A Celebration for the Future

It has been my privilege to serve as Cal Poly’s president since 1979. Each year since then has brought remarkable growth, and together we have witnessed this university become one of the foremost institutions of higher education of its kind anywhere. We have faced difficult challenges, overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles, helped one another in times of need and sadness, and shared in tremendous successes.

This past year, our 100th, has been truly exceptional. Cal Poly’s Centennial has certainly lived up to its advance billing as we celebrated our rich history and accomplishments with events such as History Day (attended by more than 500), the Founders Day Colloquium and Convocation (the latter attended by more than 1,000 participants and guests, including representatives from universities, colleges, and institutions worldwide), the Centennial Campaign Kickoff (a gala dinner hosted by Cal Poly for more than 450 alumni and friends), and the inaugural Baker Forum (attended by nearly 100 business and education leaders from the United States, Europe, Asia, and Latin America). Throughout the year, special events have drawn notable alumni, business leaders, educators, and public-policy-makers to campus, where they have shared their acumen, experience, and insight with students and faculty.

Throughout the Centennial Celebration, we have purposefully made a point of not just celebrating our past, but also making sure to keep an eye on our future. A good example of this realization is the Centennial Campaign. The $225 million fund-raising effort recognizes that the university’s future – as well as California’s – depends on our ability to prepare an outstanding and uniquely effective new generation of leaders for the emerging global-information and technology-based economy. The campaign, the first of its magnitude in the California State University system, is the greatest effort in this university’s history to marshal resources and support so that we can expand access to a Cal Poly education and ensure its continued quality and relevance.

While I am delighted to have participated in the progress this university has made and to have been a part of this once-in-a-lifetime celebration, I know that our greatest accomplishments are ahead of us. The best is yet to come.