A crossroads for Cal Poly

Students to vote whether to increase CBFs

Marlize van Romburgh

Almost seven years after implementing college based fees as a supplement to regular tuition, Cal Poly now finds itself in the midst of a state budget crisis, and is looking to you — the students — to further help foot the bill of your own education.

Students will have the opportunity to submit an advisory vote to Cal Poly President Warren Baker on March 11 and 12 on a proposal to increase college based fees to $362 per quarter in fall 2010 and another $100 in fall 2011 for full-time students. Part-time students face a $181 increase this fall quarter and $50 the two fall quarters following.

The university's current budget crisis stems from years of compounded shortfalls. Cal Poly receives mandates for everything from faculty and administrative salaries to student enrollment minimums. Much of Cal Poly's current budget crisis stems from the fact that despite enrollment increases mandated by the CSU Chancellor's office, the CSU system has repeatedly failed to deliver on its promise of providing Cal Poly with state funding to match the increase in the number of students.

As a result, Cal Poly has experienced significant budget shortfalls over the past several years, totaling approximately $25 million according to the fee proposal.

Cal Poly Interim Provost Robert Koob said that he once told President Baker, "It's not that you have too little money, it's that you have too many students."

Often considered the most prestigious university in the CSU system, Cal Poly is able to expand its enrollment because of the massive application pool each year, Koob explained.

If this does pass, it should still make the point that we need to reevaluate how we manage funds... poor budget decisions are what got us here.

— Angela Kramer
ASi President

It's not a question of whether the school will close or not... The question is whether students want to keep the Cal Poly and the quality of education that they've enjoyed in the past.

— Robert Koob
Cal Poly President

If it PASSES:

• First priority will be to stabilize budget and maintain current programs
• After several years, departments will gain flexibility to use funds for new programs and equipment, among other things
• College of Engineering
  • Over the long run, the money is extremely important in making sure the college of engineering is not just good-enough, but remains the best.
  • There will be no funds to purchase equipment, technology
• College of Science and Mathematics
  • The issue with cutting labs is that Cal Poly is really a hands-on university and it could lose some of its distinctiveness.
  • There will be no funds to purchase equipment, maintain labs or support student/faculty research

If it DOESN'T PASS:

• Class offerings will be reduced
• College will start considering faculty layoffs
• Money to maintain labs will decrease
• College will unable to invest in cutting-edge technology

For other colleges see page 2

IMPORTANT DATES

University Open Forum: Monday, March 9, from 3 to 4 p.m. in UU 220
State of the Student Address: Tuesday, March 10, 2009 from 7 to 9 p.m. in Chumash Auditorium

Voting: Online via Cal Poly Portal March 11-12. Ballot will pop-up on portal page from 7 a.m. March 11 to 10 p.m. March 12.
If it PASSES:

- College currently holds a $1 million deficit. If the university does not raise funds, course offerings will be almost completely maintained next year.
- By the third year of the increase, the college will be able to keep the current faculty hours and continue to hire teaching assistants or invite guest lecturers for classes. Class sizes would grow to 20-30 students instead of 25.
- College could rebuild its major program in computing and curriculum.
- College will maintain current level of faculty and curriculum.
- College could potentially lead to a budget surplus in three years, which could improve the facilities and technology for labs and other items.
- The student vote will then be submitted to the ASI Assembly for approval.
- College would maintain current level of faculty and curriculum.
- College would risk losing its accreditation.
- Reduction in classes.
- An unnamed major program in graduate studies would be made inactive (not discontinued) but would possibly be reactivated in the future.
- Class sizes would grow to 20-30 students instead of the current 15-20.

College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences

- Amount of courses offered will be maintained.
- Recruitment and retention of faculty and student access to faculty will increase.
- Student-faculty research and project-based learning will be maintained.
- College will be able to purchase new equipment.
- College could lay off some lecturers and freeze the hiring of new lecturers for fall quarter.
- The college will cut the number of both lower and upper division classes.
- College would lay off some lecturers and freeze the hiring of new lecturers for fall quarter.

College of Business

- College will lay off some lecturers and freeze the hiring of new lecturers for fall quarter.
- The college will cut the number of both lower and upper division classes.
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College of Education

- Students in the College of Education do not currently pay CBPs. However, due to next year’s merger with the College of Science and Math, they too will pay for the increased fee, if passed.
- Broadly speaking, the passage of the fee increase will cushion the negative impact of the state-funding gap and generally allow Cal Poly to maintain its standard of education, Koob said.
- "It’s a question of whether the school will close or not, or if there will be a Cal Poly or not. The question is whether students want to keep the Cal Poly and the quality of education that they’ve enjoyed in the past," he said.
- Should it not pass, the implications are harder to predict and vary by college, but will likely mean a massive reduction in classes offered and possible layoff of part-time and adjunct faculty, Koob said.
- Tenured faculty will be asked to teach more classes as a result, class sizes will be larger and less electives and non-required classes will be offered.
- "I don’t have a single program that I can look at and say we don’t need," Koob said.
- "What that means is that we have to start cutting classes within programs. Those not needed for graduation will go first."
- College based fees, which are unique to the Cal Poly campus, were implemented in 2002 through a student referendum similar to the one now being proposed for the increase. As the name indicates, and unlike regular tuition fees, college based fees are controlled and distributed within each college by the deans and department chairs and with mandatory student input provided through student fee advisory committees.
- Yet unlike the original college based fees — which were intended to offer supplemental funding for each college for anything from additional classes to new faculty and lab equipment — the increase will act more as a filler to help the colleges balance their budgets and maintain the same standards of education currently offered, Koob said.
- For fiscal year 2009-10, the fee increase is projected to generate about $6,900,000 in additional revenues for the university, according to the official proposal published by the university. Once fully implemented, it will represent a total of $20,600,000 in additional funding.
- In the long term, Koob said the university is cutting costs where it can. Most significantly, a new registration system, which will be put in place for fall 2009 enrollment, looks to streamline the registration process and guarantee students that they can graduate in four or five years, depending on their degree program.
- Yet despite efforts to operate Cal Poly on a leaner budget, Koob said the university can’t promise that college based fees won’t increase again in the future. "I can’t say we’ll never ask for another CBP increase because we don’t know what the state is going to do," he said.
- Students vote next week through their My Cal Poly portals and will be asked whether or not they attended informational sessions regarding the proposed fee increase and whether or not they support the fee increase.
- Depending on their vote, they will then be asked a series of follow-up questions, including where they think funding should be prioritized if the increase passes or a list of reasons to describe why they aren’t supportive of the increase. At least a 38 percent student turnout is required for the vote to even be considered valid.
- The student vote will then be submitted to President Baker, who has the final say. Both Koob and Kramer said that the president is highly unlikely to go against student sentiment, but that it is possible that he could in some way further modify the proposal.
WORD ON THE STREET
"Do you think the Calif. Supreme Court will eventually overturn Prop. 8?"

"No, they try to do (this) every year, they're so persistent. We vote on it, we vote on it and it's the same outcome every time."
-Chris Woodard, biology junior

"Hopefully our society will change enough where (they) get it right like they did with slavery and women's rights."
-Kimberly Steigmeyer, English senior

"I think the majority of people want it (overturned). I don't know how it passed. I don't think it is even something that should (be) voted on. My choice shouldn't (take away) other people's choice to get married."
-Paulina Vespasiano, journalism junior

"I've heard a lot of arguments against it and I think eventually it will be overturned."
-Joseph White, computer engineering freshman

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COMPiled AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY OMAR SANCHEZ

Obama tax plan meets Democratic resistance

Stephen Ohlemacher
ASSOCIATED PRESS

President Barack Obama's proposal to limit itemized tax deductions for high earners is running into opposition from key Democrats in Congress who worry that charities and the housing market would be hurt.

Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus questioned Wednesday whether the proposal was viable, a day after his House counterpart also expressed reservations.

Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner said tax increases on families making more than $250,000 a year are necessary to make a down payment on the Democratic agenda.

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INTERVIEWING FOR THE JOB YOU REALLY WANT

Most of us have interviewed for positions we cared little about, and for which we consequently prepared very little. But what happens when you get an interview for a job that you really care about? The stakes are a lot higher.

First, PREPARATION is essential:
- Try this exercise: Draw a line down the middle of your paper. On the left side list all key words from the job description, i.e. manages, recruits, designs, assists etc. On the right side, list your exact corresponding experiences. Now, memorize all of your relevant experiences and be able to explain how they relate to the position.

Second, PRACTICE!
- Based on the job description, anticipate the types of questions that might be asked and practice answering out loud.
- Use the Career Services "Interview Skills" handout for sample interview questions. Write out responses to all of them and ask a friend to quiz you.
- Set up a mock interview with your career counselor. The skills you will gain from this experience are invaluable!

Last, POISE yourself for success!
- Dress and present yourself as a professional, see Democrats, page 4

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$3.95 Small-Sake or Beer
$3.95 Large-Sake or Beer
$3.95 A choice of One Appetizer:
Vegetable, Mixed-, Fish-, Calamari Tempura
Gyoza, Heart Attack, Monkey Ball

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CAREER CORNER

Brought to you every Thursday by

Career Services
Division of Student Affairs

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Democrats

continued from page 5

spent on health care reform and to
limit future budget deficits. But, he
said, he was willing to work with
lawmakers on proposals they ob-
jected to.

"We recognize there are other
ways to do this," Geithner told the
Finance Committee.

Butter, a Montana Democrat,
said he thought the administration
would be flexible on the proposal.
"They want health care reform as
much as I do," he told reporters.

Geithner and White House bud-
get director Peter Orszag returned
to Capitol Hill on Wednesday for a
second day of hearings on Obama's
$3.6 trillion tax and spending pro-
posal. Both faced tough questions
about the tax package.

Obama's budget calls for setting
aside $250 billion over the next 10
years as a down payment on health
care reform. Half the money would
come from tax increases on upper-
income earners; the other half from
cuts to Medicare and Medicaid.

Obama's budget calls for two tax
increases on couples making more
than $250,000 and individuals mak-
ing more than $200,000. He wants
to increase the top tax rates from 35
percent to 39.6 percent by allowing
a tax cut enacted under President
George W. Bush to expire in 2011.

Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner testifies on Capitol Hill in
Washington, D.C. Wednesday before the Senate Finance Committee
hearing on President Barack Obama's fiscal 2010 federal budget.

ICC grants war crime charge

Members of the Darfuri community react to news of an announce-
ment by the International Criminal Court that an international
arrest warrant had been issued Wednesday for Omar al-Bashir, the
President of Sudan, on charges of war crimes and crimes against
humanity, as they gather outside the Sudanese Embassy in London.

State Briefs

FRESNO, Calif. (AP) — A
man accused of killing his girl-
friend was shot to death in a Stock-
town courtroom Wednesday after he
attacked the judge presiding over
his murder trial, officials said.

David Paradiso, 28, was shot by
a police detective after he left the
witness stand and began attack-
ing San Joaquin County Superior
Court Judge Cindy Fox during a
break in proceedings, said Dave
Koncny, a spokesman for the
sheriff's department.

Paradiso had been testifying
around 2 p.m. when his mother, in
the audience, left the courtroom
upset. Fox called a recess, and as
lumbers filed out, Paradiso left the
stand and approached the judge
from behind "with an unknown
cutting instrument," Koncny
said.

... LOS ANGELES (AP) —
Universal Music Group, the
world's largest music recording
company, is in talks with Google
Inc.'s You Tube division to create a
music video venture, according to
people familiar with the matter.

Instead of just receiving licens-
ing fees or a share of ad revenue
from the online video site, Uni-
versal is seeking an equity rela-
tionship on an ad-supported site
focused on high-quality music
videos, separate from the grainy
user-generated fare common to
YouTube's main site.

... LAGUNA BEACH, Calif.
(AP) — The city of Laguna Beach
has repealed a ban on sleeping on
the street in response to a law'suit.

City Manager Ken Frank said
Wednesday the City Council
voted to repeal the ban after the
American Civil Liberties Union
filed a lawsuit in December alleg-
ing the rule was unconstitutional.

The ACLU accused the city of us-
using the ban to harass the disabled
homeless.

Frank says the city has also
formed a task force to draft a plan
to address homelessness in Laguna
Beach. He says the city has about
30 to 60 homeless residents.

The ACLU commended the
exclusive coastal town for repeal-
ing the ordinance but did not
drop the lawsuit. The ACLU says
attorneys will monitor the city's
response to the homeless before
deciding whether litigation is still
needed.
Neko Case will scare you with her strength

Neko Case is a dead-sexy indie supernova. She's nothing less than an all-country prima donna with a voice that lifts cities. Every red-blooded man, woman and child wants to hear sex with her. And she knows it.

Because these facts have been firmly established, she is now acting with a sense of self-assurance that rivals that of L2's Bone. I should mention that unlike Bone, Case has actual talent. In short, “Middle Cyclone” is proof that Neko Case has gotten better.

How bally? She released a full record of love songs, a type she once claimed she was incapable of producing. She's covered a song from Harry Nilson (perhaps best known for writing “that one midnight cow-boy song”) and speaks on the same record, and fully owned both songs (“Don't Forget Me,” and “Never Turn Your Back on Mother Earth,” respectively). And she has the whole record available for free listens on NPR's Web site. Bally? Hell, just glance at the record cover, which depicts a barefoot Case perched atop a '67 Cougar holding a (long) sword.

But the real weapon here is Case's own larynx-mounted instrument. Her inflection and cadence have an intoxicating quality that seemingly renders every utterance infinitely compelling. Honestly, I think if anyone else even tried to deliver some of these verses, everything would just totally go to crap. Case in point: the title track, which (lancet, “...can't give up acting tough...can't scrape together quite enough...to ride the bus to the outskirts of the fact that I need love.” You might not believe me, but this metaphor, as it's delivered and, set to a gentle guitar melody and an always-creepy flicker-splend,
“Gomorrah” a new type of mafia film

Review: Gomorrah – 2009 (Limited) (****)
Director: Matteo Garrone
Written By: Roberto Saviano (Book)
Produced By: Martin Scorsese

The “Godfather,” “Goodfellas,” “Casino.” Of the three films that are often considered to be the greatest mafia movies ever made, two of them were directed by one of the greatest filmmakers of all time, Martin Scorsese. Marty’s latest project is “Gomorrah,” an incredibly realistic adaptation of Roberto Saviano’s best selling non-fiction novel, which Scorsese strongly supported. The story revolves around the very real and very scary Comorra, a powerful crime syndicate based in Naples, Italy that to this day is still more dangerous and more obscure than any mafia I have ever heard of. It is often reported to generate over $200 billion a year, which makes it hard to believe that the organization has remained unnoticed for as long as it has.

While the film has not found too much success in the states, it has become very popular in Europe (especially after winning the grand prize at Cannes). The film is so praised, in fact, that many (including myself) were shocked at the academy’s complete ignorance of the film at this year’s Oscars. This can possibly be attributed to the fact that the films marked by the virtual absence of any characters that would arouse a feeling of admiration or praise in an audience. Instead, Matteo Garrone’s epic tale seems to contain only two types of people, ruthless gangsters and victims; no heroes.

The difference between this film and so many others in the gangster genre is that it doesn’t focus on the bosses or the hitmen, or even elaborate action sequences. This movie deals with the day laborers that finance and empower the Comorra. While these workers profit through the typical illegal activities we see in so many other crime films, like drugs and contract killing, they also gain revenue through the disposal of poisonous waste and selling rip-off designer clothing. While these endeavors are not as glamorous, they succeed in adding to the film’s sense of realism. Garrone shot this movie in a documentary style that at times instills the feeling that a camera crew actually followed the real Comorra in all its escapades. The murders committed in this film are very gritty and at times surprising and disturbing. Also, the group’s use of extremely young boys to aid and at times participate in a number of gruesome acts serves as one of the story’s many unsettling aspects.

Roberto Saviano went to great lengths in order to expose the Comorra to the rest of the world. He completed his novel by risking his life through undercover work and the use of informants. Following the initial success of
Gomorrah

continued from page 5

his book, Saviano received numerous threats against his life from the organization that he had denounced. It even reached the point where he was forced to hire a personal bodyguard and subsequently leave Italy in order to lead a normal life.

The acting in “Gomorrah” is one of its most satisfying aspects because the actors succeed so convincingly that they make us forget that they are not really acting at all. Whether it is the older members of the syndicate who constantly threaten and bully whoever stands in their way, or the younger participants who idolize “Scatrace,” and whose leaders demand obedience from them, the actors succeed in seeming as if they were truly involved in the action. And their performance is one they themselves often do not recognize.

The romanticism present in so many other films that resemble it. No Matter refrains from using similar examples of perfect film making, "Gomorrah" presents a sense of hopelessness.

While many mafia movies like The Godfather (parts I and II) are classic examples of perfect film making, they are often historically inaccurate. Gomorrah refrains from using the romanticism present in so many other films that resemble it. No Matter refrains from using similar examples of perfect film making, "Gomorrah" presents a sense of hopelessness.

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CAL POLY ORGANIC FARM

Community Supported Ag. Program (CSA)

Student shares run for 10 weeks, cost $19/wk and include 8-10 different produce items each week, such as onions, lettuce, beets, carrots, strawberries, broccoli, and more. Student season starts on April 6th.

Learn More about Organic Ag by enrolling in HCS 203 or AG 315.

Gain hands on experience. Be part of the Organic Movement.

For more information, visit us online at www.calpolyorgfarm.com or contact us at 805.756.6139
Thursday, March 5, 2009

What’s worse: the fool or the fools who follow him?

As I watch the media discuss Limbaugh’s pessimistic obstructionism, I can’t help but wonder why it’s such a big deal.

This has been the week of Rush Limbaugh. The radio talk show host has been a fierce defender of the Republican Party’s ideas for many, many moons — and at times, he has been the torch bearer of their policies. However, his ideas resound only with the base of the Republican Party, isolating himself and his followers from any real political debate. Despite his virile, partisan ideology, Limbaugh now 13.5 million regular listeners.

Limbaugh has recently attracted much media attention (and publicity) for saying: “I would be honored if the drive-by-media headlined me all day long: Limbaugh! I Hope Obama Fails. Somebody’s gotta say it.” He made the statement on his radio show in January the week before Barack Obama was inaugurated, and he has been defending it ever since.

On Saturday, Limbaugh spoke at an important conservative convention. He echoed his controversial statement, saying, “What is so strange about being honest and saying: I want Barack Obama to fail if his mission is to restructure and reform this country so that capitalists and individual liberty are not in foundation?” everyone from pundits to the White House has commented on Limbaugh’s statements. Last Sunday on “Face the Nation,” Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel said, “Limbaugh is the voice and the intellectual force and energy behind the Republican Party. He has been up front about what he views and hasn’t stepped back from that, which is what’s worse: the fool or the fools who follow him?

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Proposed assault weapons ban threatens a fundamental right

The ban would seek to ban firearms based mostly on non-functional aspects such as stock shape when unable to identify the gun by name.

Gun control advocates interpret the amendment's wording so that the right of arms only applies to government-sponsored armed forces, but this interpretation fails on several points. The Second Amendment only affirms a pre-existing right retained by the people; it does not provide for anything new such as a specific armed force. The Ninth Amendment provides for the basic right affirmed by the Second. The Founders Fathers acknowledged many times their belief of individual arms ownership as a basic human right, and now the right is affirmed through case law in Heller.

US Code defines the militia as both organised in the form of the National Guard and unorganized in the form of able-bodied males between the ages of 17 and 45. This implies that these groups must arm themselves to adequately serve their function as militia. American patriot Patrick Henry said of this, "Everyone who is able may have a gun.

What kind of guns people buy is the chief point of the previous and proposed ban on the sale of assault weapons. The mere definition of what constitutes an assault weapon is purely a matter of perspective of the gun control advocates. Firearms capable of continuous automatic fire are not covered in the ban, as they are tightly regulated by the National Firearms Act of 1934. Rather, the ban would seek to oppose firearms based mostly on non-functional aspects such as stock shape when unable to identify the gun by name. Gun aficionados have a tongue-in-cheek name for those types of guns so abhorred by the anti-gun lobby: "evil black guns." Really, many of the firearms are targeted based upon appearances and the modern materials and techniques of arms construction.

The quality of arms available to the militia must be on par with those of a standing army for tyrants to feel truly threatened. Limits upon the modernity of weapons available for people to purchase effectively weakens the strength of the militia to defend against tyrants, both foreign and domestic, and therefore weakens the intent of the Second Amendment, which serves as the safeguard to all the others.

In the event that the Republic becomes an oligarchy, the right to keep and bear arms enables the people to overthrow the oppression of a non-representative government.

Even Mahatma Gandhi recognized the importance of armed populaces had upon a government that served the will of its people. In "An Autobiography," Gandhi stated, "Among the many mudsills of British rule in India, history will look upon the Act of depriving a whole nation of arms as the blackest." The mere state of armament deters violence by both parties.

If America truly believes we will never need to assert our right to keep and bear arms and that guns cause more harm than good, gun control advocates should work for repeal of the Second Amendment, rather than chisel away at the Bill of Rights. Such dilution of rights only sets a precedent for mutilation of other ensured rights.

Yet the Second Amendment will not fall easily. America has a history steeped in the tradition of gun ownership, and many of our representatives recognize this right as important to their constituents. The belief in this right transcends party lines. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) has declared opposition to reinstating the assault weapons ban, as have several other prominent Democratic senators and congressmen. In response to Holder's statements, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) said, "I think we need to enforce the laws we have right now."

Should a new assault weapons ban proposal come up in Congress, please join me in opposing this needless and unconstitutional regulation. Congress has more pressing concerns at the moment than limiting our fundamental rights.

Colin McKim is an environmental management and protection juvenile and a Mustang Daily political columnist.
Ramirez

continued from page 12

commitment to the Dodgers Dream Foundation as part of the deal.

"We are thrilled that Manny wants to be a Dodger and that he has made such a tremendous commitment to the Los Angeles community," Mc- Court said in a statement. "We wit- nessed something very special last year in the way that our fans connected with him and the manner in which the team came together. Now, we fo- cus our complete and undivided at- tention on our primary goal, winning a world championship."

Ramirez helped Los Angeles win the division by hitting .396 with 17 home runs and 63 RBIs in 53 regular- season games. In the playoffs, he batted .20 with four home runs, 10 RBIs, nine runs and 11 walks in eight games.

"We all wanted the same thing that fights together and sticks together and so it was imperative that we sit down with who would obviously be a very important member of the team," Colletti said.

Los Angeles announced last week that Ramirez declined to take offer a $25 million, one-year contract with a $20 million player option for 2010. That deal would have included deferred payments of $10 million each in 2011 and 2012 and $5 million in 2013.

Boras countered with a proposal that included no deferred money, leaving the sides about $3 million apart in present-day value. At the time the Dodgers acquired him from Boston, Ramirez' s contract was amended to eliminate the $30 million team options it included for 2009 and 2010. The new agree- ment leaves him with a small increase but likely fill short of what Ramirez hoped to gain on the free-agent mar- ket.

Colletti initially tried to re-sign Ramirez, offering a two-year, $43 million deal with a buyout or a club option that was ignored by Boras and later withdrawn by the team.

The Dodgers' second attempt in- volved salary arbitration in December, but Ramirez said no to that, too. Besides his hitting, he made a huge impact on the Dodgers' bottom line, with a big boost in attendance and souvenir sales, including No. 99 jer- seys and fake dreadlocks.

Preparations for Ramirez' arrival at Camelback Ranch were already under way. The nameplate on the clubhouse locker next to shortstop Rafael Furcal went from being blank to having "Reserved..." attached to it. "I had people calling me from the Dominican saying that Manny had signed but how they knew I'm here and I don't know. Then I came in and saw the nameplate, and I knew something was up," Furcal said.

"A guy like Manny, you learn a lot of stuff from him. He's the best hitter in the game. Everyone is happy."

Ramirez' fun-loving attitude cre- ated a noticeable change in the Dodg- ers' clubhouse last season, and infielder Blake DeWitt expects the same again.

"He's one of, if not the best, hitters in the game, and a guy like that has a ripple effect," he said. "We have a great group and when you add a guy like that who has fun and keeps everyone loose it's just going to make it that much better. It rubs off."

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Fresno, CA
Three days out of the womb, Chaz Thomas found himself in a gymnasium doing what babies do best: sleeping. He napped in his mother’s arms while his father coached a basketball game until a buzzer woke him, and like most babies, he cried and made a scene.

But Thomas quickly adapted to his noisy environment and never again cried when the buzzer sounded. Until age 3, he sat courtide, even having a mini-hop to play during practice and halftime. It didn’t take long before he started imitating players.

A player named Eric Fisher, who was one of the best three-point shooters he had ever seen, and he was left-handed,” Chaz’s father Charlie Thomas said. “Chaz came to me and said That I want to shoot like Eric. I told him ‘You can’t shoot like Eric, you’re right-handed and he said ‘I’m going to learn to shoot left-handed.’ So he switched to a left-handed shooter from a distance, which is incredible,” his father recalled.

For the rest of his life, Thomas chose to challenge himself. During high school he opted for a more competitive league when he transferred from his local high school to Cal Poly’s basketball team in San Marino, a school with notable alumni such as former San Francisco Giants Manager Clark Griffith and New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady.

High school was particularly tough for Thomas, as he had to compete with having a mini-hoop to play with during his noisy environment and never again cried when the buzzer sounded. Until age 3, he sat courtide, even having a mini-hop to play during practice and halftime. It didn’t take long before he started imitating players.

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But in high school he also found success. Playing varsity all four years, he was the point-guard and leading scorer, averaging 15 points and 4 rebounds a game. In his senior year, he helped the Mustangs reach the California Interscholastic Federation State Championship, where they were defeated by the number one ranked team in the state.

Thomas is not only recognized for his offense, his teammates also rely on him for leadership and guidance. “He helps me a lot personally on defense. He tells me ‘stay here’ or if my man is coming back behind me. ‘I’m very helpful,’” sophomore guard Shawn Lewis said.

In fact, Thomas is having one of the best years of his college career. Some credit the improvement in his shooting to the presence of senior guard Trae Clark, whom he shared a lot of playing time with past year. “Chaz is a rhythm player. If he’s in a game and gets in a rhythm, then he can really play,” his father said. “But if he goes in, for a couple of minutes, comes out and plays again, he never gets into a rhythm. He needs time on the floor. Nothing against Trae and Brendon but both (Thomas and Clark) would share a lot of playing time and it wasn’t good for either of them,” he added.

Clark was released after becoming academically ineligible early in the season, Thomas, junior Lorenzo Keeler and freshman Justin Brown have emerged as leaders at point-guard since then.

“ have to make something happen in a good way to help the team. He’s not one of those trying to get his numbers up.”

Senior forward Tito Shelton has been a teammate since the two came in on the same recruiting class and he knows what Thomas is capable of. “Sometimes people might not see it all the time, but he brings a lot of emotion to the game and when it comes down, bunch times, he’s made a lot of big shots for us this year,” Shelton said.

Thomas’ actions are noticed from the coach’s standpoint, including a $4 million buyout of the deal and again become a free agent.

The deal was broken during a 6 a.m. meeting that brought the sides face-to-face at owner Frank McCourt’s Malibu home. The gathering came after weeks of protracted negotiations that led to starts, stops, offers and subsequent rejections. At times, McCourt’s frustration with Ramirez’s agent Scott Boras surfaced, with the owner describing the agent as “challenging to work with.”

All that was forgotten on a rainy late-winter morning when Ramirez surfaced in the Malibu mist to re-join the team and city that embraced him after he left Boston at the July 31 trade deadline.

“We got a great meeting,” Ramirez told KCAL-TV. “He came from a maddening business and that’s why I’m here.”

The Dodgers confirmed the deal shortly after Ramirez allayed concerns about his physical. He is set to meet with the media Thursday morning in Phoenix.

Los Angeles $10 million this winter and $15 million in deferred money with interest, payable in $5 million installments each Jan. 15 from 2100 through 2012. If it winds up as a two-year deal, he gets $10 million each season, with three payments of $8,333,333 each Jan. 15 from 2011-13.

Los Angeles’ original offer was for $85 million in guaranteed money, including a $4 million buyout of a 2011 option, and Ramirez9s agent and the Dodg- ers the ability to maintain control of Ramirez through 2012. It also did not include the no-trade provision.

Ramirez will make a $1 million