President Warren J. Baker has lived the dream for all the Cal Poly students who wished they could have spent just a little more time on the Cal Poly campus.

"I'm often asked what has kept me in this job for 31 years, " Baker told us recently. "It's simple. It's the joy that comes from being part of transforming lives. That's fundamentally what we do at Cal Poly; we transform lives. We help academically motivated students become resourceful professionals, and what a privilege it has been to be part of that process for literally tens of thousands of students.

"If I could, I would do it another 31 years."

In preparing this special section, we had the pleasure of asking President Baker and his wife Carly Fitzsimons Baker to reflect on their 31 years of service to Cal Poly. We also enjoyed combing through the archives to present some of the facts and figures that show just how remarkable President Baker's tenure has been.

Here's the number that impresses us the most – 102,237. That's the number of bachelor's and master's degrees awarded since Warren Baker became president of Cal Poly in 1979. That's 102,237 lives transformed.

And next month we can add the Class of 2010.

—

Matt Lazier, editor

When Cal Poly asks alumni to give back, they do, particularly when they're asked to help students. One recent example is Mustang Mentoring Day.

Piloted as a partnership with the Cal Poly Alumni Association and the College of Engineering, nearly 100 students participated in Mustang Mentoring Day in November. Alumni were asked to volunteer and share with current students the things they have learned in the workforce.

Alumni and students were designated into groups for some team-building exercises and general conversation about careers, career preparation and questions about life after Cal Poly.

Students and alumni then rotated through one-on-one meetings to meet as many other individuals as possible within a short timeframe. After lunch, students were given more time to talk with those with whom they felt strong connections.

Follow-up after the day was left to students. According to alumni feedback, students are keeping in touch.

The event drew alumni from all generations. One participant said it was the first time he had been back on campus since graduating. Most agreed to attend because they saw it as a great way to give back and help current students.

"Students are courteous and eager to learn," one mentor said. "I enjoyed helping them and sharing my experience.

Students who participated raved about how the experience allowed them to meet alumni and ask general work questions and queries related to specific programs and career paths.

Although the first Mustang Mentoring Day was targeted for engineers, participants from all colleges and majors were welcome. Plans are under way for more Mentoring Days, so watch your e-mail for announcements.

Mechanical Engineering student David Hahn speaks with a mentor.