

Cal Poly Parent Program Advisory Council Meeting

February 2, 2002

Residence of Conrad & Christine Young
San Luis Obispo, CA

MINUTES

Attending

Council Members – Carol Ahlem, Perilla Brewer, Mary Cox, Mike Cox, Jerry Holcombe, Sally Holcombe, Ellie Jorritsma, Betty Long, Bobbe Michallik, Walter Michallik, Barbara McRae, Jennifer Stuppi, Paul Stuppi, Diane Ryan, Tony Ryan, Bob Sutter, Renne Sutter, Christine Young

Visitors – John Yost, Suzie Yost

Staff – Dr. Robert Detweiler, Nicky Nickelsen

Welcome/Introduction

Ellie Jorritsma called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. She welcomed parent guests, John & Suzie Yost. All attendees introduced themselves.

Minutes

Motions were made by Jerry Holcombe & Barbara McRae to approve the November meeting minutes as written. They were approved.

University Update

Dr. Detweiler thanked everyone for their continued support of their students and Cal Poly as well as their service as members of the Parent Council. He began his update by indicating that once again, the quality of Cal Poly students continues to remain high, citing their competitive test scores and GPAs. The university plans to offer 7,500 students admission to Cal Poly for fall 2002 with the expectation that 4,000 will enroll.

Dr. Detweiler indicated state budget issues are still providing funding challenges, but cuts are now expected to be 10% for the CSU – not as high as originally expected last fall. Faced with these budget cuts, Cal Poly's administration has made a choice to protect academic programs and faculty and target support services for budget reductions.

Dr. Detweiler reported to the Council, as he has in meetings past, that Cal Poly receives only the CSU average funding for its enrollment growth, an amount considerably below the requirements to sustain quality in our mission-centric programs and the teaching and learning environment that supports them. In addition, the great majority of Cal Poly's students are enrolled in polytechnic and science-based programs of study, which are more costly to run. As a result, the University is looking to institute a campus-based academic fee increase. The University is also engaged in a major fundraising campaign – the Centennial Campaign - that is unprecedented in its goals for Cal Poly and the CSU. And, the University is undertaking various administrative, calendar, curricular and other changes that increase our efficiency and allow us to stretch our budget further. A proposed student fee increase is part of a larger university plan to support and enhance the quality of its academic programs.

Each college has developed, with input from students, a proposal for the fee amount and expenditures. These proposals reflect the particular needs and plans of each of the colleges and will be available on each of the college's web sites. The fee increases, if they pass, will likely be no greater than \$200.00 per quarter and will be implemented fall quarter 2002. If the fees are passed, they will not reduce the normal allocation the state receives

from the state. Revenue will remain in the colleges and is to be used for major classes, labs or as advisory committees in each college see fit. The funds will not be used for administrative purposes. Dr. Detweiler added that CSU tuition has not increased in 7 years. 10 years ago, the student/faculty ratio was 16 to 1, today it is about 19 to 1.

Dr. Detweiler indicated information about the fee initiative will be provided to students in part through student leaders, clubs, student advisory Councils and other organizations on campus, as well as the campus newspaper. The colleges will hold informational forums. Dr. Detweiler indicated that Cal Poly's fees may be much lower than those at comparable universities, but the university will not continue to be the best bargain if its academic programs aren't sustained and if it takes longer for students to graduate. He argued that the benefits of a fee increase include increased eligibility for financial aid for many lower-middle class students.

The Council members indicated that they feel parents would support an increase in fees if that revenue ensures students have easier access to classes and it goes specifically to support academic programs. The members argued that students also struggle getting GE and support courses, not just major courses. Support courses, many of which are prerequisites for major courses, are in very short supply. The lack of available spaces often delays a student's progress by several quarters.

Dr. Detweiler clarified that, if passed, the revenue from the fee initiatives would only be used for increasing the quality of programs in the colleges – programs that don't involve general education. This applies to the College of Science & Mathematics and the College of Liberal Arts as well. He indicated that the university is making a **separate commitment** to provide funding for additional general education and support courses. Both the fee increases, if they pass, and the funding for general education and support courses will start in fall of 2002.

After extensive discussion, the Council members voted to endorse the fee initiative. In doing so, they felt strongly that the university should make a concerted effort to inform parents of the proposals, direct them to web sites for additional information and inform them of their student's opportunity to vote. Dr. Detweiler suggested a letter be sent to parents from the President and include the Council's endorsement.

ACTION ITEM: Dr. Detweiler to work with Nicky & Ellie on arranging for a letter to parents.

Dr. Detweiler summarized progress on the new campus-housing complex. 200 units are expected to be ready by fall with the remainder opening in winter quarter 2003. Currently Cal Poly can accommodate 2,900 students on-campus. The plan is to add 1,700 additional spaces.

Dr. Detweiler indicated the search for a new Vice President is continuing. A search firm was hired and the committee has received 50-70 applications. It will narrow the pool to about five top candidates. The university hopes to fill the position by June.

Discussion Items by Functional Areas

Leadership Development:

Ellie Jorritsma asked the members for their opinions on Council member term limits. The bylaws state each member will serve a three-year term. However, with staff and organizational transitions, several members generously volunteered to extend their terms in order to provide continuity to the Council and the Parent Program. Suggested options included:

- A 4-year term

- Two 2-year terms
- One 3-year term with one 1-year extension
- A term that lasts as long as a member's student is at Cal Poly
- One three year term followed by a year off and the possibility for another 3 year term

Many Council members felt strongly the term should be at least three years given the first year is spent orienting oneself to the program, the second year lends itself to greater involvement and the third year is spent supporting new members.

The Council agreed to allow the current Chair, Past Chair, Chair-elect and the Parent Program Coordinator to discuss the options and recommend a change in the by-laws, if necessary.

Ellie Jorritsma asked each of the Council members to assist in recruiting new members from their area of the state. Nicky Nickelsen assigned names of parents who expressed an interest in the Council via the fall WOW surveys. She asked the members to contact these parents, explain what Council membership entails and determine if they have an interest in attending the meeting.

The Council members felt strongly that a "mentor" program of some sort should be started to orient new members. They felt providing information on the history of programs or initiatives in advance would not only be helpful to new members, but would minimize time spent during the meetings answering questions and bringing everyone "up to speed" as items are discussed.

ACTION ITEM: Council members to contact parents regarding Council membership before April. Notify Nicky of those parents who are interested.

Nicky Nickelsen asked members to begin thinking about nominations for Vice Chair. This member will become Chair following their year of service as Vice Chair. The Chair for the 2002-2003 year is Diane Ryan. Her term as Chair will begin in July.

Events:

Bobbe & Walter Michallik reported on the Rose Float event held in Pasadena. She indicated that it was a successful event with over 100 parents in attendance. The Parent Program provided Cal Poly cheese, crackers, cookies and hot apple cider as parents decorated the 2002 entry, "Birthday Blow-out". A raffle was held and students talked about the float and the club. The need for additional parent volunteers for regional events was discussed. Nicky Nickelsen thanked Bobbe & Walter Michallik and Kirk Brewer for their time and hard work setting up and hosting at the event.

Admitted Student's Day and Open House are scheduled for April 19th and 20th. The Parent Program will not host a breakfast this year, but will continue to participate in the Friday Resource Fair and Saturday Open House. This year the Parent Program will provide support to WOW for the Parent Coffeehouse event Friday evening.

Ellie Jorritsma discussed the idea of providing regional events for parents. The Parent Program is considering partnering with the Alumni Association or the Colleges since staffing and budget constraints restrict the level of support the Parent Program can provide for events. Nicky Nickelsen announced the Alumni Association has recently hired a new Director, Kim Gannon and Interim Associate Director, Rosey Parks. She hopes that during the transition, discussion can continue about how best to partner on events for parents and alumni.

Communications:

The spring newsletter will be mailed at the beginning of March. Articles planned include: a housing update, information on the Centennial Campaign, an invitation to Open House, information on the e-mail network and an article for the "From a Parent's Perspective" section. The Council members suggested including information on the fee increase in the newsletter, depending on when it would arrive in mailboxes.

The Council was asked how they feel about the effectiveness of the e-mail network. The maintenance of the network – specifically, data updates – are time consuming for the Parent Program office. A new parent database, which was built to hold information entered via the on-line volunteer form has eliminated the data entry work associated with handling hundreds of WOW surveys. However, updating addresses is still an issue. The Parent Program would prefer not to place the burden of contacting parents for e-mail updates and managing data on the volunteers. Another issue is ensuring volunteers are sending messages in a timely manner. The Council indicated once per month is a good schedule. Nicky indicated she would like the coordinators to start drafting their own messages, though she would still ask they include links provided by the Parent Program. The Parent Program is looking to the university and outside vendors for services that can support the e-mail network and the timely mailing of messages. The Council indicated they would like to continue handling the e-mail network.

Betty Long indicated she is contacting local parents regarding participation in a university web parent focus group. The parent focus group is one of 6 groups that will provide feedback to the university about the main Cal Poly web page.

Fund Development:

The Parent Fund continues to do well, bringing in an increasing level of private support to the university. Nicky thanked Ellie for her conscientious efforts to enhance the university's message to parents through the Parent Fund solicitation letters.

Nicky asked the Council for ideas on how to develop discretionary revenue for hosting and programming for parents that would not add to the workload of staff. She mentioned working with companies to offer travel services, selling gift items, etc. The Council felt strongly that parent/student names and addresses not be sold for these purposes. They suggested selling t-shirts and engaging in other small sales projects. It was suggested that if these sorts of projects are considered, the investment of time and effort be compared to the monetary return.

Adjournment

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Open House weekend in April. Information will be forthcoming. Ellie Jorritsma adjourned the meeting at 11:45 am.

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

Nicky Nickelsen