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MUSTANG DAILY
CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY

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Block scheduling meant to get freshmen on the right track, but some stumble

Kate McIntyre

When landscape architecture freshman Marissa Mondon arrived at Cal Poly, she expected to be handed a schedule, just like every other freshman attending. But she didn't receive her schedule because her high school hadn't sent her transcript in time. The stress most freshmen probably felt at their first day of class was amplified when she had to cram all four of her courses into one day.

"I felt isolated, because no one else was in the same boat," Mondon said.

Over the summer, 3,820 freshmen were scheduled into their fall quarter classes. The block-scheduling program worked, as evidenced by feedback from freshmen and by an increase in the average unit load freshmen take - from 12 units last fall to 16.

History freshman Liz Goralka said most of her friends are only taking 12 units, but she's taking 16 because a professor at the summer orientation program SOAR advised her to.

"Most people I know except the honors students are in 12, but I signed up for 16 anyway, it's kind of delightful, but not the worst thing in the world... It sucks that other people can go out and like they have done in the past," Goralka said.

She will be easier to stay at 16 units than to transition from 12 to 16. Plus this way she won't have to catch up later on, she said.

"I might as well start hard and let it get easier it's manageable; it's not like I want to kill myself every night."

Provost Koop presented the idea of block-scheduling each freshman's fall quarter classes last winter. Using information submitted by each department about what classes each major should be taking in fall, the provost's staff assigned freshmen their classes over the summer, instead of letting them register for classes like continuing students and like they have done in the past.

Associate Registrar Debbie Arenas said the point of implementing this new program was to keep students from falling behind by not taking prerequisite courses early on.

"The goal was to get students started on the right track to graduate on time," she said.

Given the short time frame for implementing the block-scheduling, most feedback from the freshmen and colleges about the program was relatively positive.

Associate Dean Roxy Peck said the College of Science and Math was happy with the block-scheduling process and its results.

"We have had very few calls from students who weren't able to get classes this fall—even continuing students. There have been noticeably fewer calls from unhappy students and parents, which I think is a sign that we did a better job of getting both continuing students and new freshmen into classes.

The first week of classes was unusually quiet for us in that respect," she said.

Peck said she asked freshmen what they thought about block-scheduling, and the response was uniformly positive, even from students scheduled into 7 a.m. classes.

"Two students told me that they had friends that were attending other universities that were having a lot of difficulty getting classes and that they really appreciated having a full schedule," she said.

However, there were a few issues with the process, including the scheduling of students with AP credit and those with extracurricular activities. College of Liberal Arts advisor Wendy Spradlin said:

"We have students coming in with numerous AP exams passed. If the university doesn't receive their scores in time, they can easily be scheduled into classes that they don't really need," Spradlin said. "That defines the purpose of the effort!"

Spradlin said that block-scheduling works better for majors that are heavily specified, whereas students have to take certain classes to fulfill a requirement, but for students who have more freedom in their curriculum, like CLA students, it doesn't work as well.

It results in students being assigned a course to meet a GE area instead of getting to choose the course they'd like to take to fulfill that particular area. For example, a student might be assigned ECON 222 for 12 but really would have preferred HIST 213, she said.

Cal Poly making room for "serious" students

Sean Hanrahan

Cal Poly is now operating with new policies issued from the California State University (CSU) Chancellor's Office that limit the number of incomplete, withdrawal and repeat grades students can accumulate per academic record to make room for serious students, said Bradford Fely of the Office of the Registrar.

The office of the registrar notified students via email on Sept. 18 addressing Executive Order 1037 that includes three new policies, but many students are still unaware of the changes, as school had yet to begin when the email was sent.

"The concept of throughput is important in understanding the rational behind the policy changes," said Fely. "(These policies) should discourage students from planning poorly... it will also be harder to get out of a class."

The four major changes in Executive Order 1037 involve incomplete grades, course withdrawal, course repeats for grade forgiveness and course repeats for grade improvement.

Incomplete Grades

Students will not be able to receive an "I" (incomplete) grade. Instead you have to work out how you will complete the work with your instructor.

Withdrawals

Students will be able to only withdraw from up to 28 units during your undergraduate education here at Cal Poly. They will start with a zero count towards your 28 unit withdrawal limit as of Fall 2009. Any medical/emergency withdrawals after the end of the seventh week of classes will not count towards your 28 unit limit.

Incompletes

Students will be able to repeat up to 16 units for grade forgiveness (where the new grade replaces the old grade in Grade Point Average (GPA) calculation). Students existing number of repeat units (that they might have accumulated prior to fall 2009) will be carried forward in calculating your repeat totals. If students have already reached the 16 unit limit, they will not be allowed to register for additional repeat courses. They may repeat a specific course for grade forgiveness one time only. If a course is taken after being repeated once the second and third attempts will be averaged into the GPA.

Repeat for Grade Improvement by Averaging

After students reach the grade forgiveness limit, they can repeat an additional 18 units for grade improvement by averaging, where consecutive attempts are averaged into GPA.

Executive Order 1037 arrives just after the introduction to a university registrar, a new position at Cal Poly. The Office of the Registrar, formerly known as see Policy, page 2.
Policy

continued from page 1

Academic Affairs, appointed Tom Zunz, who retired in December. Sunata comes to Cal Poly from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas where she worked for more than 10 years.

A Cal Poly news report to faculty in August said the new position would play a key role in attaining graduation, enrollment and retention goals.

Sunata is responsible for insuring the integrity of student academic records by requiring that students have a clear path to graduation.

Instructors are now required to produce a contract with a student who receives an incomplete grade to prove that the student knows exactly what needs to be done to fulfill the course and students will have a harder time dropping classes after the withdrawal deadline.

With the 1037 policies just taking effect this quarter, it isn't noticeably apparent to anyone that students are experiencing relevant problems. However, the Office of the Registrar is anticipating grievances later in the year. The Cal Poly Portal will not alert a student to send even the stoutest heart into cardiac arrest.

Two days in the hospital, a stint in a coronary artery, plenty of high-priced medications .. $84,496.60

"Those numbers are staggering," said Hircock, 45, of Shawnee, Kan. "Yes, I know they have high-tech equipment, and a stint is a medical miracle. But you think about $80,000 a day."

Hircock joined the ranks of countless patients who confront complicated billing codes, long lists of charges, unanswerable language about insurance coverage and sometimes sums they simply can't pay.

But what Hircock knew — he's a professional patient advocate — is that medical bills can be challenged.

Take the time to educate yourself about the mysteries of billing codes. You can catch errors and point them out to health care providers and insurance companies.

If you don't have the money to pay an eye-popping bottom line, you often can negotiate discounts with your doctors or hospital.

"You also can ease some of the pain up front by finding out how much a procedure will cost and how much your insurance will cover. Look at alternatives. Shop around."

Don't expect health care reform to make this easier. Whatever plan Washington comes up with, patients will face confusing, complicated bills and potentially large out-of-pocket medical expenses.

The health care industry, for its part, said billing problems were rare and certainly unintended. But mistakes were made.

Medical Billing Advocates of America is an association of professionals who help consumers with billing problems; its members find errors in eight out of 10 hospital bills they examine.

With medical expenses contributing to nearly two-thirds of bankruptcies, reduced charges and affordable payment plans could prevent financial ruin.

"Ask, ask, ask. Advocate, advocate, advocate," urged Mark Rukavina, executive director of the Access Project, a nonprofit organization that helps patients work with doctors and hospitals on financially crippling bills.

Don't be discouraged when a customer service representative explains over the telephone that your policy doesn't cover a procedure or a hospital can't discount your bill, Rukavina said.

Insurance companies have an appeals process. Most hospitals have policies for providing charity care.

"Health care providers generally are willing to deal," Rukavina said.

Consumer activists are pushing health care providers to be more transparent about their fees and billing practices — a godsend for patients who've encountered items like the "disposable mucus recovery system" on their bills.

For the uninsured, that's a box of tissues.

"Hospitals can charge $15 for a box of Kleenex and say that's what it costs them to provide it," said Steve Luptak, an expert in deciphering medical bills. "And they can charge one price to the insured and a different price to the uninsured. It's not easy, but it's important to understand the system."

Luptak operates HealthCare Advocacy in Kansas City, a service designed to help individuals navigate the health care billing and insurance waters. He's part of a growing cottage industry of people who have worked in hospitals and insurance companies and have switched sides to work for consumers.

But the sky-high hospital bills, Luptak advises, is to remove emotion from the process. Especically when you're ill or recovering, it's easy to get frustrated, angry or defensive, he said.

"It's so important to be calm and diplomatic and pursue your questions until you reach the right person," Luptak said. "If you can't afford a lawyer or other professional, I always recommend turning to another family member, a friend, or someone who can be one step removed emotionally in fighting for you."

Problems with a doctor's or hospital's bills should first be addressed with the billing office. A second step is to ask for help from a hospital social worker or patient advocate on the hospital staff.

Some people find help by asking around their churches or neighborhoods for someone who has worked in the health care field.

Failing that, consumers are hiring professional advocates.

Hircock, an accountant by training, got into the advocacy business after working as an internal hospital auditor. He uses firsthand knowledge of billing errors.

"Most consumers don't have much leverage (over high bills)," Hircock said. "They don't hold any trump cards."

But Hircock the advocate knew how to scrutinize the hospital charges of Hircock the patient.

He asked for an itemized copy of his bill and combed through it line by line. He discovered that the hospital had charged twice for his stent procedure, both as an inpatient and an outpatient.

He asked the hospital what Medicare would pay. The government program reimburses hospitals based on their reported costs by Medicare standards, his procedure was worth less than $12,000, Hircock said.

"Unlike any other industry in the world, there is very little correlation between hospital charges and what it actually costs," Hircock said. "That bill had a lot of profit built into it."

He took the bill back to the hospital.

Patients can challenge and negotiate through the maze of costly hospital bills

Diane Stafford and Alan Baley

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — A mild heart attack put Lee Hircock in the hospital for a couple of days last year.

He recovered just fine. But the sky-high hospital bill Hircock got afterward was enough to send even the stoutest heart into cardiac arrest.

Two days in the hospital, a stint in a coronary artery, plenty of high-priced medications .. $84,496.60.

"Those numbers are staggering," said Hircock, 45, of Shawnee, Kan. "Yes, I know they have high-tech equipment, and a stint is a medical miracle. But you think about $80,000 a day."

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Lee Hircock, who works as a patient advocate, received a shock when he received an $85,000 bill for a two-day hospital stay.

"We'll get down to a line by line by line, nitty-gritty with (patients). Our interest is to get it right," said University of Kansas Hospital spokesman Dennis McCulloch. "But the more common challenge for consumers is paying what they owe when the bill comes due.

Doctors and hospitals are increasingly willing to write down their charges now that the health care reform debate has put them in the spotlight, consumer advocates said. "If the patient is willing to provide information (about their financial need), they're generally willing to negotiate," said Rakavina of the Access Project.

"The bottom line is they want to get paid something," said Luptak, the professional patient advocate. "But if you negotiate them down, you need to follow through. If you set a payment plan, you need to stick to it. If you work with them, they will work with you."
"Do you think block scheduling will help students graduate on time?"

"No, it may help freshman but may have potential to set back upperclassmen and cost them more money."
-Alex Meggresti, ag business senior

"Yes, because it just makes freshmen get on the right track earlier."
-Ashley Ogden, ag business senior

"Not really, especially some of the engineering paths have so many required units they'll take more than four years."
-Andy Richardson, aerospace engineering senior

"Maybe, because they get some that are harder to get since you start off with more impacted classes. Maybe that will give them a head start."
-Julie Uccelli, food science sophomore

"It probably would. It won't let you ignore graduation requirements. If I were a freshman I'd be frustrated that I had so little choice."
-Kevin Finn, computer science senior

"Probably, because they don't know what classes they need to take. If someone tells them they will be more likely to get it done."
-Becky Robles, liberal studies junior

Together, we can make a smart investment in your future. Parker Hannifin Corporation is looking for outstanding students who are ready to begin their careers with the global leader in motion and control technologies. Opportunities for new graduates are worldwide. Co-op opportunities are in Irvine, California.

Join the Parker Aerospace team, an operating group of Parker Hannifin Corporation. Parker is a $10 billion, Fortune 300 company and global provider of motion control solutions.

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Please visit our exhibit at the Fall Job Fair.
California's ban on gay marriage back to court

Howard Mintz

SAN JOSE, Calif. — The legal battle over California's ban on gay marriage boiled up again this week as a federal judge considers an attempt to throw out the challenge to Proposition 8, the voter-approved law putting a halt to same-sex weddings in California.

On Wednesday, Chief U.S. District Judge Vaughn Walker will consider a motion from Proposition 8 backers that would scrap plans for a January trial and put a quick end to the effort to overturn the anti-gay-marriage law.

Proposition 8 supporters say U.S. Supreme Court precedent and the historical underpinnings of the definition of marriage negate the need for a trial, an argument strongly rejected by same-sex marriage advocates who vow to present strong factual evidence that Proposition 8 denies gay couples federal equal protection rights.

Based on Walker's comments to date, Proposition 8 backers may have an uphill fight to avoid a trial, even with what some legal experts say are several strong legal arguments. The judge has indicated on numerous occasions that he believes the case warrants a trial to develop a full record for higher court review that many predict could reach the U.S. Supreme Court.

A newly formed legal group, headed by former Republican U.S. Solicitor General Theodore Olson and prominent trial lawyer David Boies, sued to overturn Proposition 8 earlier this year, representing two same-sex couples seeking the right to marry. The lawsuit has proceeded in the wake of May's California Supreme Court ruling, which upheld Proposition 8 but left intact an estimated 18,000 same-sex marriages that were licensed before voters approved the law in November.

Proposition 8 backers say the case can be dismissed on legal grounds, without the need for trial.

"They simply can't win under our legal system," said John Camp, a staff attorney with the conservative Alliance Defense Fund.

Lawyers for the couples, as well as the city of San Francisco, argue otherwise, saying in court papers that "Prop 8 is uniquely irrational." They want to go to trial.

"We think we have very strong arguments on the legal issues," said Theodore Boutrous Jr., one of the lawyers representing Olson. "We think we took our guidance from the court's comments early on. To us, it makes a lot more sense to develop a factual record."

Proposition 8 supporters are relying on two central arguments to get the challenge tossed out of court. The first argument is that the lawsuit fails to prove a violation of any constitutional rights because of what Proposition 8 defenders insist is a deeply rooted tradition of reserving marriage for heterosexual couples.

State

SACRAMENTO (MCT) — California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has signed two gay rights bills, one honoring the gay rights law activist Harvey Milk and another recognizing same-sex marriages performed in other states.

The bills were signed Tuesday, saying in court papers that "Prop 8 is uniquely irrational." They want to go to trial.

Walnut Creek, Calif. (MCT) — If you drive on the new Bay Bridge's east span after it opens in 2013, you will be safe because of an innovative bridge piece designed to flex, bend and break so the main structure does not in a big earthquake.

One of the inevitable Big One finishers shaking the Bay Area, Caltrans crews can replace any broken fuses to restore the bridge to full strength — much like an electrician replaces a fuse that blows out.

The $6.3 billion east span from Oakland to Treasure Island is the first bridge to use the breakable metal fuses for added protection against earthquakes.

MIA MI (MCT) — A convicted Cuban intelligence agent who infiltrated the Boca Chica Naval Air Station in Key West, Fla., didn't obtain or pass along classified information to the U.S. government as he claimed.

But what is for sure is his description of the 9/11 attacks, which he tried to warn about.

Ahmed Abu al-Ghayth, a five-time convicted terrorist, told the New York Times he had warned of a terrorist attack months before the attacks.

The 9/11 attacks, he said, were going to include planes crashing into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon as well as a crash into the White House.

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He was convicted of conspiracy to attack the United States and acquitted of other charges.

International

BAGHDAD (MCT) — Iraq security forces seized a top aide to the most wanted man in Iraq, capturing him Sunday in a helicopter raid in Diyala province, an Iraqi security official who participated in the raid said Monday.

Abdul Jalal Abdulrahman was working closely with Iyad Allawi, the vice president under the regime of the late dictator Saddam Hussein, the security official said. Dunni is still at large and is viewed by U.S. officials as Saddam's successor in the resistance movement.

The Iraqi force that captured Abdulrahman turned him over to U.S. forces, which brought him to Baghdad, where he's undergoing interrogation, Iraqi officials said.

KABUL, Afghanistan (MCT) — The Afghan government's appointee resigned Monday from the commission that's investigating allegations of fraud in the country's presidential election.

"Foreign interference" was the reason for his resignation from the United Nations-sponsored Election Complaints Commission. His departure suggests the panel could be facing pressure to ensure fair elections.

His resignation comes weeks after a panel investigating the election rejected some allegations of fraud.

Check out live music from Matt Costa and Nothing Ever Stays, inflatables, food, giveaways, and more.

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ASI & CAL POLY ATHLETICS PRESENT:

**WHAT IS FANFEST?**

a FREE interactive experience for Cal Poly students featuring live music, inflatables, large flat screen TVs showing all other college football games, face painting, food, games, free stuff, & more.

**WHEN IS FANFEST?**

3:00PM - 6:00PM before each home football game.

**WHERE IS FANFEST?**

Chase Lawn, College Ave., adjacent to the student entrance to Alex G. Spanos Stadium.

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**OCTOBER 3RD**

(YOUTH DAY)

6:05PM KICK-OFF

Cal Poly vs. South Dakota State

Tribal Seeds

(tribalseeds.net)

Mike Pinto

(mikeypinto.net)

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**OCTOBER 24TH**

(PARENTS WEEKEND)

6:05PM KICK-OFF

Cal Poly vs. Dixie State

Young Dubliners

(youngdubliners.com)

The Janks

(myspace.com/thejanks)

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**OCTOBER 17TH**

(HOMECOMING WEEKEND)

6:05PM KICK-OFF

Cal Poly vs. Southern Utah

Matt Costa

(mattcosta.com)

Nothing Ever Stays

(myspace.com/nothingeverstays)

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**NOVEMBER 14TH**

(ARMED FORCES DAY)

6:05PM KICK-OFF

Cal Poly vs. South Dakota

The B Foundation

(thefoundation.net)

Chase McBride

(chasemcbride.com)

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VISIT GOPOLY.COM FOR MORE INFORMATION ON CAL POLY FANFEST BY VISITING THE UPCOMING PROMOTIONS PAGE!
The Spans Theatre stage will transform into the Lower East Side of New York, complete with cake-faced drag queens, reckless heroin addicts and starving artists when award-winning rock musical REENT comes to Cal Poly on Oct. 15.

Co-directors Erik Austin and Kristen Towers-Rowles of Kelrik Productions, a San Luis Obispo theater company, will bring to life the story of seven friends, all of whom are living as impoverished artists and musicians and struggling with the physical and emotional impacts of AIDS.

"AIDS is still a huge epidemic, but it's just not talked about as much anymore," Austin said. "The message of REENT is to live for tomorrow, not for tomorrow.

I go have brunch," Austin said. "Sunday is my rest day. It's when I get to sleep later, it's when I have my parents sign a contract for me because I won't old enough. That was pretty fun," Austin said.

Maria Chavez, the ticket office supervisor of the Performing Arts Center, thinks that because the musical was so popular on Broadway, people will be excited to see REENT in the San Luis Obispo community.

"A lot of people who have come to buy tickets seemed to know a lot about the Broadway version, so they may be hoping to get to see this show," Chavez said.

Lauren Feinstein, a business junior, is interested in seeing the production, because she thinks it will be a fun event.

"My high school did a production of REENT, so I think it would be cool to go see another rendition," Feinstein said.

Although the story of REENT is not new in the musical theater world, it is the first time that a professional theater company will present the production in San Luis Obispo.

Kelrik Productions received legal permission through Musical Theater International, an agency that issues licenses, scripts and musical materials to amateur and professional theaters worldwide, to present REENT in San Luis Obispo.

"It's a different kind of show for San Luis Obispo," Austin said. "It's rare, it's not family-oriented, and it's a rock musical. It's not happy and perky like most of the stuff we've done in the past. I'd say it's a PG-13 show."

Despite REENT being a new direction for the company, Austin found the fast-paced production process and the company's involvement with a community to be challenging, yet rewarding.

"The biggest challenge is going to be loading everything into the theater and blending the two companies," Austin said. "Everyone is very excited and ready, so hopefully it will go smoothly."

While the cast brought up numerous props with them on Sunday, the majority of the set has been built over the past three weeks.

"It is a series of stairs, catwalks, scaffolding and platforms as well as hanging fences and abstract junk street pieces," Austin said.

Despite nerves about the final touches of the process, Austin found that it was very gratifying. Join the highly respected engineering team at CPI and put your talent to work in a dynamic, diverse and team-oriented environment. CPI is experiencing remarkable growth. The most exciting challenges lie ahead and we invite you to grow with us.

CPI values the contributions of a diverse workforce and is proud to be an Equal Opportunity Employer. For more information, visit www.cpi.com.
Isn't it funny how romantic couples decide they need a "break" from one another? It's amazing how someone could want a relationship and claim they love a person, and then decide they need to go on a break for a period of time just to test the relationship.

Isn't the whole point of a break to get away from your significant other for whatever amount of time, and wouldn't that signify that you are having problems, or maybe even that the relationship should be over?

Couples often defend this concept of a break by saying, "We just need some alone time, but by putting this title on it, you're making it a little over dramatic to be "on a break." Of course, you may just need some alone time, but by putting this title on it, you're making it more difficult for yourself and your partner.

The title and amount of time aren't the only issue with the break concept. Another issue is the rules that people form for their so-called "break," which make this period much more ridiculous. There are rules such as, you are allowed to date other people, but you're not allowed to sleep with them. Or you can't date at all; it should only be a time to think.

In reality, if either partner is contemplating dating other people, the relationship really shouldn't exist in the first place.

Another way people try to justify their break experience is that they've met someone else who they believe might be a better fit for them, or they just want to mess around a little. You know, get that college experience. But the reality of it is that people, both men and women, think about messing around with other people all the time, but actually wanting to follow through with that act should feel completely wrong if you're truly in love with your partner. Furthermore, if you are thinking about going on a break to see if it would be possible to live without this significant other, then there are bigger issues to deal with, and it seems a bit unfair to your partner to put their emphasis in your life on trial.

I've seen many couples go through this break up and get back together trend. It turns into one of those annoying relationships that has everyone turned off to dating completely. It only seems like the best of both worlds: you could go out and mess around, and then after you're done with that, you could come back to this person who is just waiting for you. In reality, that type of setup is poison for everyone involved. No matter the case, with any type of "break," someone gets hurt.

Here are a few hints that should alert you to an impending break:

1. The relationship has become distant.
2. Little fights break out over nothing.
3. You find yourself wondering if there are other fish in the sea.
4. Avoiding one another becomes a regular occurrence.

A break might help to temporarily avoid problems or it might even get that one-night-stand with that hot girl from the gym out of the way. In the end, though, when you return to that relationship, the dynamic will have changed, the problems will still be there and you will likely find that a permanent break-up is in your future.

Cassondra Becking is a liberal studies junior and Mustang Daily relationship columnist.

**"We're on a break..."**

**Decoding the stage between happy couple and the inevitable break-up**
All-star cast can’t carry “Couples Retreat”

The second film from director Peter Billingsley (Ralphie from “A Christmas Story”), “Couples Retreat” deals with four pairs of friends who reluctantly travel to a resort designed for helping troubled couples. The film stars an ensemble cast which includes Vince Vaughn, Jason Bateman, Kristen Bell, Jon Favreau, Jean Reno and Ken Jeong (“Knocked Up,” “The Hangover”). Unfortunately, despite a few amusing moments, even the star-studded comedic cast couldn’t save what eventually developed into another predictable failure.

In denial and believing their problems are simply petty feuds, three of the couples seem happy with where their relationships are headed. They receive a wake up call when their friends Jason (Jason Bateman) and Cynthia (Kristen Bell) reveal that they are contemplating a divorce after frustrations with failed pregnancies, and what they believe to be their only chance comes in the form of the Eden Resort in Bora Bora. Upon analyzing their own misfortunes, the rest of the group decides to join in, initially expecting the resort to serve as an excuse to take a vacation in paradise.

Eden is managed by martial artist and love expert Monsieur Marcel, portrayed by the much under appreciated French film legend Jean Reno (“The Professional,” “Ronin”). When thinking about both the premise and its notable faces, the story could have easily been translated onto the screen in a humorous and creative manner.

The movie opened at No. 1 at the box office this weekend, and is sure to make a reasonable profit in weeks to come, mainly because of word of mouth between people in search of easy laughs and cheesy comedies.

None of the characters are effectively developed, and most of the actors seem to be playing themselves. The story was written by Dana Fox, a screenwriter with a body of work that contains other generic comedies like “What Happens in Vegas” and “The Wedding Date.” However both Vince Vaughn and Jon Favreau also surprisingly contributed to the foreseeable plot, whose other writing collaborations include amusing scripts like the cult-classic “Swingers” and box office hit “The Break Up.”

While it’s easy to spot what the filmmakers intended to be the movie’s high points in terms of comedy and suspense (irritating shark attack scene), the only aspect that may make it worth watching is Vince Vaughn’s signature dark humor and sarcasm.

To my own dismay the film turned out to be exactly what I expected, a cheap comedy that hoped to rely on an impressive cast rather than an adequate script.

Alex Petrosian is a biological sciences sophomore and Mustang Daily movie columnist.

The audit of Cal Poly Foundation’s financial statements for FY 2008-09 is complete. Copies may be obtained or reviewed at Building 117, Heron Hall, Room 215.
You or your child must be at least 1 month of age or older and have a diagnosis of bacterial conjunctivitis. You or your child may be reimbursed for time and effort if eligible. Call Now to See if You Are Eligible! Please contact us at: Coastal Medical Research Group, Inc. 805-549-7570 Call Now to See If You Are Eligible!
I'm willing to guess that the most common way to start a political discussion with the question "are you a Democrat or a Republican?" From there, the discussion all too often goes downhill.

People generally like more either the Democratic or Republican party and their inclination might be to answer with the party you most associate with. It's a quick way to identify yourself in a sea of views and relate to millions of other Americans. If you find yourself in the company of a fellow party member then you're in luck; you can commiserate about the insanity of the other party and its members.

But maybe you find yourself with some of the other party. This situation has the potential to lead to a great amount of sharing of different views, and both learning as well as growing from them. You can have a genuinely constructive discussion in this scenario but too often the process gets derailed by the labels "Democrat" and "Republican."

It's as though answering with a political party automatically means you stand for anything and everything anybody of your party has ever done. What a big burden that is. It's probably not what you were asking for when you answered their question but it's nevertheless the situation you find yourself in.

You're a Republican? Well then Bush must be your biggest political hero, you must not care about the poor or imprisoned, and you certainly don't care about the environment at all. You're a Democrat? Well then you must hate the wealthy, you must think we all should have to drive hybrids, and you must definitely be a vegetarian.

See how constructive the conversation has become? It's a bloody nightmare! How can you have a peaceful discussion with all of these stereotypes flying around? It's as though saying you're a Democrat or Republican has given the person the illusion of being able to read your mind — and yet what they're seeing is almost entirely wrong.

Among the Democratic and Republican parties there are many differences of opinions. Many of them are minor differences, but for some, they can be earth-shattering. Some Republicans are pro-gay marriage and some Democrats don't believe that global warming is human-caused. Americans don't simply fit into two categories. There is so much more depth to the American public than two layers that it's a shame we all too often act as though it's the case.

In my case, I find not answering the question surprisingly easy, as I really don't see myself leaning towards one party or another. First off there's the fact that so many politicians don't seem to represent the people that elected them — but let's leave that thought alone for now.

What I believe in is freedom and liberty, plain and simple. People should have the right to choose what they want to do with their own lives, so long as it doesn't infringe on other people's ability to do the same. Life is too short for people to be telling others how to live their lives; I want to make my own choices. Freedom should be both economic and social. To me, the parties seem to have each one but not the other.

My money should be just that: mine. I'm a grown-up and have my say. I don't believe that global warming is a great burden that should be foisted on me. I can help by forcing money from me and giving it to what you deem to be a "great cause" or is it just anxious for others at risk, e.g. drunk driving. My private communications should be private and nobody should be held indefinitely without a trial, labeled a "terrorist" or not.

Please don't confuse me with an anarchist. I strongly believe in the rule of law. As James Madison, the "Father of the Constitution" put it, "the powers delegated by the proposed Constitution to the federal government are few and defined. Those which are to remain in the State governments are numerous and extensive. Those which are to remain in the State governments are numerous and extensive."

So next time you find yourself faced with the dreaded "are you a Republican or Democrat" question I'd encourage you to try to define your own views, whatever they may be, without using the words liberal, conservative, Democrat, or Republican. See how many stereotypes you can avoid by staying away from those four words and see if you can find the decisions to be on what your identity really are — not what the other person guesses them to be from overly-broad labels. Perhaps this way we can have more constructive political discussions that we actually enjoy and feel like we learned something.

Aaron Berk is a computer science junior and Mustang Daily political columnist.

"This article should have been about all acids, not just citric acid. ACID "sharpen" flavors and can make any dish a bit more zesty."
— Harold Response to "Zesty food will liven your diet"

"I really liked the exhibit. Kadou to the seniors who put it on." — Kate Response to "Flight of migrant workers on display in library"

"What state workers and civil servants at all levels are brought in line with the private sector, the state's budget problems will be resolved overnight. Until then, furloughs, cut fees increases, closures, etc, will be the norm." — Robert Response to "Quote with Precise"

"My Casey Blake crush is unbearable." — Nicky Kalynski
Cold realities reveal a complicated conflict in Israel

Frida Ghitis

A trip to this Palestinian town can shatter preconceptions and compel the mind to dream about the possibilities of peace, and then awaken to the cold reality of a complicated conflict.

You may expect to see splendor and desolation in the city that serves as the capital for the Palestinian Authority. Instead, you have to work your way through a bustling downtown of crowded streets and incomprehensible traffic jams, complete with vibrant commerce. You can admire the designs of bright new buildings or stop for coffee at a cool "smokey" at Stars and Bcks.

Amid the global recession, the West Bank is enjoying an economic boom unlike any it has seen in years. As many have noted, prosperity is not a substitute—but not a guarantee—of peace, but it conjoins images of what peace could bring.

Just imagine it: normalcy. Ramallah is booming, but it is not a normal town. On posters still affixed to downtown walls you see the distant look in the faces of Palestinian suicide bombers, glissed for carrying out acts of murder that our minds can scarcely comprehend. Beneath the surface lies a maelstrom of ideology and politics that won't easily disappear.

Practically all the men here wear Western clothes. The much advertised secularism of Ramallah, however, is much less visible among women. By my estimation, well over 90 percent of the women wear some type of hijab, the Muslim head cover. Others, especially among the young, wear modern clothes and then a scarf over their hair.

That religiosity is not how I remember Ramallah from many years ago, when going into the West Bank required little more than a short drive from Jerusalem. But times have changed, and then they changed again.

Until 1967, Jordan controlled Ramallah, which it had captured in the 1948 war that followed Israel's declaration of independence. In the 1967 Six Day War, Israel captured the West Bank from Jordan, and suddenly Palestinians could travel to Israel, go to the beach in Tel-Aviv, or buy groceries in Palestinian towns to buy groceries and drink Turkish coffee. When the wave of terrorism started, however, some of those crossing to Israel went for the sole purpose of killing Jews. The resulting security arrangements made life much harder for everyone.

Now you have to cross Israel's separation barrier, an ordeal for Palestinians. Nobody likes that barrier, which is a fence in most places, but near Katamon it is a wall, a complex that won't easily disappear. It conjures images of what peace, the wall becomes unnecessary for students' right to play music of their choice in a limited public school?

Geoff said: I know, William. I understood. The Supreme Court's test from Lemon v. Kurtzman says government action violates the Establishment Clause when its purpose is religious, it has the primary effect of advancing or inhibiting religion and it creates an excessive entanglement between government and religion. I don't see how allowing the instrumental would have done any of those things. I just think the district's administrators were worried for no good reason this time.

Geoff said: Funny you should mention Abilene, which is the buckle of the Texas Bible Belt. Sure you know the uproar that would ensue if the band had played "Ave Maria." Perhaps the reason the Everett district's administrators were worried is because they understand that music, like a national flag, carries enormous symbolic value.

Linda said: True, but in this case, the reason the students wanted to play that particular piece was that it shared off their skill. That's why the student who said themed administration suppressed their free-speech rights in the name of avoiding religious endorsement. You're usually a free-speech advocate. Shouldn't there be some protection for students' right to play the music of their choice in a limited public school?

Geoff said: I know, William. I understood.
Fletcher ties school record with 70 in Lady Aztec Classic

**CHULA VISTA, Calif. — For the third time in her four-year Cal State San Marcos golf career, Mandy Fletcher has tied the school record with a round of 70.**

The senior from Los Alamar, Calif., finished two under par with a 35-35 on both the front and back nine Monday at the Lady Aztec Fall Classic being held at the Silt Creek Golf Club. Fletcher also carried a 70 as a sophomore and junior, lead a quarter of golfers by four strokes breaking into Tuesday’s final round. She was one over par on the par-3, two under par on the par-5s and led the field with a one-under par total on the par 72.

Fletcher carried four hoochies, 12 parks and a pair of bagies on the 6,167-yard par-72 layout. Last week she finished second in the Frontone Grill College Invitational at Monarch Dunes.

Rebecca Norris and Hannah Brad also shot 70s in their Mustang careers. No Cal Poly woman golfer has yet to break 70.

Fletcher helped Coach Scott Cartwright’s Mustangs to a share of second place with UC Riverside, both with 39-over-par 307 totals, just six strokes behind leader Cal State Northridge.

In addition to Fletcher, other Cal Poly scorers were Julia Heath, in eighth place with a 77, Stephania Vucum with an 80 and a tie for 14th place; Miqela Pendleton, also with an 80 and a tie for 14th place; and Kristin Locke with an 84 for 26th place.

**Engineering Co-op**

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**Our Roofing Shingle manufacturing facility in Shafter, CA, located 10 miles north of Bakersfield, is looking for a Mechanical Engineering Co-Op.**

This is a 6 month position.

**Requirements:**
- BS enrolled in a Mechanical Engineering program.
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**Co-op projects/responsibilities will include:**
- Mechanical Equipment Design.
- Cost Estimates.
- Equipment List Development.
- Document Control.
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- Requests for Capital Funding (AFCE).
- Project Safety Evaluations.

**NBA taking steps to protect players against H1N1 virus**

**Josh Robbins**

The NBA and its teams on swine flu won’t take them by surprise.

The signs of precaution are everywhere:

- A bottle of Germ-X hand sanitizer sits on the security keypad that Orlando Magic players use to enter Amway Sportsplex.
- The San Antonio Spurs have placed sanitizer dispensers throughout their practice facility on their court, in their weight room and in their locker rooms.
- At league headquarters in New York City, league officials hired an expert in infectious-disease control in March to advise them and have been in contact with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- "Let’s face it, we all live in close proximity all year long," Magic Coach Stan Van Gundy said. "You have to take the necessary precautions, and you deal with it when it comes up."

Teams across the NBA have made provisions to guard players against the H1N1 virus, more commonly known as swine flu. Symptoms such as fever, body aches and fatigue can be debilitating. Having one marquee player get sick or several role players become ill could hurt a team’s performance.

Magic athletic trainer Tom Smith spoke to the team about swine flu and general health guidelines earlier this month, Van Gundy said. Smith asked players to notify team medical staff immediately if they start to feel sick or are exposed to a family member with the illness, because doctors can prescribe an antiviral medicine such as Tamiflu.

Smith also reminded players to wash their hands frequently - "I just wash my hands, that’s all," said Magic power forward Brandon Bass. "We have hand sanitizer everywhere."

The NBA has been in constant communication with its teams about the H1N1 virus, said Tim Frank, the league’s vice president for basketball communications.

Frank said some misinformation was reported in recent weeks about the ongoing dialogue between the teams and the league. He said it wasn’t true that the league had asked players and coaches to use a fit pump instead of a hand shake when greeting each other to avoid passing on the virus, as one newspaper reported. He said that the league did not send a memo to teams suggesting that players shouldn’t shake hands with fans, as another newspaper reported.

But the league has created an extensive swine flu contingency plan, just as it did when the avian flu was a concern a few years ago. Frank would not disclose, details of the new plan.

"It deals with everything you can imagine if you have to cancel games," Frank said. "If there is a game with fans or the namely issue is a lot of players get sick," Frank said.

"It’s obviously a hard thing to predict, but that’s why you put a plan together and deal with the many circumstances as you possibly can, because I don’t think any of us know where that situation is going to go.

So far, there have been only a few reported cases of swine flu in pro-sports.

Houston Texans rookie tight end Anthony Hill was hospitalized with the illness in the days leading up to the team’s fourth game, and it was the first confirmed case in the NFL, this season. Punter Vicente Padilla contracted swine flu in late July while playing for the Texas Rangers. Los Angeles Galaxy and U.S. national team soccer player Landon Donovan contracted swine flu in August; he experienced mild symptoms but members of the U.S. team delegation who came in close contact with him were advised to take a 10-day course of Tamiflu.

The Florida Gators football team was cautious when Tebow, Tebow and Major Wright were suffering from flu-like symptoms before their Sept. 26 game against the Kentucky Wildcats. The players flew to Lexington on a separate plane from the rest of their teammates.

All Gators football players received a nasal spray vaccine for seasonal flu after running back Jeff Demps and two other key starters developed fevers last month. A Florida athletic department spokesman said.

The Magic was cautious following a game in which one regular-season win can be the difference between winning and losing in a playoff series, teams are taking no chances.

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"Team management, and that includes coaches, team physician and trainers, need to be proactive, and they need to make sure that their team is free of symptoms, and in a pandemic situation, you have to ask," Archibald said. "Those who feel ill or have upper respiratory symptoms or flu-like symptoms should be advised to stay at home or referred to appropriate medical management. Basically, you do not come to the locker room."
Alex Rodriguez brings his A-game to the playoffs

By Bob Klapisch

MINNEAPOLIS — No one wants to play against the man the Yankees' opposing managers call "the One."

In this year's postseason Alex Rodriguez holds a .455 batting average with two home runs and six RBI.

By 3-2, A-Rod fouled off a sinker before proving why he's become the Yankees' most dangerous October asset. He crushed a fastball over the outer half of the plate, sending it soaring over the right field wall, tying the game at 1.

The Twins may not have known it at the time, but they were dead the moment A-Rod touched home plate. Suddenly, the mystique of Pavano's sinker had been stripped clean, as Jorge Posada homered to left two batters later.

With a 2-1 lead, the Yankees deepened the Twins' wound, scoring two more and giving Mariano Rivera all the room he needed to muddle the Yankees a little closer to the ALCS. Of course they had help along the way, Joe Nathan, umpire Phil Cuzzi, the Twins' stupidity and, well, in that last series, the Twins' stupidity and, well, in that last series.

The Yankees have a dark history here: They were knocked out of the playoffs by Mike Scioscia's team in 2002 and 2005. In that last series, Rodriguez stood in front of his locker after going 2-for-15 and said, "I played like a dog."

That seems like a million years ago now. Rodriguez has become a tremende hitter, a new man, drug-free (we assume) and one with his teammates. There was a moment Sunday night that spoke volumes about Rodriguez's communion with the Yankees. It was in the ninth inning when the game was halted as a fan ran onto the field. He started from behind home plate, near the on-deck circle, and took off on a crazy sprint — targeting no one and everyone.

For the briefest instant, the fan looked like he was heading toward Rivera. The closer was too shocked to move, but Rodriguez reacted instantly, covering the distance before the man even reached the mound until the cops, a dozen of them — had subdued the trespasser.

That's one of the many little signs of the Yankees' unity: As Pettitte would later say, "We have a good team, we have a good bunch of guys who are really enjoying this."

The Bombers are the team to beat now, and that includes anyone the National League can throw in their path. But the Yankees will face a unique challenge in the ALCs facing an Angels team that believes they, not the Yankees, are driven by destiny.

Anyone who saw the way they celebrated after clinching the West knows what's feeling Scioscia's players. They've dedicated the season to the memory of the late Nick Adenhart, whose image is imprinted on the outfield wall in Angel Stadium.

After the clinching game the Angels congregated at the wall, each one of them touching Adenhart's face in a moving, spontaneous ceremony. One major league executive who saw the replay on TV said, "That's pretty powerful stuff that's the kind of reaction you can't really defend against."

The Red Sox found out about the way that talent alone isn't the only currency that reigns in October. Something else is usually required, something Rodriguez thinks he's found.

It's called inner peace, and it manifests itself in the way A-Rod's swing has trimmed away the excesses. He's keeping his hands back, his head doesn't move as his bat comes through the strike zone.

Of course, none of this says the Yankees' work is finished, or that Rodriguez is ready to replace Reggie at Mr. October. But A-Rod, the man, has turned into "the Man."

Who saw this coming?
Tuesday Morning Quarterback

Bad beats last Sunday
Scott Slivey
ON THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

Every once in a while, a gambler takes what they call a bad beat. In sports gambling, a bad beat entails a freak play that causes what you bet on not to come true. Let's just say, my first column last week turned out to be a bad beat. Two of the three things I talked about in length during the week didn't work out as they were described.

Despite what I consider one of the worst statistical games in NFL history, Derek Anderson "guided" the Cleveland Browns to victory on Sunday after I said they could go winless this season. 

I use the term guided loosely, as Anderson finished 2 of 17 for 23 yards and an interception in the win. Take a moment to reflect and read that again. That was the entire line of the winning quarterback.

There's nothing in the world that could possibly be more freakish than that line for a winning quarterback.

I also said Denver would "plummet to earth" against New England. Weeks are a game in which Kyle Orton outplayed Tom Brady and the receiver tandem of Wes Welker and Randy Moss caught only as many passes as Eddie Royal himself, the Broncos remain sky high.

The Broncos won the overtime coin flip, which, correct me if I'm wrong, means they just call the game and go home? (On a related note, when are they going to change this outdated overtime rule to something more fair?)

So the bad beat I took during the Denver game was that the Patriot's captain didn't realize that tails never fails.

On some other thoughts of the week that was.

Vegas oddsmakers aren't watching the games

While the aforementioned were some bad beats, Vegas made it a little easier for the hardcore sports gambler to recoup some lost coins with two of the other games last weekend.

As of Saturday afternoon, the Rams were 10 point underdogs at home to Minnesota. This is a Rams team that may not score 10 points the rest of the season, and they're given just 10 points to the score-happy Vikings!

Minnesota averaged just fewer than 30 points a game coming in. So according to oddsmakers, they thought the Rams would score 20 points in the game? Here's a tip for next time, St. Louis had scored 24 points total coming into the game and been shut out twice.

The Vikings easily covered, winning by four touchdowns.

While that line may have raised some eyebrows, I think a lot of the outcome was handed to the audience probably shied away from taking New York, a 1 1/2-point favorite at home against Oakland.

Not me, my friends, because I have absolute faith in how terrible the Raiders are right now. I don't know what Oakland coach Tom Cable should be more worried about, losing his job, or going to jail on felony assault charges.

Coming off an injury, Eli Manning racked up 50 more passing yards in one half than Oakland had net yards in the entire game.

After the first play of the second quarter, New York led 21-0 and had taken control.

It was so bad that even backup quarterback David Carr, the second holder for most times sacked in a season, avoided a sack and ran 12 yards for a touchdown.

Calm before the storm

San Francisco head coach Mike Singletary was suspiciously calm at the postgame press conference after his team got blown out by Atlanta.

He was so calm, that he reminded me of one of those stone-faced killers you see in movies. This is the same man that dropped his pants to prove a point during halftime of his first game as coach. The 49ers were trailing 21-3 on Sunday they lost 45-10. That's double the whooping.

Samurai Mike doesn't take these things.

All I'm saying, is that if Dre Bly, who intercepted a pass then promptly fumbled while showingboat (down 35-10 at this point I might add), doesn't show up to practice for the next few days and is ultimately discovered to be sleeping with the fishes, I think I might have a suspect.

What a win for Atlanta though, the Falcons are making at least 53 new believers each week. Maybe someday even the general public will realize they're a legitimate contender.

Coming soon: The Garrett era

We were on the verge of history Sunday when the Kansas City Chiefs scored in the final minute to take the Dallas Cowboys into overtime.

Cowboys owner and de facto head coach Jerry Jones was probably macroscopically away from firing Wade Phillips and concentrating the Jason Garrett era in Dallas.

Garrett, who makes $3 million a year as an assistant head coach, has been waiting in the wings for over a year now. Phillips probably sees Garrett as the one for the job.

The Cal Poly women's tennis team has one goal in mind this season: to place first at the Big West Conference.

The last time the team placed first in the Big West was in 2003, and assistant coach Andy Gerst thinks that Cal Poly has the potential to break Long Beach State's first-place run.

"The Big West title is the most important thing to us," Gerst said. "That's our main goal for this year. That last year, we've had really solid teams in our conference."

With tough competition, including Long Beach State, UC Irvine and UC Santa Barbara, Cal Poly has fallen short for the past six years in claiming the title.

Senior co-captain Suzie Matzenauer thinks that Cal Poly is stronger than in previous years and has the best chance of taking first place.

"It feels like a brand new team, we have so much talent and much more hard work this year," Matzenauer said.

Four returning seniors, including the two captains, Matzenauer and Brittany Blalock, and the addition of five new team members offers a good mixture of experience and fresh voices.

"We've got some new blood with the five new players, and they all bring a good energy to the team," Gerst said.

Two of the five new players are transfers and the other three are freshmen, including Alexa Lee, who is a five-star recruit and ranked in the top 15 in Southern California. Lee, who is from Palm Desert, Calif., has been playing tennis since she was 9 and hopes to add a lot to the team, both in play and in attitude.

"I'm pretty aggressive and I hope that my style comes together with the team so that we win matches and do well (in the Big West)," Lee said.

Lee is also very impressed with her teammates' skill level.

"There are a lot of seniors who have experience and can help the younger girls to work to their full potential," Lee said.

Although Lee is enthused to join a team with such ability and motivation, the experience so far has taken some getting used to.

"My biggest challenge is going to be staying consistent and working to my 100 percent every single practice," Lee said. "I've never been in an environment with so much talent, so this is all very new for me."

Equipped with a strong group of competitors, the women's tennis team started off well at pre-qualifying games at the ITA All-American Championships Oct. 3, hosted at the Los Angeles Tennis Center.

Matzenauer set the bar high with a three-set victory against 86th-ranked Joanna Mather of Florida.

"It was very good for her to get a win right off the bat. She competed real hard," Gerst said.

In addition, five players, including seniors Matzenauer, Blalock, Diane Filip, Jocelyn Davis and freshmen Lee and Ashley Pase reached the quarterfinal phase of their respective singles and doubles matches last Friday at the fall intercollegiate tournament hosted by Cal State Fullerton.

Cal Poly's solid play in the first matches of the season demonstrates the women's motivation and poise, Gerst said.

Lee stayed very active over the summer, playing in the women's open at Cal Poly Pomona and in a Santa Maria tournament, hitting with her new男朋友 with so much consistency and confidence.

"I like to dance around and listen to loud rap music with Jocelyn, Matzenauer said. "We just sing and dance and get pumped up for the match. It takes away the anxiety and just gets you ready to play."

While competition against teams such as Long Beach State are not for a few months, the team is gearing up for the Northwest Regional Championships, which will be held at Stanford from Oct. 23-26.

Matzenauer finds an original outlet for her nerves.

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