"Learn by doing."

This phrase, as most people know, emphasizes Cal Poly's belief that our students must go beyond the acquisition of theory and apply their knowledge in substantial and often concrete ways.

At the same time, of course, our students also learn by reading, writing, reasoning, and debating. For some of our students — the literary critic, for example, or the musician — the application of knowledge may remain fairly abstract. But most students in our professional majors are taught to apply their learning to solve practical problems, addressing situations they will find later in the workplace.

The requirement to move from theory to practice is one element in our students' education that marks the special nature — and special value — of a Cal Poly diploma.

It is fitting, then, that this first edition of the new Cal Poly Magazine emphasizes the university's central theme of "learn by doing."

It should be noted, too, that this magazine is itself an application of Cal Poly's "learn by doing" philosophy: it is produced by students using campus equipment.

Cal Poly Magazine is providing a new "look" to one way the university communicates with alumni and friends. We are working to find improvements, to make sure that Cal Poly maintains its reputation for excellence. At the same time, however, we know we must remain true to our rich legacy that has "learn by doing" at its core.

Warren J. Baker, President

Cal Poly Plan update

Sixteen new tenure-track faculty members start work this fall as part of the university's efforts to address goals outlined by the Cal Poly Plan.

The more than $1 million needed to support these new professors' positions comes from a $45-a-quarter Campus Academic Fee that students agreed to charge themselves through a 1996 referendum.

An additional $570,000 in student fee revenue is being linked with state funds and private donations to finance new and continuing Cal Poly Plan projects ranging from specialized studio classrooms with state-of-the-art instructional technology to supplemental workshops and curriculum restructuring to enhanced student advising systems.

The Cal Poly Plan is the strategic initiative that will guide the university into the next century. Its principles and goals were affirmed in a second student referendum last spring. At the same time, however, students voted down a proposed increase in their fees to enhance support for Cal Poly Plan initiatives.

The Cal Poly Plan is designed to improve educational quality through better teaching, increase students' progress toward the completion of their degrees, add to institutional productivity, and improve assessment procedures.

Planning principles include wide consultation among all groups associated with Cal Poly. Governance of the process is shared among faculty, students, staff, and the administration working as equal partners in open meetings.

The hiring of 16 new faculty members means that at least 140 more classes will be available during the academic year, and these new professors bring with them expertise in the use of educational technology and teaching methods.