

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

Saturday, January 28, 2006  
Alumni House Conference Center  
Cal Poly State University, San Luis Obispo, CA

## **MINUTES**

### **ATTENDING**

Council Members – Paul Bittick, Allison Byler, John Cotter, Ed Czisny, Maxine Czisny, Melanie Dreike, Gloria Edelen, Nancy Gragnani, Connie Katz, Patricia Pasetta, Chris Patubo, Pat Patubo, Sue Richardson, Tony Richardson, Frances Rivoire, Carolyn Thom, Thanos Trezos, Ken Williams, Robbie Williams

Parent Guests – Yvonne Chavez, Barbara Damerel, David and Karen French, Ron Hunnewell, John and Karen Jernigan, Katherine Keeney, Jeff and Joy Kreps

Student Guests: Emerald Poon Katz (Psych); Open House Guests: Melissa (Bio) and Katherine (History)

Staff – Cornel Morton, Nicky Nickelsen, and Theresa Rush

### **WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS**

Frances Rivoire called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. She warmly welcomed all and acknowledged the attendance of council members and guests.

Motions to approve the minutes from the January meeting were made by Melanie Dreike and Tony Richardson. They were approved.

Frances reviewed the Mission Statement of the 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.” She reviewed agenda items for the day. Council members were asked to update their contact information on the roster being circulated. She reminded members about the “interesting readings” list and encouraged them to consider recommending a book or article for the list.

Frances announced that copies of the Council’s functional responsibilities are available for review. This document describes the expectations and responsibilities of Council members.

### **UNIVERSITY UPDATE**

Cornel welcomed and expressed appreciation to everyone for the time they committed to attending the meeting. He acknowledged the students in attendance adding that time is an especially precious commodity for them.

Cornel indicated that the role of staff in the Division of Student Affairs is to serve as student development educators. “We attend to the whole person.” Staff in the division takes pride in acknowledging individual students’ backgrounds and talents. In return, students challenge us; “they hold our feet to the fire.”

### Vice Chair/Chair-Elect

Prior to beginning his update, Cornel referenced a later agenda topic - the nominations process for the 2005-06 Vice Chair/Chair-elect - indicating the role of the Chair is an important one. It involves speaking parts to parents of new and admitted students. The person should be a role model for the parent community and be available to work as part of the Executive Committee to

plan Council meetings and encourage parent involvement. He complimented Frances on her job in this role.

#### Possible Partnership with Admissions for Parent E-news

The Parent Program is still exploring opportunities to partner with Cal Poly's Admissions Office, which may be able to provide support for a Web-based e-news service for freshman parents through its existing software. That office uses a program called EMT to attract prospective students to Cal Poly. This option since it would not require sharing data with an off-campus entity and may result in some cost-savings.

#### First Year Initiative

This year, Cal Poly received about 32,000 applicants for fall admission. The university will offer admission to 7,000 students and enroll approximately 3,400. These 3,400 students will have the opportunity to self-select into Cal Poly's First-year Initiative seminar which is designed to provide them with a quarter-long, first-year academic experience.

Many universities have a First Year Experience program which is required of or offered to all new students and is designed to orient them to the college experience. Although the equivalent does not yet exist at Cal Poly, we have some components of a First Year Experience program that are serving as building blocks for a more formalized program.

The First Year Initiative seminar is one such component. The seminar has been available through Student Academic Services for some time, but enrollment has been limited. Cornel and his colleagues in Academic Affairs are working with deans, department chairs and faculty in the academic colleges to elicit their support of and participation in a formalized First Year Experience program. Jeff Jacobs, a faculty member in the College of Agriculture, has agreed to work part-time in addition to teaching, on coordinating existing campus efforts directed at first-year student success. He is also researching programs at other universities and creating techniques that faculty can use in the classroom to help support students during their transition. Work is also underway to help senior faculty impact the recognition system so that work with FYE programs is a required component of the tenure process.

University officials often rely on empirical evidence that programs are worthy of continuing; therefore, the assessment of First Year Experience programs will be a priority and will likely include qualitative and quantitative research focus groups and other experimental data.

#### IRA Referendum

On Feb. 22-23, students will be asked to vote on a proposal to increase by \$10 (to a total of \$16.98) the quarterly fee for non-athletics Instructionally Related Activities (IRA). These are activities and laboratory experiences that are at least partially sponsored by an academic discipline or instructional department and that are integrally related to its formal instructional offerings. Some examples are the *Mustang Daily* newspaper, performing arts events, hybrid vehicle development, and agricultural judging. Currently, Cal Poly recognizes 62 IRA programs, with about 5,000 students participating directly and many more affected indirectly.

While the number and cost of IRAs have increased significantly, the fee that supports these activities has not been raised in over thirteen years. The current fee revenue no longer covers the costs, causing a shortfall that has been closed with temporary funding that will not be available in coming years. The proposed fee increase would be used both to secure support for existing programs and to provide for the addition of new programs. About 5,000 students benefit directly or indirectly from IRA programs.

Your student can attend an open forum to learn more about the fee initiative before voting on Feb. 9 and Feb. 13. More information about the referendum and the forums is available at: <http://studentaffairs.calpoly.edu/feeref>. Parents will receive information about the upcoming vote in the February e-newsletter.

### Mardi Gras

This year, Mardi Gras begins on Friday, Feb. 24 and extends through "Fat Tuesday" Feb. 28. Since Mardi Gras evolved into an out-of-control party scene that resulted in a riot in 2004, the City of San Luis Obispo, in partnership with Cal Poly and many other community groups will continue the strong measures it established last year to end the growing cycle of out-of-control behavior. The situation last year was vastly improved. During that weekend, there will be more than 350 law enforcement officers on duty in San Luis Obispo, along with DUI checkpoints and significantly increased fines for several violations. Underage drinking is a significant problem during Mardi Gras weekend, and the laws will be strictly enforced.

As the weekend approaches, there will be extensive messaging throughout our community making it clear that "The Party is Still Over" in San Luis Obispo. Cal Poly students will receive information via the campus newspaper, radio, e-mail, information booths on campus, and through other forums which will reiterate the risks of involvement in Mardi Gras activities. Law enforcement officers are currently making door-to-door visits to residents and leaving educational door hangers.

The Parent Program's February e-newsletter will include a letter from SLOPD Chief Deborah Linden about Mardi Gras. It explains past problems and how they have been addressed and asks parents to encourage their students to stay free of the weekend partying.

### Free Speech In The Classroom

Free Speech continues to garner increased levels of attention across campus. Most recently, the Council on University Citizenship discussed the practice of proselytizing by faculty in the classroom. The Academic Senate issued a statement reminding faculty to appropriately present material and to use the classroom as a forum for civil discourse on both sides of the issues they discuss.

### Alcohol Education

Cal Poly is considering implementing an online alcohol education tool to help inform and educate new students about the risks associated with the use and abuse of alcohol. New students could be required to complete the program prior to or during their first-year at the University as a condition of residency or registration. The program is offered by an external vendor and is a two-part activity.

The abuse of alcohol continues to be a problem on college campuses nationwide. This year, Cornell has met with two students with second-offense alcohol violations. Letters from the Vice President for Student Affairs are regularly mailed to all students who are arrested on an alcohol violation; a letter is mailed to their parents on their second offense.

### Member Comments and Questions

Sue Richardson: Sue expressed concern about the lack of access to services for students who live-off campus during their first year. Students who live on campus seem to have a better connection to the University and better chances for success than those who do not secure

housing on campus. Services implemented for the residents, especially those related to FYE, should also be offered to off-campus first-year students.

Sue asked for an update regarding the Red Handprint policy, which Cornel discussed at the fall Council meeting. Cornel explained that the task force he convened last fall, led by Dr. Elie Axelroth of Counseling Services, recently submitted a draft plan for educating and informing the campus community on the history and use of the red handprint. The University's policy to continue an informational campaign will not change. The task force made several recommendations regarding how future campaigns might be conducted. They also expressed concern that a survivor of a sexual assault may not want to see a red handprint - and be reminded of the incident - every time they walk by a particular location. He will meet with faculty, staff and students prior to making a decision on the matter.

John Cotter: John inquired as to whether or not students would receive a unit of credit for participating in the FYE program. Cornel indicated that he would like to see that happen and will continue to advocate for course credit. John suggested the FYE program be posed as a means of academic enrichment, something that infuses a sense of confidence in students. He suggested documentation be provided that shows that the universities we compete with for students are offering similar programs. Cornel agreed and indicated the Student Success Council did research FYE programs at other schools and included that information in meetings with the colleges.

John inquired about retention programs for sophomores. Cornel indicated that sophomore retention is an issue; but that Cal Poly does have a sophomore success program in the residence halls. He added that Cal Poly's "six-year" graduation rate has increased a bit from the mid-60 to 68 or 69%. UC schools generally have a 77% graduation rate. UC Davis has an 82%-83% graduation rate. Our Provost has set a goal of 75% for Cal Poly.

Paul Bittick: Paul indicated that graduation rates for transfer students tend to be higher than for undergraduates.

Carolyn Thom: Carolyn suggested the Week of Welcome (WOW) program be involved somehow in the First Year Experience program, given its nationally recognized status.

Patti Pasetta: Patti suggested making the FYE program mandatory. If it is optional, students will not go.

Melanie Drieke: Melanie expressed support for an online alcohol education program and inquired how it would work. Cornel explained the program he reviewed is a two-part process with four sections. Sections 1-3 include assessment and education and provide information about the affects of alcohol. Section 4 is designed to be taken 30 days after the completion of sections 1-3 and provides an opportunity for the student to reflect on their experiences within the last month.

Cornel reported that President Baker is planning to suggest to the Chancellor that the CSU offer the program system-wide. A CSU-wide implementation could reduce the cost to each campus and would allow for consistency in alcohol education efforts and possibly the assessment of those efforts.

Connie Katz: Connie stated that online alcohol training be required of all first-year students prior to enrollment; if it is not mandatory, students will not do it. She asked if the program would

also be available to continuing students. Cornel indicated if the university did make it available to continuing students, it would likely be on a self-select basis. However, the university could potentially require that students who are found guilty of alcohol violations complete the online program as part of the judicial process.

The suggestion was made that the program be tied to the housing contract. Since not all students live on campus, this would not capture every student.

Thanos Trezos: Thanos stated that first-year students should be guaranteed campus housing. He questioned why Cerro Vista apartments was made available to sophomores before all of the freshmen could be accommodated.

*The following information was gathered after the meeting:*

The decision to place sophomores in Cerro Vista was the result of proforma data and market analysis. Cal Poly adjusts its freshman enrollment according to the number of students it graduates out of each of the colleges annually. Since the number of graduates fluctuates from year-to-year, the size of the freshman class is unstable. This instability makes it difficult to guarantee maximized occupancy levels, a condition which is necessary to pay off the construction loan. Cal Poly conducted a market analysis, including a student survey, which found that a high number of sophomore students were interested in residing on campus their second year. Consequently, Cerro Vista was opened to sophomores instead of freshman. When the 2,700 bed Poly Canyon Village complex comes online, all freshmen will be accommodated on campus.

Sue Richardson: Sue expressed concern that students who are not successful in securing campus housing the first year are excluded from applying for sophomore housing. The policy rewards students who were successful their first year in the campus housing environment. The concern is that students who have lived off-campus their first year may find it difficult to abide by the rules outlined in the campus housing contract.

*The following information was gathered after the meeting:*

Cerro Vista has accommodated a few sophomores who lived off-campus the prior year after all other interested sophomores declined. Many students have already found other off-campus housing by the time the first list is exhausted, however.

Allison Byler: Allison indicated that the WOW program did schedule a winter orientation program; however, it was cancelled due to lack of interest. Packets were available to students in the Student Life and Leadership office - University Union, Room 217; however, it is not clear if word got out about the packets as very few were picked up.

### **GUEST SPEAKER TOPIC: REGISTRATION AND SCHEDULING**

Kimi Ikeda, Assistant Vice Provost for Systems and Resource Management was introduced to speak to the group on the topic of registration and scheduling. Kimi thanked the members for the questions provided in advance and invited the group to make additional comments or inquire throughout her presentation.

The goal of the registration system is to efficiently enroll students in classes. Over time, the registration process has evolved - from paper to phone to web - to keep pace with changes in technology, to meet the needs of students, and to ensure their progress to degree.

From an administrative standpoint, planning for registration is a complex process involving nearly all facets of the campus. To demonstrate this notion, Kimi reviewed the timeline for planning the fall schedule which is released during the month of May. Kimi explained that the months of May through September are spent dealing with changes - to the State budget, faculty, course offerings, facilities and room requests. These changes make it difficult to prepare a final schedule for students.

In August, students begin to register for fall classes. At the same time, summer students are finishing their quarter. Academic Records and Information Technology Services (ITS), the two entities most involved with registration, are busy processing spring graduates, posting grade reports for summer students, setting up registration for incoming freshmen and checking credits for transfer students. While these processes and administrative challenges mean nothing to the student, they all impact the structure and efficiency of the system.

The academic departments also play a key role in the registration process. Academic departments determine course offerings. To do this, they evaluate course demands, faculty availability and budget. They also coordinate student advising. Advising is not mandatory at Cal Poly, but each college, with the exception of the College of Agriculture, has a central advising center. In the College of Agriculture, advising is handled by the departments.

John Cotter inquired as to why advising is not mandatory. Kimi indicated it is a resource issue. For example, a department/college needs to decide whether allocating funds for an advisor position is a better use of resources than hiring an instructor to teach more classes. Time is also a factor when advising staff is limited. Since the window of time between the release of the class schedule and the beginning of registration is very short, it's difficult for advisors to meet with every student in the college prior to their rotation.

As a general rule, students should plan ahead and make appointments in advance to see their advisors. Much of the information students need to assist them in planning their courses and registering is available from many sources. Students are provided with a flow chart that lists all the classes they need to take by quarter to satisfy the requirements for graduation. General Education requirements are listed on the Web and in the Cal Poly Catalog. In addition, the GE courses offered during a particular quarter are listed prominently at the beginning of each class schedule. Students can get answers to questions at the Academic Records Office or by talking with other students. Academic Records also provides a Student Planning Calendar available online at [http://www.ess.calpoly.edu/\\_records/Calendars\\_Deadlines/index.htm](http://www.ess.calpoly.edu/_records/Calendars_Deadlines/index.htm). Cal Poly's Advising Web page (<http://advising.calpoly.edu>) lists contact information for advisors, important links and includes an advising handbook. The handbook features helpful information such as advising steps, change of major information, recommended study habits and a graduation checklist.

A question was raised about how bottleneck courses are addressed. Kimi indicated that some high demand courses are bottleneck courses because they are required for all or the majority of Cal Poly students. Other courses which have openings may be perceived as being bottleneck courses because a particular day of the week, time, or instructor is in high demand. Some very popular GE courses are considered bottleneck courses even though other courses that meet the same requirement have seats available.

The fact that Cal Poly has 110 spaces for 3,700 - 4,000 sections of classes also affects course availability. The Scheduling Office makes every effort to make the best use of space at all

hours of the day, but this task is complicated by such factors as changes in faculty availability from quarter to quarter and the willingness of departments to be flexible with room changes.

The Provost has tried to push resources toward bottleneck courses. This year he offered a pool of funds to the colleges to add more courses and hire full-time faculty, but none of the colleges came forth to request the funds.

A suggestion was made that Web registration be available around the clock. Kimi indicated that the availability of registration is a system issue. There is a batch process which must take place nightly to update data. The campus is moving to the new PeopleSoft system this fall; after the system is implemented, the capability to make registration available for longer periods during the day may exist.

A question was raised about why Cal Poly does not offer more online courses. Kimi indicated that the campus has experimented with online courses but overall has found that the campus prefers face-to-face instruction.

Low enrollment courses are expensive to offer and therefore require a judgment to be made by the departments/colleges as to whether to continue with the course or cancel it. Sometimes the canceling of a low enrollment course has a negative impact on those registered for the course as it may be a sequenced class, a class that is only offered one time year, etc. All these factors are considered.

A question was raised about how groups are prioritized and which students are included in the priority groups. Kimi explained that registration follows a predetermined order: Those students that require special accommodations register first, followed by special exceptions (e.g., athletes, ASI Officers, etc.), new student priority and graduate students and finally continuing and former students. The special exceptions group includes approximately 500 students. For Fall 2006, the new student group totaled approximately 4,000 students.

Kimi mentioned that Cal Poly will no longer print the quarterly class schedule. Starting fall 2006, course listings will be available online only. The online version will have search functionality and will be more accurate in that it will be updated regularly.

Melanie Drieke inquired as to whether the intent of the waitlisting process has been accomplished. Kimi explained the waitlisting process and indicated it has solved some of the inequities students experienced prior to its implementation. For instance, prior to waitlisting, students who knew the professor of a class they needed might ask that faculty member to hold a seat for them, increasing their chances of adding the class over a student who did not know the professor. Since waitlists do list students in the order they signed up, faculty are able to make better decisions about how they distribute e-permits. Waitlisting has resulted in an average of 3,000 automatic add transactions per quarter, significantly reducing the amount of adding that takes place after the start of classes. Kimi indicated that students are encouraged to remove themselves from the waitlists of classes they no longer want or need as soon as possible so that other students have a truer view where they stand in order on the waitlists.

Paul Bittick added that some faculty add students based on seniority and time remaining to graduation. Kimi indicated the waitlisting/e-permit process has not removed their power to exercise discretion in adding students; but, it does give them more information to make a fair decision.

Thanos Trezos inquired as to how class size is determined. Kimi indicated the academic departments determine the sizes of their classes. In the event a class is at room capacity, fire regulations limit the number of students faculty may add.

Carolyn Thom inquired as to whether or not the university will rectify the opportunities which were lost in 2004 when budget reductions resulted in substantially fewer course offerings (i.e., priority registration). Kimi offered to look into how those students who had priority during that term could be "compensated" but felt it would be unlikely that those students would gain a priority for a future term.

Kimi added that efforts have been made to respond to student concerns and increase equity in the registration system. Last year, the unit maximum for the first round of rotations was reduced from 16 units to 14 units. After the first round of rotations, the unit maximum increased, allowing all students an opportunity to add additional classes. This change was made in response to student complaints about the difficulty they were experiencing in adding at least one or two core classes when they had lower priority. The intent of the change was to provide greater equity in the access to classes and reduce incentives for students to pad their schedules with an extra class for a friend with lower priority. The change did seem to help; but, was implemented for only three quarters. Ultimately the University decided to return to the 16 unit maximum for the first rotation.

Frances Rivoire thanked Kimi and the members for the enriching discussion and proposed offering a separate session later if interest warrants it. Kimi referred questions related to Admissions to the Admissions office. She invited the members to e-mail her with any further questions about registration or scheduling.

### **COUNCIL BUSINESS**

Frances Rivoire asked the group to consider nominations for our next Vice Chair, who will serve in that role for the 2006-07 academic year and then assume the role of Chair for the 2007-08 academic year. Frances stated every Chair has an important role in leading the Council as it creates an enriching legacy from which current and future members benefit. Nominees should be available to serve through summer of 2008 as part of their three-year term or by extending the term an additional year.

Council members were asked to recommend topics for parent presentations or guest speakers to assist with the scheduling of agenda items for future meetings. The group reviewed the list to determine those topics that seemed to be of most interest to the majority. They were:

- Inviting professors and students to speak about research or a unique project
- Nutrition
- Town Gown Relations
- Housing
- Parking and Safety
- Facilities Planning

### **PARENT PROGRAM UPDATE**

Nicky distributed a report which summarized the results of last summer's parent data migration. All parent data used to send our e-newsletter is stored on the Advance C/S system. This is the University Advancement's donor database. As a result of this migration, both the Parent Program and University Advancement are benefiting from the e-mails that are collected by way

of the Parent Program's online form or through Parent Fund solicitations. The distribution list for our e-newsletter is over 3,500.

The Parent Program is preparing the spring *Parent Connection* newsletter which will be published and mailed in April. Suggestions for topics from Council members are encouraged.

Nicky provided a mid-year update on Cal Poly Parent Fund's solicitation efforts. The Parent Fund has raised \$400,872 from 3,984 gifts between July 1 and December 31, 2005. Four years ago the Parent Fund raised less than \$400,000 annually. The Parent Program's friendraising efforts have played a key role in the University's fundraising efforts. By providing services for parents, we are able to strengthen their connection and support of Cal Poly. Craig Nelson, Director of the Cal Poly Fund, will provide an annual update at the July meeting.

#### **CLOSING REMARKS AND ADJOURNMENT**

The next meeting is scheduled for Saturday, April 22, 2006, during Open House Weekend. Frances Rivoire adjourned the meeting at 3:00 p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Nicky Nickelsen and Theresa Rush