

Cal Poly Parent Program Advisory Council Meeting

July 13, 2002

Alumni House Conference Room
Cal Poly State University, San Luis Obispo, CA

MINUTES

Attending

Council Members – Kirk Brewer, Perilla Brewer, Mary Cox, Jerry Holcombe, Sally Holcombe, Ellie Jorritsma, Betty Long, Bobbe Michallik, Walter Michallik, Barbara McRae, Diane Ryan, Tony Ryan, Christine Young, John Yost, Suzie Yost

Staff – Dr. Robert Detweiler, Craig Nelson, Director of the Cal Poly Fund, Nicky Nickelsen

Student Assistant - Autumn Pearson

Guests – Connie Friel, John Friel, Pat Keeley, Crystal Williams

Welcome/Introduction

Diane Ryan called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. Introductions were made by all in attendance and four parent guests were welcomed: Connie and John Friel from Aptos, CA, Pat Keeley from Sebastopol, CA and Crystal Williams from Chico, CA. All are parents of current Cal Poly students. During introductions, Ellie Jorritsma expressed her confidence in Diane Ryan's leadership as the new Council Chair. She provided Diane with a gavel as a wish for success in her role. Diane thanked Ellie Jorritsma for her guidance and assistance during the transition. She also expressed appreciation to the Council for the opportunity to serve as Chair and. Nicky introduced Autumn Pearson, the Parent Program's new student assistant. Autumn is a Speech Communication senior. Her experience and knowledge as a Poly Rep has already been very helpful in serving parents.

Minutes

A motion was made to approve the April minutes with Kirk Brewer added to the list of those attending. They were approved with this addendum.

Summary of Past Year

Diane Ryan summarized the Parent Program's accomplishments during the past year, highlighting the following:

- Ellie was welcomed as Chair last summer and did a magnificent job representing Cal Poly parents and providing outstanding leadership to the Council.
- The size of our Parent Connection newsletter was doubled to 8 pages.
- A new Parent Handbook was created in conjunction with the WOW program
- The new Parent Program web site went online
- The parent survey went online, allowing parents to sign-up for the e-mail network and indicate their volunteer interests
- A new database was created to identify volunteers and allow for better access to data
- Program support of WOW Parent Orientation Weekend improved with increased outreach at the resource fair, Presidents' reception and parent sessions.
- Parents' Day programming improved with the change to Homecoming weekend and the addition of the wine tasting, faculty forum, performing arts events and a reception. Collaboration with Athletics and Alumni Relations allowed parents to be a part of the Homecoming activities, making for a more festive day.
- Outreach improved during Admitted Students' Day, the most notable of which was a very successful Parent Coffeehouse
- Parent attendance at the Rose Float event more than doubled
- Parents in Orange and San Diego counties were invited to regional events in conjunction with the Alumni Association (El Adobe and Julian Wine Stomp)

- Improved communication regarding key issues including housing and the fee increase
- Support of Cal Poly's Parent Fund
- Increased in parents involved in supporting Parent Program services (E-mail network, new Council members, volunteers at El Adobe and the New Student Welcome Events)

Goals for upcoming year

- Market the e-mail network for increased involvement and participation
- Consider surveying parents regarding events and/or services
- Consider informal networking between alumni and students for internships
- Improve web site
- Continue to develop volunteer identification and tracking system

Discussion Items by Functional Areas

Communications:

Nicky Nickelsen announced proposed topics for the fall *Parent Connection* newsletter including: an invitation to Parents' Day, a calendar, an article from a parent's perspective, an article on student deaths and safety from Tony Ryan, a college highlights section, a list of Parent Program services and a piece announcing University Advancement's new online giving opportunities. Barbara McRae volunteered to write the Parent's Perspective article.

Nicky Nickelsen indicated she received suggestions for changes to the *Parent Handbook* from Council members and will be coordinating those with the WOW program. The new handbook resembles the design of WOW's Summer Advising materials and will be printed for distribution at Parent Orientation Weekend.

Nicky Nickelsen indicated that an Access database has been created to help manage parent e-mail network and volunteer data. The database allows parents to sign up for the e-mail service and indicate volunteer interests online, minimizing the amount of data entry and potential for errors on the part of the Parent Program. The database will help the Program manage parent data more efficiently than the Excel spreadsheets currently used. All updates would be stored in the database, eliminating the need for volunteers to document updates in a spreadsheet. An online reporting feature allows volunteers to access parent data (e-mail addresses and names) for parents on the network. Nicky Nickelsen explained to the Council how volunteers can access the data for their area online, distributing step-by-step instructions, which were also mailed to each volunteer. She asked the Council members to refer any parents interested in the e-mail network to the Parent Program web site to sign up. She indicated a paper survey will still be mailed to the permanent addresses of each incoming student every fall with the WOW materials, so that parents can complete it "as they are thinking about it" and mail or fax it back. A laptop will also be available at the Parent Program booth so that parents may sign up for the network during WOW Parent Orientation Weekend. She asked the Council members to notify her of any user issues they encounter when working with the online reporting tool so improvements may be made.

Leadership Development:

Diane Ryan announced that Kirk Brewer is the Parent Program Vice Chair. He will assume the role of Chair for the 2003 calendar year. We welcome and look forward to Kirk's leadership.

Diane Ryan reiterated the term limits announced at the April meeting. Council members will serve a three year term, with the option to renew one year.

Events:

Nicky Nickelsen announced the dates of upcoming parent events:
 WOW Parent Orientation Weekend – September 14, 15
 Parents' Day – October 26

Admitted Students' Day/Open House – April 25, 26, 2003

An e-mail message will be sent to the Council members requesting they volunteer for shifts for each of the fall events. The Parent Program booth will need to be manned both Saturday and Sunday of WOW. Volunteers are needed for the Presidents' Welcome and Reception Saturday night and parent sessions on Sunday. The Council will meet for breakfast on Sunday morning. Diane Ryan will speak Saturday evening and Sunday morning.

Nicky Nickelsen described the events planned in conjunction with the Homecoming festivities for Parents' Day, indicating that parents will be invited to the parade this year. The Welcome and college tours/highlights will occur later in the morning to allow time for those attending the parade or traveling that morning to attend. Lily Cai is the evening performing arts option.

Diane Ryan reported on the EI Adobe event, a gathering for Orange County Cal Poly alumni and parents. The evening included a raffle which was coordinated by Diane Ryan and Bobbe Michallik with assistance from local parent volunteers. An alumnus from the College of Architecture and Environmental Design spoke about his company's projects, commenting on the value of his Cal Poly degree. It was a successful event with approximately 20 parents attending.

Jerry and Sally Holcombe reported on the Alumni Association's Fly-In event held at the USS Hornet in Alameda, CA. Parent attendance was minimal, but the Holcombe's commented on the unique venue for this particular event. This was the first year parents were invited to the Fly-In.

Nicky Nickelsen indicated the Alumni Association is hosting New Student Welcome Events – NSWEs (formerly called Send-Off Picnics) statewide in August. Nicky indicated she has been working closely with alumni staff to plan for parent volunteers at the picnics. Volunteers will receive lunch and a t-shirt and their role will be coordinated by each of the alumni chapter hosts. Volunteers who expressed an interest in assisting at the New Student Welcome events via our online form or WOW surveys were sent an e-mail message with information about the events and asked to reply. Approximately 30 of 80 parents confirmed their availability and were sent a packet of information including a referral to the alumni hosts/hostesses planning the events.

The Council members expressed concerns about the quality and location of the events. Several Council members indicated that, in the past, the quality and quantity of food and programming provided was inadequate and inconsistent from event to event. Some events seem to be more successful than others. Since these events are a first point of contact with the University for new students and their families, the members argued it is critical they be well organized and represent the University appropriately. Kirk and Perilla Brewer felt strongly that a welcome event should be scheduled in the LA area. Since a large number of students attend Cal Poly from LA they suggested the University should support a program for those families. The Council members also suggested the name "newly admitted students" should be changed.

Nicky Nickelsen conferred and indicated she thought the Alumni Association would very much agree that a program should be offered for LA area families. She explained that the statewide alumni chapters are responsible for planning the NSWEs in their local areas. The quality and location of the events very much depends on the existence of a chapter, its leadership and the level of local volunteer participation. Unfortunately, many of the chapters are not as strong as we'd like them to be. A new Director and Associate Director of Alumni Relations as well as the new Assistant Director, referenced above, were recently hired. With these recent staffing changes, a comprehensive review of goals and priorities related to budget, outreach, membership, chapters and programming is occurring. Nicky indicated she is confident the new

staff, given time, will create a quality alumni program with strong chapters – changes that will likely be reflected in the NSWE programming.

She indicated that, from an administrative standpoint, the coordination on the part of the Alumni Office is already very much improved. She also emphasized that the NSWEs are Alumni Events. The Parent Program's role is to provide parent volunteers, not to plan the events. With that information, she assured the Council members that the feedback is very much valued appreciated and will be communicated to alumni staff who she meets with weekly.

Council Member Recognition

Diane Ryan and Nicky Nickelsen recognized and thanked Ellie Jorritsma, the Parent Program's 2001-2002 Council Chair and 4 year member, presenting her with a Cal Poly History Book. Ellie provided exceptional leadership to the Council and programming direction to the Parent Program. Craig Nelson thanked Ellie for an exceptional effort in her role as Cal Poly's Parent Fund signer and presented her with a bag of Cal Poly memorabilia.

Jerry and Sally Holcombe were also recognized for their 3 years of service on the Parent Council and presented with a Cal Poly History Book. Jerry was recognized for his role as the 2000-2001 Council Chair, bringing exceptional leadership during a transition that included a new Vice President for Student Affairs, Advancement Director and Parent Program Coordinator. He was instrumental in recommending a new Council structure and in identifying common themes that set the stage for new Parent Program priorities: communications/outreach, events and volunteer involvement. Sally was recognized for her assistance editing Parent Program publications including the *Parent Handbook*. Both were recognized for hosting events in Northern California and for their participation and support of Cal Poly throughout their term.

Christine Young was recognized for 3 years of service on the Parent Council. Christine and her husband Conrad are very active with the Alumni Association and have hosted many events for parents, alumni and donors. She served as the Alumni representative to the Parent Council, providing creative and thoughtful programming suggestions in her dual role. She was also instrumental in coordinating e-mail communications to parents in the San Diego and Imperial areas. She and Conrad hosted the Parent Advisory Council and other Cal Poly groups at her home in San Luis Obispo. Christine always made herself available to welcome parents at campus events.

The Council recognized Dr. Detweiler for his leadership as Interim Vice President for Student Affairs and expressed appreciation for the support and direction he has provided to the Council and the Parent Program. Jerry and Sally Holcombe presented Dr. Detweiler with a token of appreciation. Several Council members expressed words of appreciation to Dr. Detweiler.

Fund Development:

Craig Nelson, Director of the Cal Poly Fund, reported on parent giving levels to the Parent Fund, noting the marked increase over past years. He explained the phone and mail solicitation process to the Council, adding that the fall and spring letters mailed annually to parents are edited and signed by the Parent Program Advisory Council Chair. He recognized the Parent Program and the Council for the continued outreach efforts, providing them with quality communications, events and ways to be involved.

University Update

Dr. Detweiler announced that Dr. Cornel Morton has been hired as Cal Poly's new Vice President for Student Affairs. He is expected to start at the end of August. Dr. Morton comes to Cal Poly from Kent State University in Kent, Ohio where he was Associate Vice President for Student Support Services. His professional background includes various administrative leadership positions at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Central Michigan University, University of

Toledo, University of Maryland and Tennessee State University. Dr. Morton has an impressive list of publications, presentations and research interests and is very well qualified and suited for his important role serving students at Cal Poly.

Dr. Detweiler indicated Cerro Vista campus housing is scheduled to open fall of 2003 and will likely house returning Cal Poly students. The second phase is scheduled to open in 2006.

Dr. Detweiler indicated he expects the University will continue to focus on student success. He suggested the Council continue its work, providing feedback and comments to the new Vice President on behalf of parents. He indicated it is important that the Council continue to work to ensure parents have a voice, that it is acknowledged, and that the services provided by the Program are recognized.

Adjournment

The next meeting is scheduled for October 27, 2002. Information will be forthcoming. Diane Ryan adjourned the meeting at 2:00 p.m.

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

Nicky Nickelsen