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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Winter Enrollment Down at Cal Poly Due to 50 Percent Decrease in New Admits

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Winter quarter enrollment at Cal Poly is approximately 17,540 students, down about 300 from 17,843 students during winter quarter of last year.

The decrease is a result of continued reductions in state funding, a trend that began in summer 2003 and is expected to continue through the next academic year, according to Executive Vice Provost and Chief Planning Officer Linda Dalton.

The winter quarter figure includes some 250 new students, which reflects a 50 percent reduction in newly admitted students from last year.

However, it is consistent with the admissions target for this quarter. “Due to known budget cuts, we deliberately planned to reduce our head count to this level,” she said.

Although students are still applying to Cal Poly in record numbers, the number of new students for winter quarter is about half of what it normally would be. “This is to ensure that students have access to the classes they need, as well as to maintain our level of instructional quality,” she explained.

Enrollment in fall 2003 dropped to 18,303 from 18,453 the previous fall, and Dalton expects it is likely to be lower again next year, by at least 400 students. While enrollment planning for 2004-05 is in the very early stages, she anticipates that enrollment reductions will be proportionate to further budget reductions.

“This makes our admissions process particularly challenging, because we continue to receive large numbers of applications from qualified students,” she said. “We would like to keep the number of new students as stable as possible.”

Dalton acknowledged that reducing the number of freshman and transfer students will be disappointing to families whose sons or daughters are not admitted. “But we don’t think it would be responsible to admit more students and then not be able to provide the classes they need,” she said.

Dalton went on to say that this trend of continuing budget and enrollment reductions will significantly delay
elements of Cal Poly's master plan.

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