Cal Poly recorded a 57 percent increase in donations in 1997-98 as the university’s goal of providing the best undergraduate education was greatly enhanced by the generosity of its donors. More than 18,600 alumni, parents, friends, and corporations helped break almost all previous fund-raising records.

Nearly $23.2 million in cash, in-kind gifts, and endowments was given to the university’s colleges, programs, and projects, compared to last year’s $14.7 million.

The Cal Poly Fund, which raises cash gifts from direct mail and phonathon programs, also saw its total increase to $1.3 million. Approximately 68 percent of the Cal Poly Fund gifts was designated by donors to specific programs.

Alumni contributed a record $1.6 million. More than 9,000 alumni made gifts to Cal Poly. One of the backbones of private support for the university is parents. This year more than 5,000 of them donated approximately $832,000 (a 56 percent increase over last year) to their students’ educational experiences. Cal Poly parents consistently give about 10 times more per enrolled student than parents at other CSU campuses.

Nearly $8.3 million in cash was donated by corporations and businesses, many of which hire Cal Poly graduates, as well as by private foundations and associations. Gifts from companies that match employee contributions totaled nearly $192,000.

More than $12 million of the rise in the overall total came from in-kind and equipment gifts from corporations. Industry has a keen interest in helping Cal Poly and its students have access to the best technology available in the marketplace.

Endowment support more than doubled, with $5.8 million raised from alumni and friends who recognize the stable funding that endowments can bring to the university. Life income agreements totaled $575,000. These agreements provide immediate and lifelong income benefits to the donors, and future assets for Cal Poly.

The university also was notified of substantial future legacies, which will come to Cal Poly in the form of bequest provisions and revocable trust designations.

The Athletics Department’s “Building the Advantage” Capital Campaign raised $1.1 million, nearly double last year’s total. These funds are used for new construction, facility renovations, and endowments. Included in this total is $225,000 generated from the sale of more than 400 personalized seats in the renovated Mott Gym.

In addition to the $23.2 million raised in gifts, Cal Poly’s Sponsored Programs Office administered approximately $8.9 million in contracts and grants, which fund research, instructional support, and public service projects.