Cal Poly Students Vote to Support College-Based Fee Increases

After two days of voting marked by the second highest turnout in university election history, Cal Poly students voted to support fee increases of $125 to $200 per quarter to pay for additional course offerings in department majors, computer lab updates and equipment purchases.

Ballots from the March 13-14 College-Based Fee Initiative election were counted Friday morning; Interim Vice President for Student Affairs Robert Detweiler announced the election results Friday afternoon.

Some 51 percent - 8,733 - of the students eligible to vote cast ballots. (Only a 1991 fee referendum on athletics saw a higher student turnout at the ballot box.) Of those students who voted, 61.5 percent voted in favor of the new fees and 38.5 percent voted no.

"Cal Poly students are to be congratulated for the thoughtful attention they have given to the fee initiative," said President Warren J. Baker. "Their strong turnout at the polls is evidence of their commitment to our polytechnic mission and learn-by-doing educational tradition. I'm proud of our students for demonstrating that they are committed to sustaining and enhancing the quality of their educational experience at Cal Poly."

The initiative, which is advisory only, asked students in each of the university's six colleges to support fee increases that would go directly to each of the college's budgets. Students in the colleges of Agriculture, Architecture and Environmental Design, Engineering, Science and Mathematics and the Orfalea College of Business supported a $200 per quarter fee increase. Students in the university's College of Liberal
Arts endorsed a $125 per quarter increase.

"Students in all of the colleges supported the increase by a solid margin," Detweiler said.

The percentages in favor and against the increased fees were: College of Science and Mathematics, 72 percent to 27 percent; Orfalea College of Business, 63 percent to 36 percent; College of Agriculture, 66 percent to 33 percent; College of Liberal Arts, 60 percent to 39 percent; College of Architecture and Environmental Design, 58 percent to 41 percent; and College of Engineering, 54 percent to 45 percent.

Currently, undergraduate students at Cal Poly pay $721.50 per quarter in fees. The $721.50 includes the $476 California State University fee, plus a $46.62 campus academic fee, a $23 Associated Students fee, a $55.95 Instructionally Related Activities fee, a $79.95 University Union fee, a $29 health services fee and a $7 sports complex fee.

The election results will be forwarded to President Warren J. Baker and to the Campus Fee Advisory Committee. The committee members will consider the student vote and make a recommendation to the president regarding implementation of the proposed college-based fees.

If finally approved and implemented, the new fees will take effect for the fall 2002 term. Each of the individual colleges and their departments, with significant input from students, would then decide how to spend revenue generated by the new fees.

In forums and meetings with students over recent weeks, campus administrators said the fees are necessary to maintain high-quality labs, sufficient course offerings and low student-teacher ratios - all historical assets at Cal Poly.

For more information on the fee increases, visit the Student Affairs Web page on the issue at: http://www.studentaffairs.calpoly.edu/fees/.

For information on the history of fees charged at Cal Poly, visit http://www.fees.calpoly.edu/Docs/Fee_Hist.pdf.

For information on current fees charged at Cal Poly, visit the University Fees Web page at http://www.fees.calpoly.edu/ and click on the link for "Winter 2002."

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