

(Left to right) Kathleen Enz Finken, Don Oberhelman, Betsy Kinsley, Preston Allen, Debra Larson and Deborah Read. (Photo by Mason Schroder)



STEWARDS OF STUDENT SUCCESS

NEW FACES FILL IMPORTANT LEADERSHIP ROLES ON CAMPUS

BY MATT LAZIER

WHEN HE TOOK THE REINS of Cal Poly in early 2011, one of the first and most significant tasks facing President Jeffrey D. Armstrong was rounding out his leadership team.

Several vacant or soon-to-be vacated administrative seats loomed. But a little more than a year later, Armstrong has assembled several new senior administrators who share his passion for student success and Cal Poly's Learn by Doing tradition. "We've brought in some very bright minds who are dedicated to helping Cal Poly preserve and enhance Learn by Doing," Armstrong said. "They join an existing team of accomplished leaders, and together we're all focused on our students' success and making sure Cal Poly continues to provide an excellent education."

Meet Cal Poly's new leaders:

KATHLEEN ENZ FINKEN

Provost

Values: Befitting her role as the university's chief academic officer, Enz Finken feels a strong connection with Cal Poly's comprehensive polytechnic education and the president's goal

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of producing professionals who can work across disciplinary boundaries. "I have an innate curiosity and seek to constantly gather information from diverse sources. It's by making connections across disciplines, functional areas, organizational models, and industries that problems are solved, innovative ideas are born and progress is made."

Professional background: Degrees in the history of art and architecture, experience as a faculty member, department chair, college dean and, most recently, as provost at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.

DEBORAH READ

Vice President for University Advancement/CEO of the Cal Poly Foundation

Values: "I appreciate Cal Poly's excellent educational reputation and the Learn by Doing model that separates Cal Poly graduates from their counterparts. These qualities serve as the basis for the high regard Cal Poly alumni have for their alma mater," said Read, whose primary duties are to develop and implement programs for all aspects of the university's Advancement division – alumni relations, development, government and community relations, marketing and communications. "We are very fortunate as a university to have alumni who care so deeply and are willing to become involved and give back to help future generations of Cal Poly students reach their full potential."

Professional background: Deep experience in higher education administration, with significant leadership experience in managing comprehensive fundraising campaigns. Has served as vice president for advancement at both public and private campuses, most recently at the University of Dayton, a private research university in Ohio.

PRESTON ALLEN

Interim Vice President, Student Affairs

Values: Allen said Student Affairs fulfills a major role in developing students who are successful and who become leaders in their communities. "By collaborating with the academic experience, Student Affairs can provide many supporting elements that help students mature into their strong potential. These are the educational programs, community involvement opportunities, and social support systems that help our students flourish."

Professional background: Has served Cal Poly since 1993,

most recently as associate vice president for student affairs and executive director of university housing.

DON OBERHELMAN

Director of Athletics

Values: Oberhelman sees athletics as an extension of the Learn by Doing education and an important arena for student growth and development. "I want our student-athletes to become leaders in the community and make a positive impact on the world. It's my goal that each of them leaves Cal Poly with a diploma and a championship ring."

Professional background: Nearly 20 years in athletics administration at several universities. Most recently, San Diego State University's chief operating officer and senior associate athletic director.

DEBRA LARSON

Dean, College of Engineering

Values: With experience in both industry and academia, Larson knows what Cal Poly's largest college must do to prepare its students for professional success. "Cal Poly aims to prepare new professionals who are ready to do the work their first day on the job. That means cultivating our connection to industry so we know exactly what they need from our graduates."

Professional background: Experience as a civil engineer in the private sector and an engineering professor and higher education administrator. Most recently associate vice provost for academic affairs at Northern Arizona University. Serves on the boards for a variety of professional organizations.

BETSY KINSLEY

President's Chief of Staff

Values: Armstrong lauds Kinsley's problem-solving skills and ability to unite diverse groups. Kinsley shares Armstrong's view that student success is the beacon by which all of the Cal Poly community must navigate. "There are many moving parts to supporting the president effectively," she said. "Ultimately, though, we have a clear and simple goal – to help our students succeed – and every action we take must support that."

Professional background: Broad background in government service and civic engagement, including work with the U.S. House of Representatives and the San Diego City Council. Most recently, president's chief of staff at San Diego State University.