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Cal Poly Graduation Rates Reach All-Time High

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Cal Poly’s graduation rates increased to an all-time high with the graduating class of the spring of 2009, according to Provost Bob Koob.

Of the 3,011 Cal Poly students who enrolled in 2003, 74 percent graduated in six years, an all-time high for Cal Poly and the best graduation rate in the California State University system. And of the 3,575 students who enrolled in 2005, more than 30 percent graduated in four years, which is up from a 15 percent four-year graduation rate 10 years ago.

The standard measurement for post-secondary graduation nationwide is based on a six-year rate, according to Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, a subsidiary of National Center of Educational Statistics.

“Our four-, five- and six-year graduation rates continue to increase,” Koob said. “Our goal is to help our students get their degrees on time so that they can begin their careers and contribute to California’s workforce.”

An improved retention rate of freshmen is a key to the improved graduation rates, Koob noted. Of the 3,450 freshmen that attended Cal Poly in 2008, 91.4 percent returned as sophomores – the highest percentage in the history of the university.

“A 91.4 percent retention rate for freshmen is phenomenal anywhere in the country,” Koob said. “It’s obvious, of course, but the more freshmen we retain into the sophomore year, the greater the likelihood a student will graduate. We focus a great deal on making sure that first-year academic experience is a successful one for our freshmen.

“Among the reasons for this success are that Cal Poly students are highly motivated and our faculty and academic advisers do excellent work. There are intangibles as well, such as the high quality of our orientation



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programs, which we know are effective in helping students be prepared to deal with the academic demands we place on them.

“The fact that so many students are staying tells us that students are engaged in the community and that they’re really enjoying their college experience,” Koob said. “That, coupled with the increase in average number of units students are taking, tells us that they are getting the classes they need.”

Cal Poly students are some of the most competitive students in the CSU. In 2009, first-time freshmen had an average high school GPA of 3.81, and average SAT scores for 1201. These numbers have climbed steadily over the past five years.

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