

PRESERVING DEMOCRACY

ONE DOCUMENT AT A TIME



ALTHOUGH **ROBERT C. TAPELLA (GRC '91)** wasn't a natural resources major at Cal Poly, one of his first official acts as U.S. Printer was to save almost 500 trees – by electronically submitting the federal government's 2,200-page budget.

For the first time in the nation's history, the government will submit its proposed 2008-2009 budget electronically, a move that will save some 20 tons of paper and nearly \$1 million over the next five years.

Nominated by President George W. Bush and confirmed in October 2007, the energetic Tapella certainly has his work cut out for him. As the 25th Public Printer, he oversees the massive Government Printing Office.

The largest information processing, printing and distribution facility in the world, the GPO houses more than 2,200 employees in a 1.5-million square-foot complex.

The GPO is responsible for the production and distribution of information and services for the three branches of government. Documents include the Congressional Record and Federal Register.

"It is unique in the world. We offer permanent, public access to the documents of our democracy. That is truly exciting," he said.

Although it took awhile to complete his studies at Cal Poly, during that time Tapella also owned several businesses and served full time as district representative for Congressman Bill Thomas.

He was working 20 hours a day and loving every minute of it. "Looking back, I realized I had been learning by doing. I didn't know it then, but in retrospect, that is exactly what happened," he said. □