SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
ACADEMIC SENATE
Academic Senate Agenda
May 2, 1995
3:00–5:00 p.m.
Please note: BUILDING 52 (Science)–ROOM A12

I. Minutes:

II. Communication(s) and Announcement(s):

III. Reports:

IV. Consent Agenda:

V. Business Item(s):

VI. Discussion Item(s):
   The Cal Poly Plan: President Baker will be joining the Senate for a discussion of the
   Cal Poly Plan. This discussion will center around the rationale for developing a Cal
   Poly Plan, some of the elements of such a Plan, and creating a process for further
   development of the Plan (pp. 2–7).

VII. Adjournment:
THE CAL POLY PLAN:
INVITATION TO A DISCUSSION ABOUT THE FUTURE OF CAL POLY

THE CHALLENGES

As we in California higher education look toward the next century, several trends are clear:

- There will be a tremendous increase in the number of students seeking a higher education in the state.
  450,000 more students will seek admission annually to the state's colleges and universities, and 180,000 more each year in the CSU alone, within a decade.

- The state's appropriations of money for higher education will not keep pace with student demand.
  Indeed, in just the last few years the percentage of the state's general fund budget allocated to higher education has declined from 13 percent to nine percent -- and a recent Rand Corporation report predicts that this trend will continue for the foreseeable future.

- Growing public concerns about access, educational quality, productivity and accountability will encourage efforts to increase external regulatory controls on the state's colleges and universities.

At Cal Poly we cannot assume that comprehensive responses to these trends will be forthcoming in the near future. We must engage these challenges actively at the campus level at the same time that we participate in efforts to address them more comprehensively on a statewide basis.

CAL POLY'S UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES

While the challenges we face in higher education are truly unprecedented in their scope, Cal Poly is in many ways uniquely positioned to lead the way in addressing these challenges:

- Cal Poly has many more well-qualified applicants than it can accept at present funding levels -- but has a physical plant capacity that would permit us to enroll more than two thousand additional full-time students during the academic year and a substantial increase during the Summer Quarter.

- Cal Poly's unique and critical role in the state is widely recognized, and there is support for the University to pursue adequately funded growth in enrollments -- through a special (differential) funding structure for the campus. The additional funds for growth could come from a differential state allocation for Cal Poly, from a differential fee structure -- or from a combination of the two.

However achieved, adequately funded growth -- up to Cal Poly's physical plant capacity -- would yield precious new dollars for investment in expanded access, and in enhancements in quality, productivity and accountability.

- Cal Poly could serve thousands of well-qualified students who must currently be turned away.

- Cal Poly -- already a leader in undergraduate education -- could invest in improvements that would enhance the student experience, open up new opportunities for faculty professional development, stimulate innovations in productivity and quality, and further consolidate our growing national reputation. Among the tangible investments we would consider:

  Campus diversity
  The University has already made significant gains in this area and could expand its efforts with adequately funded growth.
New faculty
At a time when many universities nationwide are reducing their faculties, Cal Poly could hire a significant number of highly qualified new faculty members who would renew and strengthen our already strong and distinguished faculty.

Academic programs and resources, student services and other support services
We could offer students even more personal attention and provide enhanced access to classes, library services, lab resources, information technology, etc. -- according to student needs and expressed wishes.

Innovation
We could pursue additional ways to increase institutional productivity -- including expanded year-round operations and continuous improvement strategies. We could increase support for efforts by our faculty to explore innovative approaches to teaching and learning. We could investigate ways to increase student productivity -- promoting increased retention and graduation rates and decreased time-to-degree.

OUR COURSE OF ACTION

Confronted by daunting challenges on one hand and promising opportunities on the other, Cal Poly has the ability to take control of its own destiny and move to a position of increased national prominence. To do so, however, we must produce a plan that answers the following questions:

1. **Quality, Productivity and Accountability:** How do we define these concepts -- and what kinds of initiatives should we pursue to attain improvements?

2. **Access:** If we are to achieve adequately funded growth, in what areas should this growth be realized?

3. **Diversity:** What steps should be taken to further diversity?

4. **Funding:** How should growth be financed? What combination of state allocations and student fees is possible? And how do we continue to guarantee that no qualified student will be denied access to Cal Poly because of an inability to pay?

To determine whether it might be feasible to develop a plan for Cal Poly, the administration held preliminary discussions with Chancellor Munitz and his Cabinet in late March. The Chancellor has authorized us to explore development of a plan through the following steps:

1. **Consultation** this spring and summer between representatives of Cal Poly and the Chancellor’s Office. Out of this consultation will come a white paper which will describe the boundaries within which campus decisions are possible.

2. Consultation this spring between the Cal Poly administration, faculty, students and staff to develop a process for campus consultation and consensus, to take place in the fall.

3. Wide-ranging campus discussion by faculty, students and staff in the fall, concerning planning options and alternatives.

4. Production by the new year of a planning proposal that may be transmitted to the Chancellor, the Board of Trustees, and -- if necessary -- to the legislature, for review and approval.

A fully funded increase in enrollments presents us at this time with important opportunities to increase access, to expand support for faculty growth and professional development, to enhance the student experience -- and to strengthen the University overall. Please join us in realizing this opportunity and in defining Cal Poly’s course into the future.
The Cal Poly Plan

As most people now realize, California higher education faces a crisis of growing proportions. Colleges and universities are confronted by a burgeoning student population and limited financial resources, and they have to come to terms with the prospect of fierce competition for limited state tax dollars extending far into the future. At the same time, higher education is being challenged by growing public and political concerns about costs, quality, and accountability.

At Cal Poly, we need to act on these problems, responding in ways that will permit us to preserve the mission and character of the University and best serve the interests of our students. If we are passive, fail to act, we may be required to accept answers imposed upon us.

In fact, owing to the unique qualities of this university, I believe we have opportunities to meet these challenges in ways that will actually enhance our operations and the quality of education we offer. The purpose of this report is to outline some of the initial steps we propose to take through campus-wide consultations in order to create what we are calling the "Cal Poly Plan," a plan to place Cal Poly in the forefront of public higher education in developing strategies for increased growth and improved quality, productivity, and accountability. This is a plan that will make sure we and not others shape the way we will meet the challenges of the new century.

First, however, let me list more fully the problems we face:

In about a decade, 450,000 additional students will be seeking admission to the state's colleges and universities each year, with about 180,000 of these young men and women asking to squeeze into the California State University system that is already close to capacity. And these numbers will keep going up in the years that follow.

The increasingly diverse nature of this growing student population puts particular demands on higher education to open its doors wider and to re-evaluate its curricula, making sure new generations of citizens are well educated to find productive places in a constantly changing, increasingly complex, and even more challenging society and workforce.

In the meantime, political voices in Sacramento are making persistent demands that higher education be more efficient in managing its resources - that we do more with the same, or less. These demands, I believe, accurately reflect the public's concerns about accountability. The public wants to be certain we are efficient and productive. Citizens also want to make sure we indeed provide quality and service to students and do not exist primarily to advance the research interests of faculty.

In an era when demands for access and accountability are on the rise, public higher education must respond clearly and fully. Restoring public confidence and renewing appreciation for our role in society may be the most important goals we can reach.

Cal Poly's Unique Opportunities

Cal Poly is uniquely positioned to lead the way in devising responses to these challenges. In fact, according to Clark Kerr, former President of the University of California and, subsequently, chair of the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, the kind of programs offered by Cal Poly show the direction of higher education throughout the nation.

Here is a passage from Dr. Kerr's book Troubled Times for American Higher Education published last year:

"In general, I believe that the greatest single trend in the reorientation of program efforts within American higher education, as already in Western Europe, will (and should) be toward more emphasis on ... polytechnic type skills and ... polytechnic type applied research and technology transfer. This is where the competitive battles will focus increased attention."

The value of the polytechnic education we offer is already recognized by the public. Our
academic programs and the excellent instruction provided by our faculty attract many more top students than we are able to accommodate. We are obviously doing something right.

Meanwhile, in the face of a strong demand for admission, we have unused capacity on campus to serve more students if we are supported by sufficient operating funds. We could in fact enroll more than 2,000 additional full-time students during the academic year and a substantial increase during Summer Quarter.

Growth in enrollments would obviously fuel development throughout the university, including opportunities to hire new faculty and staff. Positioning ourselves to make new hires is particularly important since we would have the potential for attracting some of the best new faculty in the country at a time when employment opportunities elsewhere are limited.

We have made significant gains in student diversity, doubling the percentage of minorities on campus over the past decade, but we continue to have an unwavering commitment to continued progress in this area. With the opportunity to add additional students, we are committed to further increasing the enrollment of underrepresented students at Cal Poly.

Cal Poly is already a nationally recognized leader in undergraduate education. This reputation is based on the quality of our faculty and programs, and it also stems from our "learn by doing" philosophy, our history of innovation in teaching and learning, and our strong record for retention, graduation, and student academic and career success. Adequately funded growth would allow us to build upon these strengths. For example, we could offer students even more personal attention and improve their academic and support services and resources. Faculty could have more opportunities to experiment with new methods of teaching and learning.

We are committed to evaluating the academic quality and effectiveness of our offerings. We have a program review process in place, and we probably will wish to enhance the means we use to assess accountability. And when it comes to productivity, Cal Poly has taken significant steps to manage our resources more efficiently. Planned growth coupled with further relaxation of some CSU and State regulations may allow us to find additional opportunities to improve our efficiency while we also improve quality.

All in all, our reputation for excellence that attracts top applicants, our capacity for growth, and our successes in efficiency and accountability provide the foundations for even higher achievements in the future if we can locate the resources to support these changes.

The Campus Charter and Beyond

Many of the issues I am placing before you have grown out of lengthy deliberations regarding a Campus Charter. The administration and the three Campus Charter Committees have come to realize, however, that Cal Poly may never be able to create a document that we can refer to as the charter; instead, we should see ourselves involved in an on-going "charter process," focusing on CSU and State policy changes that would benefit this university. We think that changes in regulations can help us address the external pressures we face, enhance our operations, and perhaps, serve as a model for other CSU campuses.

It should be clear that the first task facing us is to find more operating funds. Meeting challenges for growth and accountability, for investments in diversity, and for improved quality and productivity requires additional resources and a good plan. Cal Poly, given our high-cost technical programs, in fact needs financial support above the average now being provided for the CSU. We must break new ground in policies that determine our funding, that limit our investment flexibility, and that constrain the creativity of our campus community. We must also break new ground in defining productivity and developing accountability measures that are clearly linked to what the campus by consensus sees as improvements in quality.

Elements of a Cal Poly Plan

To shape our own destiny, we must produce a plan that answers the following questions:

1. Access. If we are to achieve adequately funded growth, in what areas should this growth be realized? Should we make fuller use of the Summer Quarter to decrease the time to a degree for our students? Should we offer our Summer Quarter to other CSU students?

2. Funding. How should this growth be financed? What particular proposals should we consider regarding revenue sources open to us — that is, state tax dollars and student fees — as we try to fund growth and improve service to students, as we also invest in new development to improve both the quality and efficiency of teaching and learning?

3. Diversity. What steps should be taken to further diversity? How should diversity considerations be used in determining areas of growth in the student body as well as the faculty and staff?

4. Productivity, Quality, and Accountability. In addition to using our physical plant more efficiently, what other productivity measures should we consider?
In fact, how do we define "productivity" in an academic setting? How does educational quality fit in this definition? And how do we define "accountability"? Once we have defined these measures, how do we make it possible for students, faculty, staff, and administrators to be more productive?

Developing the Cal Poly Plan

To determine whether it might be feasible to develop a plan for this campus, the administration held preliminary discussions with Chancellor Munitz and his Cabinet in late March. Responses from the Chancellor and some members of the Board of Trustees have been very positive. They share our belief that Cal Poly may be uniquely positioned within the CSU to lead in developing creative responses to the challenges facing the system. These discussions were informal and wide-ranging, and they did not commit either the university or the CSU system to any specific course of action.

Meanwhile, I have appointed three university vice presidents - Robert Koob, Academic Affairs; Frank Lebens, Financial Affairs, and Juan Gonzalez, Student Affairs - to a steering committee that also contains three officials appointed by the Chancellor. This group is to explore the boundaries within which campus decisions are possible, in essence developing a framework for the development of a plan.

Once we have established these boundaries, we will provide the campus with a "white paper" laying out the issues, parameters and limits of our planning conversations. Prior to preparing this "white paper," the administration is continuing to consult with Academic Senate leaders, including the Senate's Executive Committee, ASI leaders, staff leaders, and the three Campus Charter Committees whose membership is drawn from the faculty, students, staff, and administration as well as employee labor groups. We will also be talking to student leaders and college councils.

Starting early Fall Quarter, we will offer venues for wide-ranging discussions among all of the constituents on campus as well as community leaders whose opinions will be especially valuable regarding possible increases in enrollment. Friends of the university will also be asked to assist those of us on campus in developing the directions we may take to generate investments in productivity and efficiency, to determine accountability measures, and to modify personnel policies to foster more creativity and efficiency. Advice from faculty, staff, and student groups will be sought to help us set up these discussions. We want to have a free and frank debate and, at the same time, try to create an atmosphere that encourages the discovery of new ideas. Members of the administration realize they don't have all the answers. We may not even have all of the questions.

I am asking that everyone - faculty, staff, students, and administrators - plan to work together to create what promises to be a new and even brighter chapter in Cal Poly's history. We may find ourselves moving into uncharted territory, and we will need your cooperation and good will. More than that, we will need your knowledge, your creativity, your wisdom.

A Word to Faculty and Students

In closing, I want to make sure faculty clearly understand that any changes we make to improve efficiency, productivity, and accountability will not include increased workloads for instructors. We already know from past surveys that the teaching contact hours spent by our faculty are considerably higher than one would find elsewhere in higher education. We need to achieve more discretionary time for faculty to develop new and creative approaches to teaching and to assure their own professional growth. We need to step up our efforts to develop and implement innovations in teaching and learning, perhaps even "re-engineer" how the University carries out its instructional programs so that we reach productivity goals while simultaneously improving quality and investing in more faculty development. I do not think these objectives are mutually exclusive.

We must be sure as well that any changes we make will be to enhance quality, not diminish it. This means we need to define "quality" and find the appropriate means to measure productivity and efficiency. We must maintain academic rigor in our programs. Many of the performance-based initiatives in higher education beginning to sweep the country over-simplify the definition of productivity and do not consider the resulting changes in quality. While students and their parents are understandably concerned whether a university education will lead to a rewarding profession, we cannot simply train our graduates for entry-level positions alone. We must prepare them for a complex and dynamic work place that requires a breadth of knowledge, giving them greater flexibility in their career choices and the tools to support life-long learning. Our students must be able to make informed choices, think critically and develop lasting values. These goals must be reflected in our definition of quality.

Productivity models used in the past that were based exclusively on the number of student-credit-units
generated did not directly address such issues of educational quality. We may want to use funding and rewards in teaching to emphasize more sophisticated student outcome measures. To be clearly accountable, as the public is asking, we need to be responsible for providing the depth and breadth of knowledge and diversity of skills our students truly require in the modern world. We need to make the public understand and appreciate the goals we have established for our students and then demonstrate that the means used to help our graduates reach these goals have been wisely and efficiently employed.

Speaking to students, I would like to emphasize that particular attention will be given in the Cal Poly Plan to providing an enhanced Cal Poly experience for students. Through growth in enrollments the Cal Poly Plan will permit us to focus new funds on improvements in the quality and availability of our academic offerings, support services and other resources. Our desire is to exploit the opportunity for growth to improve an already excellent education.

Therefore, should the Cal Poly Plan require an increase in student fees, it is our clear expectation that they will result in direct improvement of academic and support services to students. Increased availability of courses, including courses in the summer, more personal attention to student needs, richer library and laboratory resources, expanded access to computer technology – these are some of the kinds of benefits that we believe can flow from the Cal Poly Plan. A central emphasis will also be placed on initiatives that encourage and support shortened time to degree.

In order to develop the Cal Poly Plan, student participation will be critical. Students will join faculty and administration as the discussion begins and initial decisions are made. Throughout the process we will encourage student participation and seek student views and assistance in developing this exciting initiative to build an even brighter future for Cal Poly and for our students.

—Warren J. Baker, President