

CAL POLY PARENT PROGRAM ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

Saturday, April 22, 2006

University Union 220

Cal Poly State University, San Luis Obispo, CA

MINUTES

ATTENDING

Council Members – Paul Bittick, John Cotter, Ed Czisny, Maxine Czisny, Barbara Damerel, Melanie Dreike, Nancy Gragnani, John Jernigan, Karen Jernigan, Ron Hunnewell, Patti Pasetta, Pat Patubo, Bob Rivoire, Frances Rivoire, Carolyn Thom, Terri Whitt, Ross Whitt, Ken Williams, Robbie Williams

Student Representative: Daniel Rivoire

Special Guest: Warren J. Baker, President, Stephan Lamb, Director of the Center for Community Service.

Staff – Cornel Morton, Nicky Nickelsen and Theresa Rush

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Frances Rivoire called the meeting to order at 8:45 a.m. She warmly welcomed all and acknowledged the participation of council members at Admitted Students' Day.

Frances welcomed new parent members Barbara Damerel, John Jernigan, Karen Jernigan, Ron Hunnewell, Terri Whitt, Ross Whitt and new student member Daniel Rivoire.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

LEADERSHIP NOMINATIONS PROCESS:

Frances explained the changes to the nominations process referring to the memo sent out by the Parent Program office winter quarter (see attachment at the end of this document). She thanked everyone who expressed an interest in the position and took the time to fill out the questionnaire. Completed questionnaires were reviewed by the executive committee and a nomination was made to Cornel Morton who appointed Nancy Gragnani. Nancy graciously accepted. Nancy has two daughters attending Cal Poly. Layci is majoring in Ag. Science and Kelsey is majoring in Ag Business. Congratulations, Nancy.

The questionnaire was available for members to review. New members were encouraged to begin thinking now about leadership opportunities. Since the appointment is for two years (vice-chair and then chair) and a member's term is three years, the window of opportunity to be appointed approaches quickly. The process for nominating the 2007-08 chair-elect will begin winter quarter 2007.

Melanie Dreike commended the nomination committee for an excellent job in organizing the process for future elections.

MINUTES:

Motions to approve the minutes from the winter quarter meeting were made by Carolyn Thom and Terri Whitt. The minutes were approved.

FUTURE TOPICS:

Topics for the summer meeting are planned as follows: Ira Katz will provide a presentation on paperless texts. Frank Cawley, Director of El Corral Bookstore will address the rising costs of textbooks and bookstore operations. Craig Nelson will provide the annual Cal Poly Parent Fund update. The new alumni representative will also be introduced.

Topics for future meetings include: Cal Poly's student enterprise projects, campus planning and construction and academic advising. Frances commented that having guest speakers and involving members in the presentation of topics allows the group to gain knowledge that prepares them to be better representatives of Cal Poly. She recommended this format be continued.

In addition to the guest speakers, Nicky indicated that the bylaws are up for review. This topic will be slated for a meeting during one of the 2006-07 meetings.

It was suggested that the dates of meetings for the year be announced in advance. The Parent Program will continue to make every effort to fulfill this request. The dates of some meetings are dependent upon events. The summer meeting will be held June 24 or July 8th. The fall meeting will be Sunday, October 22nd.

John Cotter suggested the Parent Program provide a way for council members to make contact with parents in their local area and serve as a representative for their constituency. He suggested allowing access to e-mail addresses for local parents. In the past, the e-news service was administered by council members and other volunteer parents. The Parent Program sent a message to volunteers who were responsible for personalizing it and forwarding it on. After a year, the e-news service was brought under campus management for logistical reasons, to protect the privacy of parent e-mail addresses, and to prevent the spread of viruses. Parent contact information was made available on the Parent Program Web site instead.

Bob Rivoire indicated that the names and links to council members are listed on the Web site. The challenge is marketing the Web site and driving parents to that specific page. When parents call or e-mail the office with a question, the Parent Program staff does take the name and e-mail address of each parent and sends them links to information we provided by phone. A link to the "Contact a Parent" page is included in messages to encourage parents who want more information to call on Council members for a parent's perspective.

With limited staff and budget, the Parent Program has prioritized other programs above regional events; however, they are another way of connecting with parents on a more individual level. We do provide parent volunteers for the Alumni Association's annual New Student Welcome Events (NSWEs). We have also invited parents to a few alumni chapter events. Logistically, this partnership makes sense. The challenge is determining what events parents would be most interested in attending and how best to market and staff them.

A former Council member from the Sonoma area established a series of parent coffees for parents in her area. The event has worked well in Sonoma and doesn't require a large commitment of staff time. The Parent Program has considered expanding the coffees statewide. Doing so would involve staff time screening and selecting interested hosts, coordinating and supporting the network of volunteers, and developing a invitation in the summer that lists the various coffees available (similar to the NSWE invitation).

Ed Ciszny indicated that the NSWE invitation would serve as a helpful model for marketing parent coffees.

Paul Bittick asked if the Parent Council has an official presence at Alumni Association events. Parent volunteers are recruited to assist with the NSWEs; the Parent Program usually receives

about 50-60 interested parents for these events. Council members are asked to attend other alumni events if they live nearby and are available to do so.

Paul Bittick indicated that recruitment of faculty is getting more difficult due to the housing market. Paul feels that part of our duty is to build support for the university so that we attract talented faculty as well as good students.

Carolyn Thom suggested calling parents by phone to welcome them and offer to answer questions, emphasizing the importance of personal contact.

Unfortunately, the university cannot release phone numbers or other contact to anyone but the student. Information the University has on file in its student database is considered "student" information (even though a phone number may be the parent's phone number) and is protected under the Federal Right to Privacy Act. Information stored in the Advance database (the donor database) is treated similarly. Since University Advancement is the steward of parent data, all requests for data or communication are subject to their approval. Their process allows them to track everything that goes out to parents and other constituents in order to ensure all communication efforts, including phone calls, to any one group are coordinated.

Though a phone call or face-to-face interaction is the most personal form of outreach, it isn't as practical at the university level as it may be at the elementary or high school level. Some parents may not be willing to commit to making hundreds of phone calls. Although many parents may be pleasantly surprised to receive a phone call from another parent, some people do not welcome unsolicited phone calls.

Paul Bittick reiterated that the university has strict guidelines regarding the use of information.

Barbara Damarel requested a copy of the university's/division's organizational chart so that members can better understand the functions of each division/department. Nicky will provide copies at the summer meeting. These charts are also available at:
<http://www.president.calpoly.edu/charts.asp?pid=1> .

Terri Whitt indicated that, at the Admitted Students' Day Coffeehouse, she offered her e-mail address to a prospective parent and invited them to contact her with questions. She recalls a volunteer (Tony Ryan) extending her his e-mail address when she was a prospective parent; this eased the anxiety she felt about being the parent of a new college student.

Patti Pasetta suggested providing business cards to each Council Member to give out at events.

Karen Jernigan suggested that the name badges include the city and state where members are from. This information serves as a good conversation starter.

Academic advising was also suggested as a future topic for a guest speaker. Carolyn Thom explained that it seems her student has to go to various sources to find assistance. Dan Rivoire indicated he guided himself through the process of changing majors. Although he didn't have much help in the way of advising, he did learn a lot figuring out the process on his own. Each student receives their own flow chart of courses to take to complete their education which makes it simple to track progress.

Nicky explained that each college has a central advising center with the exception of the College of Agriculture, which provides advising by department. Some advising centers, such as

the Orfalea College of Business utilize peer advising to assist students as there are limited numbers of advisors. Advisors are available, but students need to take the initiative to seek them out. Many students are not used to doing this.

Barbara Damerl suggested some way of conveying information so that volunteers feel prepared to answer questions of new parents. Nicky indicated that the office has considered providing Council members and volunteers with an annual training session; however, it would be an additional time commitment for Council members. If the group is willing to come to campus six times each year, this can be organized. As an alternative, the Parent Program can provide Q and A at each of the meetings and/or by e-mail between meetings. The *Parent Handbook* is also informative source of answers to frequently asked questions and serves as a foundation of knowledge for orienting parents of new students.

Karen Jernigan inquired about Summer Advising for students. Nicky indicated that summer advising has been provided in the past; however, this year it will be offered online. A model of what it will look like has not yet been released.

Ed Czisny suggested providing a speaker on how students can secure internship positions. Paul Bittick indicated that every major is different; some require an internship and others do not. Career Services offers resources for students to help them locate internships, search for jobs and research graduate schools.

John Cotter indicated that he was asked about areas of emphasis within a major.

Nicky indicated that Council members should not feel like they have to have all of the answers and should refer any technical, policy or curriculum questions to staff. She will begin providing Q and A at or between meetings to help members learn the answers to many questions parents ask.

Frances thanked the members for their suggestions and the discussion.

PRESIDENT WARREN BAKER'S ADDRESS:

President Warren J. Baker expressed his appreciation to the Parent Council for their contributions to the University. He discussed trends in higher education mentioning that California ranks just above Mississippi in the percentage of students choosing to attend college (about 30%). He explained - in terms of income how the decline in the number of "college-going" students among the population will likely affect our local and national economy by the year 2020.

Dr. Baker emphasized that education is critical to the future of our nation and democratic societies. Yet, we know that many college-aged students aren't prepared to enter a university, and have no aspirations to continue their education. In addition, our teachers aren't engaged. There is a disconnect between what universities expect students to know and what teachers of middle schools and high schools believe the expectations are. We know the transition from high school to a university should be seamless. And, we know there needs to be ways to increase interest in teaching careers and help teachers become more engaged.

Dr. Baker mentioned a few programs that are addressing these issues. PIQE, the Parent Institute for Quality Education is a non-profit organization that is working to support parents of underserved students in schools across California during middle and high school so that they can support their child's success and inspire them to attend college. Recently the CSU

Chancellor's Office provided funding to the various CSU campuses to help them support the efforts of PIQE in their local areas. He also mentioned partnerships with corporations that allow teachers to work during the summer to enhance their continuing education in various fields.

When asked what parents could do to help, he encouraged them to advocate for higher education in their own communities. Support education and be sure that we're doing the right things.

President Baker thanked everyone for their time and involvement in the university.

UNIVERSITY UPDATE

STATE OF THE STUDENT ADDRESS:

This past week, ASI provided a program called the State of the Student Address. This program is an annual tradition at Cal Poly that was recently reinstated by ASI. It showcased the goals and accomplishments of student government and included an address by President Baker and Dr. Morton.

UPDATE ON DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS STRATEGIC PLAN:

On April 28, a consultant will meet with each of the Student Affairs department directors and coordinators to review ways to structure the assessment of programs related to the four pillars of the Student Affairs Division Strategic Plan (ABLE: Advocacy, Building Relationships, Learning, Enhancing Opportunities.)

POLY CANYON VILLAGE GROUNDBREAKING:

On March 17 ground was broken symbolizing the start of construction on Poly Canyon Village. The new residential community will include 2,700 new beds and two parking structures. Cornel provided members with a t-shirt from the ceremony.

GUEST SPEAKERS' PRESENTATION:

COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING AND VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

Stephan Lamb, Director of Center for Community Volunteerism and Service Learning and Daniel Riviere, an active student volunteer leader presented information on the scope and variety of community-based learning and volunteer programs offered by the Center for Community Volunteerism (see attached packet.)

Student Community Services is state-funded and offers 10 programs that serve various groups in San Luis Obispo County. Students are encouraged to join a program, form a group to volunteer, enroll in a community-based learning class where they can get course credit for volunteering or direct a program.

Programs are coordinated by student directors and offer ongoing volunteer opportunities as well as the chance to create meaningful social change. The 10 programs are: Best Friends, Beyond Shelter, Environmental Council, Poly Paws, Raise the Respect, Senior Services, Students for Health and Well-Being, Youth Challenge, Youth Education and Youth Recreation. Through these programs, students gain leadership skills, a social network, knowledge of the local community, awareness of social issues, resume builders and competitive experience for graduate school applications.

The Center also coordinates and sponsors a variety of other special events and programs throughout the year. "Change the Status Quo" is a two-day conference open to students, faculty, staff and the community that provide a forum for individuals to express their passion for

social change and collective activism. “Free Speech Hour” is held in the University Union plaza Tuesdays from 11 am – Noon and provides a forum for public discourse. “Soup and Substance” is held in Chumash Auditorium Tuesdays from 12 pm – 1 pm and is an informative hour of discussion revolving around issues that affect the world. (Lunch is provided.) “Hunger Awareness Week” and “Homeless Awareness Week” each offer a week of educational activities focused on these social problems. This year’s student activities during “Homeless Awareness Week” received prime news coverage on a local TV station.

The Center also created and maintains a local Web site – <http://www.volunteerslo.org> - which lists local volunteer opportunities and is available to the entire community. The Center also organizes a holiday gift drive, “Make a Difference Day” and “Earth Day” activities. The most recent “Make A Difference Day” involved 500 volunteers who contributed 2500 hours of time in one day to help 15 different local non-profit organizations, saving them time and money.

Students are encouraged to discover issues that evoke passion in them. They are encouraged to pursue change through community service programs or educational dialogue. Dan provided the example of a student who learned about the struggle of the Burmese people and took it upon herself to arrange for the screening of a film and a discussion about the resettlement of Burma and the human rights issues facing the country and its people.

To recognize civic involvement by students, faculty and staff, the Center sponsors, in conjunction with the President’s Office, awards that highlight specific achievements in service. The awards are competitive and the selection is made by a panel of faculty, staff and students who review written nominations. The event will be held May 22.

PARENT PROGRAM UPDATE

CLOSING REMARKS AND ADJOURNMENT

Frances Riviere adjourned the meeting at 12:15 p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Nicky Nickelsen and Theresa Rush