Cal Poly had another banner year in 1996-97 as the university's goal of providing the finest undergraduate polytechnical curriculum was greatly enhanced by the generosity of all its donors. Nearly 25,000 alumni, parents, friends, and corporations broke almost all fund-raising records.

More than $14.7 million was raised in total private support for the university's colleges, departments, and programs. This is a 21 percent increase over the prior year's amount, and the second highest total ever recorded at Cal Poly.

A 22.3 percent rise in Cal Poly Fund gifts from direct mail and phonathon programs brought that total to nearly $1.2 million. Approximately 70 percent of the Cal Poly Fund gifts, raised by a combination of mail and phone solicitations, was designated by donors to specific programs, including colleges and units.

Endowment support also increased, with nearly $2.1 million raised, a 5.5 percent rise over the prior year. Alumni and friends are becoming increasingly aware of the need for, and benefits of, healthy endowments so Cal Poly can maintain its margin of excellence in the future.

Life income agreements totaled more than $2.5 million. They provide immediate and lifelong benefits to the donors and future income for the university.

For the seventh year in a row, alumni giving topped the $1 million mark. With 9,800 gifts, approximately 11.5 percent of alumni gave something back to Cal Poly.

Cal Poly parents excel in generosity as well. More than 7,000 of them donated approximately $552,000 to their students' educational experiences. Cal Poly parents consistently give about ten times more per enrolled student than parents at other CSU campuses.

More than $3.8 million was donated by 346 individuals, who made cash gifts of $1,000 or more.

The corporations and businesses who benefit from Cal Poly graduates also continue to support the university. More than $7.7 million was donated last year from these sources as well as from private foundations and associations. In addition, gifts from companies that match employee contributions totaled nearly $179,000.

Equipment and other in-kind gifts totaled $4.4 million. Nearly every program benefited from these gifts, which ranged from high-tech computers and machinery to decorative onion seeds for Cal Poly's float entry in the yearly Tournament of Roses.

The Athletic Capital Campaign received $557,000 in donations toward its general program, scholarship, endowment, renovation, and construction goals. The university also was notified of more than $12 million in bequest intentions and revocable trusts, and the Sponsored Programs Office administered approximately $2.7 million in grants, made by corporations for applied research projects.