Record Year for Donations to Cal Poly College of Agriculture Brings New Equipment, Programs

A new Dairy Cattle and Applied Research and Technology program, new professors in plant biotechnology and poultry science, more scholarship money for students, technology supporting precision agriculture teaching and research and an Integrated Pest Management center available to California farmers, vintners and ranchers are just some of the expansions made possible thanks to a record year of donations to Cal Poly's College of Agriculture.

Individuals, corporations and foundations gave more than $9.7 million to the college in 2001. That brings the total raised by the college since the start of the Cal Poly Centennial Campaign to more than $28 million. The college is well on its way to meeting its goal of raising $40 million by the end of 2004 as part of the university-wide Centennial Campaign, which seeks to raise $225 million for Cal Poly by Dec. 31, 2004. As of January 2002, the university had raised $153.7 million towards that goal.

The money and equipment donated in 2001 are important, explained Interim Dean of Agriculture David J. Wehner, because the state funding available for Cal Poly and for all of the California State University campuses has decreased substantially over the past decade. A successful fund-raising campaign is needed to enable Cal Poly's College of Agriculture to continue to offer one of California's premier teaching and applied research programs through the next century, Wehner said.

In consulting with alumni and representatives from agriculture before publicly launching the Centennial Campaign in 2001, "We asked a very simple two-part question: What does a great college of agriculture look like, and what does it do for students?" Wehner said. "Not only did we receive their input, but they backed it up with investments. The response from alumni, friends and agricultural industries has been phenomenal."
Foundations and individuals giving more than $1 million to the Cal Poly College of Agriculture to date as part of the Centennial Campaign include: The J.G. Boswell Foundation, to create a professorship in plant biotechnology; Susan and Robert Brown, to create two visiting professorships as well as student scholarships; Omer and Claudia King, to support and develop laboratories and scholarships; Lorenzo and Judith McOmie, to support faculty development, applied research and scholarships; and Daisy J. Hudson, for student scholarships.

Corporations and individuals investing $250,000 or more include: Foster Farms, to create a professorship in poultry science; E & J Gallo Winery, development of a state-of-the-art teaching and research vineyard; Monsanto, to create the Dairy Cattle and Applied Research and Technology program; Format International, a donation of software for the Animal Nutrition program; Ken and Gay Gerlack, to support environmental horticultural science; Charles R. Peebles III, for student scholarships; and Frank W. Pinkert, for student scholarships.

Corporations investing $100,000 or more include: the Agricultural Education Foundation, an unrestricted donation; the California Milk Advisory Board, in support of the Dairy Science Department; the Dairy Institute of California, in support of the Dairy Products Technology Center; Dow AgroSciences, for a new senior staff position coordinating integrated pest management and to strengthen the enterprise project program; the William Randolph Hearst Foundation, to fund a Cal Poly Scholar in the College of Agriculture; the Magellan Corp., equipment in support of precision agriculture through GIS mapping technology.

Individuals investing $100,000 or more include: Carol Andrews, to underwrite and recognize the best senior projects and capstone projects in BioResource and Agricultural Engineering; Phillip and Jeanette Armstrong, in support of international agricultural development; Margaret Baylis, in support of the Leaning Pine Arboretum and student scholarships; Harlan W. Beck, an unrestricted donation; Dorothy S. Brown, in support of the Animal Science Department; Jack and Phoebe Cook, in support of rodeo scholarships and programs; Glenn and Debbie Drake, in support of the equine program; Woody and Adele Frey, in support of the Leaning Pine Arboretum; Bill and Jean Lane, in support of the Leaning Pine Arboretum and new gardens; Gary Leslie, a donation in support of the equine program; John and Sara Merriam, in support of flexible irrigation; Yaichiro Minami, field equipment for the Crop Science Department; Burt and Virginia Polin, in support of scholarships and farm operations; and the Joseph Shinoda Memorial Scholarship Fund, for student scholarships.

The initial success of the fund-raising drive shows a high level of support for Cal Poly’s College of Agriculture, Wehner said.

"Success is not always measured by how much money is donated, but who
the donors are and how they invest. When J.G. Boswell Company, Monsanto, Dow AgroSciences, Foster Farms, Gallo, the Hearst Foundation and other great leaders in industry and the community stand with you, you know you're doing something right," Wehner stressed. "We believe that 'something right' is Cal Poly's 'learn by doing' philosophy - something we take to heart in the College of Agriculture," Wehner emphasized.

Cal Poly has a little less than three years remaining in its Centennial Campaign, and its College of Agriculture is working hard to raise the remaining $12 million needed to meet its goals.

"We're going to keep on educating and fund-raising like there is no tomorrow," Wehner stressed. "We owe that to the next generation of young men and women who want a top-notch Cal Poly education."

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