our web site and creating a Cal Poly parent handbook. Nicky asked for volunteers to advise on each of these projects.

Events: Ginny Gribben’s Boise event was very successful. Approximately 45 people attended, mostly alums and a few parents. A pre-game party was held at a local restaurant and bar, and afterwards the group attended the Cal Poly/Boise State basketball game. Raffle prizes were given away and those who attended had a great time.

Carol Ahlem reported that the Hilmar event was a wonderful success. Over 200 people responded; and 189 attended the dinner, 80 of whom were parents. The evening included cheese, sausage and wine tasting, and a tri-tip dinner. There were several speakers, including Dr. Detweiler, Dr. Kellogg from the College of Agriculture, representatives from the Alumni Association and the Parent Program, and local alumni who promoted upcoming events.

Jerry Holcombe reported that the Northern California coffee didn’t turn out as expected. Of 85 invitations, the RSVP rate was four. The low number of parent responses was disappointing. However, the Parent Program appreciates the time and effort involved in putting together the event.

We hope to have a Central Coast event soon. Plans for 2001-2002 events are being discussed with the Alumni Association.

Fund Development: Nicky Nickelsen indicated the Spring Cal Poly Fund letter was mailed to parents earlier in the month. She thanked Jerry for his assistance with the lead letter, and Carol and Christine for their ideas for the articles on the reverse of the letter. The Cal Poly Fund will include Parent Program magnets in the Fall Fund letter. Judy Nussbaum has been making monthly visits to donors of \$1,000 or more to thank them for their generosity. Nicky indicated she hopes to make summer visits to donor parents in Southern California.

Judy is also focusing on collecting corporate profiles for giving. She is hoping to identify companies that can lend support for needs that are present among the units in the Division of Student Affairs. (ie: Career Services, Disability Resource Center, Student Life & Leadership)

Leadership Development: Nicky Nickelsen reviewed the guidelines for administering the parent e-mail network. She thanked Council members for their assistance in developing these guidelines. Due to the amount of growth these networks could experience, the Parent Program has decided to focus only on e-mail. To simplify the operation of the network, messages will be printed and sent by mail to those parents who haven't provided us with e-mail addresses. Contact information for each area was provided on disk to Council members.

E-mail addresses from Admitted Students' Day and Open House will be provided to the Council members by May 15, 2001. At that time, a supplemental packet will also be mailed that includes frequently asked questions, and a list of department phone numbers along with the topics addressed by each department. Initially, the Parent Program will provide guidance regarding appropriate types of parent correspondence to Council members and other volunteers administering the e-mail network.

Guidelines regarding discussion of university policy and procedures by parent volunteers with other parents were reviewed. The Council agreed to avoid answering questions dealing with campus policies or procedures. These questions are to be referred to University staff or the Parent Program. Examples of personal experiences are encouraged during any type of interaction with parents or students.

Nicky indicated that once the e-mail network is operating, it is anticipated prospective Parent Program volunteers and donors will become more easily identifiable by those monitoring the networks.

Parent Program Update

Christine Young and Nicky Nickelsen reported about the March Alumni Association retreat at which alumni chapter development was discussed. While at the retreat, Nicky mentioned the Parent Program, and encouraged chapter leaders to contact her if they would like to include parents in their upcoming regional events.

Nicky reported that she attended a Western States Parent Program Conference in Pomona. There was a good deal of information available, but most universities are just starting their programs. Many have some sort of fundraising element. She passed around sample parent handbooks from the conference and indicated that she would discuss ideas about Family Weekends/Parents Days at the Council's summer meeting.

Nicky distributed Poly Royal brochures for Council members' reference when answering questions at the booth. She also thanked them for all of their time and effort this weekend. The Admitted Students Breakfast went well with over 1,300 attendees. The parent booth and panel were successful; and about 250 people attended the Friday evening parent coffee (organized by the Open House committee and WOW).

Adjournment

Jerry Holcombe adjourned the meeting at 11:15 am. Council members volunteered at the Parent Program booth the remainder of the day.

Please forward additions or corrections to nnickels@calpoly.edu. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicky Nickelsen

