

## **CAL POLY PARENT PROGRAM ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING**

Saturday, July 14, 2007

The Inn at Morro Bay

Morro Bay, CA

### **MINUTES**

#### **ATTENDING**

Council Members – Paul Bittick, Rob Boriskin, Cynthia Boriskin, Yvonne Chavez, John Cotter, Ed Czisny, Maxine Czisny, Barbara Damerel, Nancy Gragnani, Matt Howard, Ron Hunnewell, John Jernigan, Karen Jernigan, John Jones, Connie Katz, Ira Katz, Patti Pasetta, Pat Saley

Parent Guests - Randy Otsuji, Lisa Jones

Student Guests –

**Colleen Lynch**, Liberal Studies student

**Amanda Raudsep**, Student Representative to the Parent Council for 2007-2008

Staff – Nicky Nickelsen, Jessica Todd, Craig Nelson, Monica Schechter, Trey Duffy

#### **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Nancy Gragnani called the meeting to order at 1:40 p.m. She brought the members chocolate covered raisins produced in her hometown of Kerman, California and expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to serve as this year's Parent Program Advisory Council Chair.

Nancy Gragnani and Nicky Nickelsen introduced new Parent Program staff member Jessica Todd. Jessica joined the staff in May. Prior to her current position, she served as the Assistant Director at Atascadero Children's Center.

Nancy introduced guests Monica Schechter and Colleen Lynch who will be presenting on Study Abroad and International Programs. She announced that Craig Nelson and Trey Duffy are expected to join us later. Craig will provide an annual Cal Poly Parent Fund update and Trey will present on Disability Resource Services.

She also welcomed prospective member Randy Otsuji and parent guest Lisa Jones, wife of Council member, John Jones. Each of the members provided an update about their student's summer plans.

#### **UNIVERSITY UPDATE**

Nancy Gragnani conveyed Dr. Morton's regrets for being unable to attend and indicated his University Update would be sent to everyone via e-mail following the meeting.

#### **MEMBER RECOGNITION**

Nancy Gragnani and Barbara Damerel recognized Teresa Hendrix, John Cotter, and Matt Howard for their service as Parent Program Advisory Council members. Teresa contributed valuable perspectives as a parent, an alum and Cal Poly staff member employed in the University's Public Affairs office. John was our first Parent Council member to make parent a presentation to the group and took a special interest in FERPA. Since then, four other members have given presentations on topics of personal expertise or interest to the group, which have greatly enriched our discussions. Matt Howard was congratulated on his upcoming graduation thanked for working so diligently to integrate suggestions from the Parent Council into Cal Poly's family orientation programming during SOAR and WOW.

## **MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

Motions to approve the April meeting minutes were made by John Cotter and John Jones. The minutes were approved as written.

## **STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS PRESENTATION**

### **Monica Schechter, Associate Director, Study Abroad and CSU International Programs**

Monica presented on the Study Abroad and CSU International Programs opportunities available to Cal Poly students. According to Monica, students have the opportunity to participate in 140 Study Abroad Programs in 36 Countries, providing them with a diversity of countries and experiences from which to choose.

Understanding other cultures and language is more important today than ever before in our nation's history. Foreign study in particular is recognized as an essential part of the college experience. Approximately 4% (approximately 800 students annually) of Cal Poly students will have lived and studied in another country by the time they graduate. One of the most important skills students develop from their university education is the ability to consider things from more than one perspective. Studying abroad enhances this ability and helps them develop analytical and critical thinking skills as well.

The most common reasons students study abroad are: to internationalize their college experience, explore another culture and contribute to cross-cultural understanding, improve language skills and build relationships. It's also a great addition to the resume and is often an adventure of a lifetime. The IEP Staff are eager to help students pursue these opportunities.

Although study abroad and exchange programs are attracting greater numbers of students, there are common misperceptions that do deter some students from participating. Many students believe that fluency in another language is required or necessary. For some programs, this is the case; but, there are many programs that do not have this requirement. Courses in many different programs are taught in English. As part of some programs – such as the Thai Study program - students are introduced to conversational language skills.

Another common misperception is that participation in these programs will postpone a student's graduation date. Students often receive course credit for the courses they take while they are away. Consequently, they are making progress towards their degree while gaining experiences and perspectives that are very valuable and, many times, life altering. If a student plans well, they can graduate on time and have the study abroad experience too.

Another misperception is that participation in Study Abroad programs is expensive. In some countries (i.e. China, Taiwan, Mexico, and New Zealand), the cost is actually less than attending Cal Poly for a term when you factor in the exchange rate and cost of living. Scholarships are available and eligible students can utilize financial aid to assist with the cost of overseas programs. Students who keep their grades up and plan ahead benefit from having more options open to them, including financial assistance.

Students interested in exchange or study abroad can choose from four main programs:

1. CSU International Programs (IP) –The CSU offers year-long programs available in 19 countries. These programs are generally for junior and senior level students interested in taking classes that follow their major or minor track. Students must have a GPA of

2.75 or higher to participate. Students receive CSU credit for the course they pass and pay CSU fees. Fees range from \$11,150 to \$22,390 for the year. Destinations include: Australia, Canada, Chile, Germany, Mexico, South Africa and the UK.

2. Faculty Led Quarter-Abroad Programs - These programs are for all majors and are generally recommended for students who choose to study abroad earlier in their college years. The courses offered typically satisfy General Education requirements in Areas B, C, and D. Students receive Cal Poly credit and pay Cal Poly fees. The quarter that the student participates depends on where they want to study.

The program in Valladolid, Spain occurs during fall quarter and requires the completion of one term of college-level Spanish for eligibility. The Australia study program typically falls in winter quarter and includes general education courses. The Quarter-at-Sea program is offered in spring and includes destinations such as South America, the South Pacific, and Asia. The Thai Study Program offers a variety of courses and includes opportunities to immerse in Thai culture and language during spring quarter. Internship opportunities are available for qualified seniors. Programs in Peru and London are offered during the summer.

3. College Exchanges - These are for upperclassmen in the various majors in Colleges with exchange agreements. These are low cost and more appropriate for a more independent student. Students pay Cal Poly tuition and stay for up to one year. To participate, the students should contact a Faculty Exchange Coordinator.
4. Affiliated Programs –Cal Poly also has university-wide affiliation agreements with study abroad providers including Austria Learn, Cultural Experiences Abroad, Denmark International Study, the National Student Exchange Program and the University Studies Abroad Consortium.

Some important things to keep in mind when considering Study Abroad are to: plan ahead, attend the Study Abroad Fairs in April and October, meet with an advisor, talk with a financial aid counselor, attend the pre-departure orientation, talk to former students who have studied abroad, and visit the Web site at <http://iep.calpoly.edu>

Monica introduced Cal Poly student Colleen Lynch, who studied abroad in Chile for a year to share her personal experience.

Colleen Lynch is a Liberal Studies student who is also enrolled in Cal Poly's Teacher Education Program. Colleen spent a year in Santiago, Chile and also served as a student representative on the CSU Academic Council for International Programs. Colleen shared her experiences in Chile, explaining that the year abroad was life-changing for her.

She stated that although the opportunity wasn't something she considered very seriously, she decided to attend an information session. At the time, she wasn't completely sure about her career goals and how this might fit in; but, her parents encouraged her to apply. Colleen stayed with a Chilean family, attended school and volunteered during the summer months. She learned a tremendous amount about the culture and become fluent in Spanish.

The experience helped her clarify her life goals. When she returned, she enrolled in the Teacher Education Program and plans to use her bilingual skills - which are in high demand - in her teaching career. She also fell in love during her time abroad.

Colleen emphasized that the support of her parents was the defining factor in her decision to study abroad. She encouraged the Council members to be open to learning about the opportunities available and to support their student in getting more information. She indicated that many students don't even mention the idea to their parents because they think it might be too expensive or delay their graduation. She reiterated that her year abroad was life changing and truly the highlight of her college experience.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Mission**

Nancy Gragnani reviewed the mission of the Parent Program Advisory Council. The mission of the Council is to provide advice on matters of importance to Cal Poly parents. The Council shall assist in the development of a strong and active Parent Program, and provide assistance in seeking support for the University.

### **College Topics Discussion**

Nancy Gragnani asked the members what topics they were interested in hearing about at future meetings. No topics or offers to present were mentioned; but, a few members had situation-specific questions. Nicky offered to connect anyone whose students have specific questions or concerns with the appropriate campus staff.

## **PARENT PROGRAM ITEMS**

### **HOTEL ROOM BLOCKS**

Jessica Todd shared information about the hotel rooms the Parent Program blocked for the purpose of assisting Council members with accommodations during busy times of the year when their presence at Cal Poly is required. She explained the policies associated with each agreement and answered questions. This service was provided as an option to the Council members in addition to whatever rates or other accommodations they might be considering. The Parent Program will assess the use of this service after one year to determine if it useful to continue to offer these options.

### **SOAR**

Nicky Nickelsen reported that Summer Orientation, Advising and Resources sessions are currently underway and that the Orientation Programs staff and students are doing a fine job coordinating the family programming. She provided an overview of the daily agenda and indicated that the Parent Program is participating in a resource fair and presenting during a session for parents.

### **PARENT HANDBOOK**

Nicky Nickelsen announced the newly revised *Parent Handbook* is at the printer and will be mailed to parents who attended SOAR and purchased a Family Packet at the end of the month. She thanked John Jones for reviewing it.

### **NSWE**

The **Cal Poly Alumni Association's** New Student Welcome Events will be held August, 5, 12 and 19. Over 75 parents have volunteered to help welcome parents at the various events.

### **WOW**

WOW Family Orientation Weekend is September 8 and 9. Nancy Gragnani announced that the theme for the week is from VH1's hit show "The Best Week Ever". Nancy indicated that she

would like to have the Parent Program include the theme in its welcome booth. Ideas are invited.

The Cal Poly Alumni Association will launch its Online Community, "Poly Link" this fall. It will be available to all Cal Poly alumni as well as all future graduates.

#### **STAFF PRESENTATIONS**

##### **CRAIG NELSON, DIRECTOR OF THE CAL POLY PARENT FUND AND ADVANCEMENT SERVICES**

Craig Nelson reported that Cal Poly raised \$22.8 million last year in donations from alumni, parents and friends. Gifts from parents totaled \$2.1 million from 8,014 gifts. The annual fund (phonathon and mail) raised \$708,000 from 7,469 parent gifts. \$578,000 was to the unrestricted gifts category. A percentage of the unrestricted amount (the last figure) is provided to the Parent Program to assist in outreach efforts to parents. Craig noted that the student phone-a-thon callers play a key roll in raising money for the University. He also thanked the Parent Council for their continued efforts to provide information, resources and events for parents and for the goodwill they are generating on behalf of the University.

Craig presented an award to Paul Bittick for his service as the 2006-07 Parent Fund signer. Paul was also recognized for his service as a Parent Program Council Advisory Member and as Council Chair from 2007-08.

##### **TREY DUFFY, DIRECTOR, DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER**

Trey introduced the Council members to the services provided by Cal Poly's Disability Resource Center and mentioned the outreach they offer to new families during orientation. He discussed the concept of Universal Design, an approach to the design of products, services and environments to be usable by as many people as possible regardless of age, ability or circumstance.

Universal design is a relatively new paradigm that emerged from "barrier-free" or "accessible design" and "assistive technology." Barrier-free design and assistive technology provide a level of accessibility for people with disabilities; but, they also often result in separate and stigmatizing solutions - such as a ramp that leads to a different entry to a building than a main stairway. Universal design strives to be a broad-spectrum solution that helps everyone, not just people with disabilities. (Adapted from: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal\\_design](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal_design) )

Universal design in instruction addresses the need to create flexible goals, methods, materials, and assessments that accommodate learner differences. As campuses begin to incorporate universally designed instructional practices, all students are provided with the tools they need to succeed and the required accommodations for students with disabilities become transparent.

Trey shared a video called "From Where I Sit" by Jean Wells and Steve Stinskin. The video is designed to raise awareness about different learning styles and included commentary from students and faculty. It emphasized the need for a variety of classroom tools that allow all students to succeed equally. Trey is in the process of assessing whether or not the video would be valuable to and well received by faculty. The Council members felt the video is an excellent resource.

John Cotter inquired about how the University would implement these tools in all of its classrooms. He also asked if there resources are available to help faculty. Trey indicated the Cal State University System has mandated specific services be provided. For instance, all

videos purchased by the university must be closed captioned. The initiative is very innovative and if the objective can be achieved, the CSU will have made great strides toward universally designed learning environments. The initiative can be found at:  
<http://www.calstate.edu/accessibility/>

A large part of the effort is raising awareness among faculty about the types of disabilities which exist, encouraging them to think about the ways they present material and challenging them to adjust their teaching styles accordingly.

Pat Saley suggested showing the video to new students during orientation. They indicated that would be ideal; but, the orientation schedule is tightly programmed. Other options may be available for educating students about disabilities and differences among people.

Barbara Damerel inquired if there was a way students with special needs could be identified to the faculty so that they might be able to assist in their success.

This is an issue that comes up often. They explained that the law - specifically, the ADA (American's with Disabilities Act) - prohibits the release of this information without the students permission. If students wish to share their personal situation with the professor, it is up to them to do so. If students seek help through DRC, additional resources and services can be provided based on their individual need.

Connie and Ira Katz stated that they felt all students deserve the right to a fair and equal education. Connie said she would like to see the schools and Universities look at the way classes are taught and require ongoing training for all teachers. Cal Poly does have a Center for Teaching and Learning which offers this service.

For more information, see: <http://www.accessibility.calpoly.edu/> .

### **CLOSING REMARKS AND ADJOURNMENT**

The next meeting is scheduled for Sunday, November 11. Other announcements are:

1. New Student Welcome Events – August 5, 12 and 19 in your local area.
2. WOW – Saturday and Sunday, September 8 and 9
3. Parents' Weekend and fall meeting – November 9-11.

Nancy Gragnani adjourned the meeting at 4:50 p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,  
Jessica Todd