Cal Poly Appoints William W. Durgin as New Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

SAN LUIS OBISPO - Cal Poly President Warren J. Baker announced today the appointment of William W. Durgin as the university's new provost and vice president for academic affairs.

Durgin is currently the associate provost for academic affairs and vice president for research at Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Worcester, Mass. He will officially join Cal Poly August 31.

"Bill Durgin is an extraordinarily dedicated, enthusiastic and visionary academic leader," said Cal Poly President Warren J. Baker. "He will bring to Cal Poly a keen appreciation for the university’s educational mission and a commitment to encourage and support the work of our students, faculty and staff. Building on a long record of outstanding achievements, he will provide strategic leadership in diverse areas of university emphasis, such as student project-based learning, interdisciplinary education and applied research."

Durgin says he is delighted to be joining Cal Poly and looks forward to working with faculty, staff and students to build even stronger academic programs.

"I was attracted to the learn-by-doing philosophy and look forward to further developing that undergraduate pedagogy as well as expanding discovery-based learning at the graduate level," said Durgin. "The Cal Poly community is a wonderful one that my wife, Kathy and I are honored to join."

Durgin began his career as an assistant professor of engineering science and mechanics at the University of Florida in 1970. In 1971 Durgin moved to Worcester, Mass. to take a position as a senior research engineer and assistant professor of mechanical engineering at WPI.

While at WPI he has served in many capacities for the university, including director of the Advanced Space Design Program and head of the Mechanical Engineering Department. He also served as dean of undergraduate and graduate studies prior to assuming his current role as associate provost for academic affairs and vice president for research.

Among his achievements, honors and distinctions, Durgin established WPI’s Aerospace Engineering Program and played a central role in establishing programs in biomedical engineering, manufacturing engineering and industrial engineering. He chaired the Colleges of Worcester Consortium, with participation by both public and private institutions. He established a collaborative program for minority graduate research among WPI, North Carolina A & T University and Raytheon, focusing on high-capacity satellite networks. He also originated the concept of a life science/technology park, now known as Gateway Technology Park, a cornerstone for regional economic development, bringing together government, industry and universities. Durgin served from 1993-2002 as the K.G. Merriam Professor of Mechanical Engineering. In 1992 he was awarded a NASA Significant Achievement Award.

Durgin has also served on numerous academic and administrative committees and advisory boards regionally and nationally. To read his full curriculum vitae, visit http://www.wpi.edu/Admin/Provost/wwdurgincv.pdf

Durgin earned his doctorate and bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from Brown University, and his master's degree in mechanical engineering from University of Rhode Island.

Reporting to the university president, the provost and vice president for academic affairs provides leadership for Cal Poly's academic programs and coordinates the internal operations of the university in collaboration with other members of the senior management team.

Bill Durgin succeeds Robert C. Detweiler, who has served as interim provost and vice president for academic affairs.
since January 2004, following Paul Zingg's appointment as president at CSU Chico.

"Cal Poly has been extremely fortunate to have Bob Detweiler's strong, results-oriented leadership during this extended transitional period," said Baker. "For some four decades he has provided outstanding service to the CSU. Since joining Cal Poly in 1998, he has contributed to the university as professor of history, interim vice president for student affairs and interim provost and vice president for academic affairs. His unique combination of senior management experience, good humor and communication capability has been invaluable. I greatly appreciate all he has done for Cal Poly."

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