

# Cal Poly Parent Program Advisory Council Meeting

July 14, 2001

Alumni House

Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, CA

## MINUTES

### **Attending:**

Council Members – Carol Ahlem, Mary Cox, Mike Cox, Jerry Holcombe, Sally Holcombe, Ellie Jorritsma, Betty Long, Barbara McRae, Gary Pechersky, Rosalee Pechersky, Christine Young

Parent Visitors – Walter Michallik, Jennifer Stuppi, Paul Stuppi

Staff – Dr. Robert Detweiler, Judy Nussbaum, Nicky Nickelsen, Craig Nelson, Cal Poly Fund

Guests – Rob Bryn, Neighborhood Services Manager, City of San Luis Obispo,

### **Welcome/Introduction**

Ellie Jorritsma called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. She welcomed recently appointed Council members Mike and Mary Cox and Betty Long; and parent guests, Paul and Jennifer Stuppi and Walter Michallik. All attendees introduced themselves.

### **Minutes**

The April meeting minutes were approved as written.

### **Overview of Accomplishments/Future Goals**

Ellie Jorritsma summarized the Council and Program's accomplishments as follows:

Communications - Newsletters continued, Help Line continued, E-mail network established, giveaways advertising our Help Line e-mail address were ordered, plans for a redesigned Web site and Parent Handbook were initiated, and Council communication with fellow parents has continued and improved

Events - 3 on-campus events, Hilmar event, Rose Float event.

Fund Development – Judy's efforts to begin thanking and talking with parent prospects. Coordination with the Parent Fund.

### Goals for 2001-2002:

Continue to be responsive and service-oriented, develop good communications and good events, identify and engage parent volunteers via the e-mail network. With new program development underway, we have an opportunity to provide more outreach, heighten awareness about the Parent Program and strengthen services in the following areas:

1. WOW – Parent's Day – Open House
2. 4 regional events with the Alumni Association
3. 2 Newsletters
4. Maintain redesigned Web site
5. E-mail network with Web sign-ups
6. Parent Database to track e-mail sign-ups, volunteers and Help Line calls
7. Updated handbook
8. Issues of importance to parents (safety of housing, etc.)

### **Vice Chair Appointment**

Ellie thanked everyone who provided nominations for Vice Chair of the Council. Diane Ryan received the most nominations and is appointed Vice Chair. Congratulations to Diane.

### **Guest Speaker – Off-Campus Housing Concerns**

Dr. Detweiler introduced Rob Bryn from the City of San Luis Obispo to respond to off-campus housing concerns raised at the April Council meeting including: rent increases, the pressures students feel from landlords in a “sellers” market, the inconveniences and safety issues associated with inadequate and improperly maintained off-campus housing, and the fear of retaliatory action or evictions. Dr. Detweiler, Nicky Nickelsen and Council member Betty Long met with Rob Bryn and other City officials in July regarding these issues and Bryn agreed to have a dialogue with the Council.

Bryn provided a comprehensive overview of the City’s efforts to address housing issues within the City limits. In response to complaints of overcrowding in November of 1989, the City launched a 2-year program to research the extent of housing violations in the community. At the same time, an attempt was made to address concerns from San Luis Obispo citizens about the student rentals in their neighborhoods. The Office of Neighborhood Services started with a caseload of 91. The following year they reported 325 violations and have logged approximately 400-500 violations every year since. They focused on cleaning up obvious problems, sending out building inspectors and citing landlords in violation of City codes. Follow-up inspections were performed, violations tracked and repeated non-compliance reported to the City Attorney. 462 garage conversions were cleared and 66 misdemeanors related to housing violations were prosecuted within a ten-year period under the program. Landlords having repeated code violations at the same site or other sites owned by them are now subject to an automatic misdemeanor charge. During that time, Cal Poly’s student population was at its highest – over 17,000 - although numbers began to decrease in the 1990’s.

For a number of reasons, San Luis Obispo continues to experience the pressures and problems associated with the impacted housing situation. 58% of the City’s residential areas are rentals and 57.9% of the population is under the age of 29. With the projected increase in student population, the 1% growth cap and the increase of commercial vs. residential growth, problems are expected to worsen before they improve. To help alleviate the situation, Cal Poly has begun construction of new on-campus housing and has plans for faculty and staff housing. Bryn indicated the City is very willing to continue to work with the university and the community as partners in addressing housing issues and welcomes concerns and suggestions from Cal Poly parents.

According to Bryn, the most realistic way to address housing problems seems to be to “dry-up” the market for inadequate housing by educating consumers to make wise choices. Although this is a challenge when housing choices are limited, the alternatives include dangerous and life-threatening situations.

Bryn indicated the City always investigates allegations of code violations as a means to enforce the law and insure the safety of residents. However, tenants should be aware the investigation process means investigators will enter the premises, order any violations corrected and require the tenants to move out until the violations are corrected. For tenants renting converted garages, which are not designed for human habitation, reporting their living conditions requires them to either move into a suitable room in the same house; or if one is not available, to a totally different residence. Because of these inconveniences, many violations go unreported. The City prosecutes landlords who do not comply with orders to correct code violations; and tenants experiencing “retaliatory eviction” can have their cases heard in a court of law. However, cases involving retaliatory eviction are civil issues and are outside the scope of services provided by the City’s Community Development and Neighborhood Services Departments.

Bryn indicated the City has also attempted to address the issue of safety at sorority and fraternity houses. At one house, the residents had disabled the fire alarm system and had done so in a manner that made it appear to be functional upon routine inspection of community living areas. The fire inspector who investigated individual rooms discovered the system was actually disabled, and felt the seriousness of the situation warranted his presence in the house until the systems were enabled. With this and other examples, Bryn made the point that although students are not always responsible for code violations, some do contribute to the problem. Dr. Detweiler indicated that in the case of sorority and fraternity houses, the university has more leverage in insuring compliance since these organizations are affiliated with the university. He indicated once a Coordinator for Greek Affairs is hired, ways the university can help with Greek housing safety, including the possibility of an inspection program, will be discussed.

Bryn also talked about a number of good neighbor issues. In addition to handling code violations, the City spends a significant amount of time addressing neighborhood disturbances, attempting to maintain the quality of life many long-term San Luis Obispo residences expect. The City and the university partnered to create S.N.A.P., a student organization that makes the initial response to complaints of student disturbances. S.N.A.P. teams issue warnings with repeat complaints handled by SLOPD. Fines range from \$160 to \$1,000. Mardi Gras was recently cancelled after more than 80 arrests were made. At the time of the Council meeting, 3 officers were still on disability from the May event.

Bryn indicated the City focuses on handling violations and landlord and tenant education. There are resources currently in place to educate tenants, and specifically students, about housing and good neighbor issues. They include:

- Materials provided to students by Cal Poly's Office of Housing and Residential Life including:
  - A Guide for Living Off-campus,
  - Booklet entitled "Safety and Security Tips for Living Off-campus"
  - "California Tenants Handbook" published by the State of California and recreated by Housing & Residential Life
- Web links located at [www.housing.calpoly.edu](http://www.housing.calpoly.edu) and [www.slopd.org](http://www.slopd.org)
- Renter's Checklist for Safe Housing
- Referrals to Neighborhood Services and ASI's Legal Information Service
- The City's process for reporting code violations
- Housing & Residential Life's winter quarter housing seminars which include presentations from the City's Neighborhood Services Department
- Presentations by Housing and the Neighborhood Services Department during W.O.W. notifying students of their rights and responsibilities
- Regular meetings between the City and Cal Poly about housing and neighborhood issues
- The City's four point crime prevention ad campaign which includes web, print, TV and radio "quality of life" appeals that appear in Cal Poly's Mustang Daily and on stations including: MTV, Lifetime, ESPN, KSBY and KCOY
- Formalizing second offenses against landlords so that the same offense on the same or different property is a misdemeanor

Nicky Nickelsen provided the Council with materials students receive via Cal Poly's Office of Housing and Residential Life. She indicated that a number of good resources are available; the challenge appears to be communicating what is available and making it easily accessible to parents.

Suggestions for communicating with parents and working with the City included:

- Providing information in five key areas: housing availability, tenant rights, safety, being a good neighbor and the consequences of poor choices.
- Providing information on the Web site
- Dedicating a newsletter or parent publication to housing issues
- Printing SLOPD's crime prevention ads in parent publications
- Publishing a guide to acceptable off-campus housing (it was suggested the potential legal implications of this option be researched.)
- Maintaining a relationship with the City and offering funds.

### **Lunch Recognition**

Nicky thanked the Council for their commitment to the Parent Program this past year. The programming suggestions and advising has been invaluable in strengthening services and heightening awareness. She recognized Judy Nussbaum for her leadership in developing the Program. Judy has accepted an interim position at the Alumni Relations Office. Craig Nelson recognized Jerry Holcombe for his service as Chair of the Council and signer for the Parent Fund letters. Dr. Detweiler and Nicky Nickelsen recognized founding members Rosa Lee and Gary Pechersky for four years of service on the Parent Council and thanked them for their strong support of and commitment to Cal Poly. Their presence on the Council is very much appreciated and will truly be missed.

### **University Update**

Dr. Detweiler assured the Council members that, despite the personnel changes in the office, the Parent Program will remain strong. He indicated the Program would focus on good communications and good events, adding that if our students are having positive experiences, parents will support the university. He indicated the search for a new Vice President is continuing; three candidates have visited the campus.

Dr. Detweiler indicated Cal Poly recently broke ground on an 800 bed housing facility and is committed to not admitting students unless there is housing for them. Housing for staff and faculty is also planned.

Cal Poly continues to measure student success by graduation. The university's recent decision to give ACT scores more attention than SAT scores generated questions from the Council members. Dr. Detweiler indicated the SAT tends to measure more of what a person knows, whereas the ACT measures a person's ability to learn. The ACT seems to be a better predictor of student success.

**ACTION ITEM:** Parent Program to ask the Director of Admissions to provide FAQ's on the issue of ACTs and/or speak at the next Council meeting.

### **Council Updates**

#### **Leadership Development:**

Nicky thanked the Council for their efforts to launch the e-mail network. The past two months have generated questions and positive responses from parents. The Council discussed technical issues including Blind CC and accessing attachments. It is anticipated the most interested parents and potential volunteers can be identified via the network. In the future, we may call upon these interested parents when we have events or need to recruit Council members.

#### **Events:**

An Orange County Alumni/Parent Centennial event is scheduled for July 25<sup>th</sup> at El Adobe Restaurant in San Juan Capistrano. Diane and Tony Ryan are coordinating a raffle, the proceeds of which will be used to purchase gift certificates from El Corral Bookstore for a

drawing at their local new student send-off picnics. Thanks to Diane and Tony for working with the Orange County Alumni Chapter on this event.

WOW Parent Orientation Weekend will be held move-in weekend, September 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. Council members and parent volunteers are needed to:

1. Answer questions at the parent booth both days,
2. Assist with the Parent Program panels
3. Attend the Saturday evening Parent Reception.

A schedule of the day will be forthcoming.

Parents' Day is scheduled for November 10<sup>th</sup>. Tentative plans for the day include a welcome breakfast, a faculty forum, the Homecoming parade, an honored alumni forum, BBQ lunch, Student Affairs Resource Fair, a football game, an evening reception and an opportunity to attend two evening performing arts presentations.

#### Communications:

Topics for the fall newsletter are being considered. The Parents' Day invitation will be included in the newsletter. The Council suggested covering topics previously printed, making updates (i.e., health). Nicky reviewed the site map and design for the Web site, which is expected to be online in August. The Council suggested tracking hits to the site. She asked for volunteers to assist in editing text for the handbook, which was provided by students from the Orientation Programs office. Thank you to Sally Holcombe and Mary Cox for volunteering for this project.

#### Fund Development:

Ellie indicated the fall Cal Poly Fund letter to parents will include our Parent Program magnets to help heighten awareness about the Program. Nicky indicated she and Judy visited the student phonathon callers in the spring to listen in on calls. Parent concerns and questions were noted and, as a result, Nicky provided the callers with a reference list of campus numbers to use for parent inquiries. The Help Line is at the top of the list.

#### **Adjournment**

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Parent's Day weekend, although the Council may convene informally during WOW Parent weekend. Information will be forthcoming. Ellie Jorritsma adjourned the meeting at 3:00 pm.

Please forward additions or corrections to [calpolyparent@calpoly.edu](mailto:calpolyparent@calpoly.edu). Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicky Nickelsen