Veteran California Legislator Visits Cal Poly on Farewell Tour

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- Cal Poly was a whistle stop on the farewell tour of California Senate and State Assembly veteran John Vasconcellos Oct. 11.

The senator shared his hopes for the state’s future with an audience of university administrative and faculty leaders, gathered to honor his 38 years of public service, representing the heart of Silicon Valley in the legislature.

Senator Vasconcellos wants a “politics of trust” to be his legacy for Californians, a “new vision of governance and leadership to replace cynical politics rooted in divisiveness and mistrust.”

President Warren J. Baker praised the senator’s efforts on behalf of education, especially in the science and technology arena. “California education has benefited a great deal from his nearly four decades in Sacramento. Sen. Vasconcellos has a real understanding of the connection between an educated citizenry and the quality of life in the state,” he said.

In turn, the senator thanked Cal Poly faculty and staff for their role in helping develop the state into "the most diverse, talented, and creative populace in the history of the earth, a culture that has as its primary challenge realizing the promise of our multicultural democracy, with gender equity, in the global economy and in this age of technology."

Everybody watches California, he said, because it is “where the world unfolds first. We build models for everybody else.”

Although he was dressed in the style of a serious retiree, the senator’s Hawaiian shirt and lei of fresh flowers were a visual counterpoint to the ambitious plans he spelled out for reforming state government.

The good news, from his perspective, is that society is more open. The bad news is that politics isn’t.
“We live in complex and challenging times, with so much divisiveness that no one can do anything. But if we put our hearts and minds to it, we can get through this,” he said.

“The ‘politics of trust’ is a call for change that champions the virtues of faithfulness in ourselves, our human nature and potential, self-esteem, social inclusion, and collaboration as pragmatic alternatives to political cynicism,” he explains.

For more information on the senator’s vision, visit his Web site at www.PoliticsOfTrust.net.

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