College ranking lists don't lie, but also don't tell whole truth

"They're information (but also) someone's opinion," Koob said. "It's not necessarily fact."

While those rankings are just lists, Koob said Cal Poly ranks among private schools who receive large endowments from alumni.

"It's pretty impressive to rank among private institutions," Koob said. "And I think that's because of the quality of professional education we have."

The "learn by doing" model has earned Cal Poly recognition for its graphic communication program, as well as engineering, architecture and business. The Wall Street Journal deemed Cal Poly's business and engineering grads the best hires in the nation in a September 2010 poll.

The graphic communication program has consistently received national accreditation from the Accrediting Council for Collegiate Graphic Communications, Inc. The

Prospective solar farm could strengthen economy with jobs, dollars

A prospective solar facility may bring significant economic and environmental benefits to San Luis Obispo County this summer, pending the Planning Commission's approval. Members of SunPower, the company developing the solar panel grid installation and various economists from the city met Wednesday morning to present the positive impacts of this project to the public.

The facility is the 250-megawatt California Valley Solar Ranch, with 1,500 acres of solar panels, whose construction would provide approximately 350 jobs and $315 million in wages and benefits for many local residents. In addition, $11 million would go directly to the county budget, according to the presentation.

These jobs would be filled by construction workers, electricians, carpenters, engineers and laborers. This sector of the job industry has been hit especially hard by the declining economy. San Luis Obispo unemployment rates in that particular sector are up to 30 percent and account for more than a quarter of all job losses in the county, according to the presentation.

"It will produce enough power to supply energy for every home in the county. That's about 100,000 homes."

— Chris Baker
Solar farm project director

Apart from the economic impact, the ranch would push San Luis Obispo County to the forefront of the nation's movement toward clean green energy, said Stephen Hamilton, chair of Cal Poly's economics department.

On the state level, it brings California to meeting its Renewables Portfolio Standard, which requires utility and electric companies to increase its use of renewable energy by 1 percent every year. And in addition to supporting the hardest-hit job sector in the country, it aligns with industries that are growing faster than other segments of the local economy.

"This project has quite a lot to offer," Stephen said. "It can really position us well in moving forward."

As a renewable form of energy and alternative to oil, intrinsically the solar farm can sustain the country's energy needs.
Solar
continued from page 1

"It will produce enough power to supply energy for every home in the county," said project director Chris Baker. "That's about 100,000 homes." It would also meet 59 percent of the entire county's electricity demand.

SunPower is a well-established California-based company that has installed hundreds of similar facilities around the state. The risk factor of setting one of these up in San Luis Obispo is rather small, Baker said. He anticipates the Planning Commission's acceptance of their proposal in early February. Their approval would allow SunPower to secure all applicable permits and begin construction as early as this summer.

The farm is expected to take two to three years to complete, followed by a 25-year operations period that will employ 12 workers.

The Planning Commission will review and discuss the project proposal at their next hearing on Jan. 27.

"It will help not only the economy, but the environment," San Luis Obispo, Mike Manchek said. "It will help not only the county wants and needs at such a crucial time.

"The world is watching us and the timing could not be better," Manchek said. "It will help not only the economy, but the environment as well. It propels the county in the national effort to create and sustain green economies."

Lists
continued from page 1

program is one of eight nationwide to receive accreditation.

In August 2010, the aerospace engineering program was deemed by "America's Best Graduate Schools: Law, Medical & Business" as one of the best aerospace engineering programs in the nation.

"The world is watching us and the timing could not be better," Manchek said. "It will help not only the economy, but the environment. It will allow San Luis Obispo to be a leader in the national effort to create and sustain green economies."

said, couldn't be quantified. More than anything, it's important for students to know that we care about our students and their success, and you can't really rank that," he said. "You can't make a decision based on these lists alone. You have to visit campus, and see if you could call this place home."

Gildien said if surveyors had a real opportunity to walk around campus and talk with students, ratings would surely go up.

While administrators see the lists as a sort of SparkNotes for exploring Cal Poly, journalism freshman Kassi Luja didn't rely much on lists and rankings.

"When I got into Cal Poly, I started doing more serious research on it," Luja said. She relied on the College Board website, which acts as an aggregator for rankings and statistics, but also matches students with schools that fit their criteria. When she arrived, Luja said she felt like she still had a lot to learn about the school.

"In the first few weeks of school, I found myself in a sea of people who knew a lot more about (the journal-

They aren't something we use in recruitment, but it is nice to be recognized.

— James Maraviglia
Associate Vice Provost for Marketing and Enrollment Development

Various lists on which Cal Poly is ranked, which is typical of prospective students, said James Maraviglia, the Associate Vice Provost for Marketing and Enrollment Development.

"Less than 2 percent of students use those kinds of lists as decision-making aids," he said. "But nearly 78 percent of students have been given a tour and have seen what the campus is like."

While Maraviglia would gladly do away with the ranking systems all together, he said any positive press is good, even if it's not highly read by students. "They aren't something we use in recruitment, but it is nice to be recognized," Maraviglia said.

"Nothing like that factored into my decision to come here," MacEgan said. "That isn't what's chiefly important to me."

"In the first few weeks of school, I found myself in a sea of people who knew a lot more about (the journal-

Lists, rankings and accreditations are no match for exploring Cal Poly and making a personal connection with the campus. So, while lists are great, Koob said, they can never compare to spending time on campus.

"What we really care about is the relationship between students and their education. You can't get that from a list."
California is in a budget crisis, but education should be the last place to be cut.  
— Elliott Ripley, environmental engineering senior

We already have so much construction on campus, and this is just going to delay it.  
— Jenny Cruz, animal science sophomore

The students are the ones suffering from this; it's already hard enough with the previous budget cuts.  
— Jessica Tu, food science sophomore

It's not good — education should be California's priority and cuts should be made in other areas.  
— Michael Murphy, earth sciences senior

It would give us less opportunities and hinder our full college experience.  
— Nick Larson, history freshman

They need to be a balance between budget cuts and tuition raises.  
— Shelbi Pilg, liberal studies senior

Word on the Street
What do you think about the proposal to cut the CSU budget?

State

DAVIS (MCT) — The U.S. Department of Agriculture today awarded $40 million in research grants to the University of California, Davis to develop bio-energy sources and climate-change tolerant plants.

The grants will fund two projects headed by UC Davis scientists and will include researchers from more than 50 universities in more than 20 states. The largest grant — for $25 million — will go to the university's wheat genome project.

SANTA CRUZ (MCT) — A 29-year-old Corralitos man struck a power pole on Freedom Boulevard about 1 a.m. today after lighting a cigarette and changing the radio while driving, causing a fire, a power outage and the closure of Freedom Boulevard, the California Highway Patrol said.

At 10 a.m., officer Sarah Jackson reported the road would be closed until sometime this afternoon, while PG&E and AT&T work on the lines and downed poles. PG&E reports that power was initially out for 920 customers, but has been restored incrementally.

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news

Briefs

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National

NEW MEXICO (MCT) — Santa Fe city council members will decide tonight whether to impose furloughs on most city workers as a budget-balancing measure.

The City Council last year voted to schedule unpaid furloughs on a couple of upcoming holidays, including Monday’s observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Shutting down most city offices for two days would save an estimated $500,000.

SANTA CRUZ (MCT) — Heartbroken and sobbing mother Angel Abernathy told Torrie Lynn Emery, 23, that she had destroyed both her family and the Emery family when she began a high-speed car chase over a Facebook posting that ended in the death of her daughter and the serious injuries of another young woman.

Abernathy’s daughter, Alesha Abernathy, 21, died July 21, trying to escape Emery, who was after Abernathy’s passenger, Danielle Booth, 20. Booth and Emery had been feuding over an incarcerated man on their Facebook pages the day before.

International

LEBANON (MCT) — Lebanon’s fragile government collapsed Wednesday over an investigation into the assassination of a former prime minister, just as its current leader met with President Obama in Washington. Eleven ministers close to Lebanon’s Hezbollah-led opposition withdrew from the Cabinet.

Hezbollah, the powerful Shiite Muslim political organization and militia, and its Shiite and Christian allies pulled out of the government after months of negotiations brokered by Saudi Arabia and Syria failed to produce a compromise over the tribunal examining the 2005 assassination of Rafik Hariri.

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HAITI (MCT) — Hundreds of white balloons were released into the air, buglers played taps and Haitians sang their national anthem Wednesday afternoon to mark the moment when exactly one year ago a ferocious earthquake destroyed much of the nation’s capital and killed more than 300,000 people. A year later, nearly 1 million Haitians remain in tents or other temporary shelter.

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State fiscal analyst says California budget plan poses significant risks

Kevin Yamamura
MCCLATCHY NEWSPAPERS

California's nonpartisan fiscal analyst found plenty to like Wednesday in Gov. Jerry Brown's budget, but he warned that the complex plan carries significant risks.

The Democratic governor has called for $26.4 billion in deficit-cutting measures, relying heavily on additional taxes and spending cuts that are politically volatile.

He also wants to reorganize state and local government duties, all in two months' time.

Legislative Analyst Mac Taylor dubbed Brown's proposal "a very good starting point" that makes reasonable assumptions about the economy and demand for state services.

The budget also satisfied Taylor's longtime call for permanent solutions that solve California's budget mess beyond this year.

"The vast majority of the governor's proposals are ongoing, or at least multiyear," Taylor said. "That's different from many past budgets ... We continue to face year after year these budgetary problems because we've adopted so many one-time or limited-term solutions."

But Taylor said Brown's proposal depends upon multibillion-dollar contingencies that could easily fall short.

Chief among them is a June special election that seeks five years of higher taxes on income, sales and vehicles, as well as taking $1 billion in cigarette-tax money that pays for early childhood development.

The measures would cut the state's deficit nearly in half by generating $12 billion.

Brown has not said what he would do if the proposals fail, though he indicated Monday that education and prisons could still face severe cuts.

At the same time, his plan to shift more state responsibilities over to local governments would fall apart.

Voters have cast a wary eye toward taxes in recent years, and Brown has to persuade lawmakers to place a tax question on the ballot.

"There's clearly a lot riding on the election," Taylor said. "A huge part of his budget plan is contingent on the voters approving those extensions."

Brown acknowledged the risk earlier this week, though he said he didn't want to provide a backup budget plan so as not to threaten voters.

The governor is confident that elected officials and Californians understand the enormous fiscal problem facing the state and the need for a balanced approach," said Brown finance spokesman H.D. Palmer.

Taylor praised Brown's focus on good starting point that makes reasonable assumptions about the economy and demand for state services.

Brown's plan and say they will not offer their own budget proposal with Brown.

"This is really not our problem," Sen. Tom Berryhill, R-Oakdale, said Tuesday after meeting with Brown.

Taylor backed four of Brown's tax ideas — eliminating enterprise zones, imposing a stricter requirement on a corporate tax formula, reducing the income-tax dependent credit and extending the state's higher vehicle tax rate.

He said higher sales and income tax rates merit consideration but also raise flags.

"They are some of the highest rates in the country, so we are a little concerned still that the continuation of the taxes at those levels certainly don't help our economy," he said.

"By the same token, the trades-offs you are you would have to cut another 10 to 12 billion in spending."
Supreme Court may let police officers search residences without warrants

David G. Savage  
TRIBUNE WASHINGTON BUREAU

Police officers who smell marijuana coming from an apartment can break down the door and burst in if they have reason to believe this evidence might be destroyed, several Supreme Court justices suggested Wednesday.

In the past, the high court has ruled that police officers usually cannot enter a home or apartment without a search warrant because of the Fourth Amendment's ban on "unreasonable searches and seizures."

But the Supreme Court's conservatives said during arguments in a drug case Wednesday they favored relaxing that rule when police say they have an urgent need to act fast.

Police had banged on the apartment door of Hollis King in Lexington, Ky., on a night five years ago after they detected the smell of marijuana.

The officers broke down the door when they heard sounds inside the apartment and arrested King for marijuana and cocaine possession.

Last year, the Kentucky Supreme Court ruled this search unconstitutional, but the Supreme Court justices sounded as though they think a majority will reverse that ruling.

"Everything done here was perfectly lawful," said Justice Antonin Scalia.

"There's nothing illegal about walking down the hall and knocking on somebody's door, and if, as a police officer, you say, 'I smell marijuana,' and then your hear the flushing, there's probable cause," Chief Justice John Roberts said.

Several of the court's liberal justices, who grew up in apartments in New York City, expressed surprise.

If the court rules this way, "aren't we just simply saying (police) can walk in whenever they smell marijuana without bothering with a warrant?" asked Justice Sonia Sotomayor.

"We start with the strong presumption that the Fourth Amendment requires a search warrant," added Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

Since the war on drugs began in the 1980s, the Supreme Court has steadily given police more leeway to search cars, travelers and baggage. But the justices have been reluctant to permit searches of homes and apartments without a search warrant.

The key issue in Kentucky v. King is whether an "exigent" or emergency circumstance allows the police to enter a residence without a warrant.

Obama administration lawyers joined the case on the side of the state's prosecutors.

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SLOMA documentary films highlight Art Nouveau

The San Luis Obispo Museum of Art (SLOMA) will feature two documentaries on Jan. 17 surrounding the art style Art Nouveau, which is showcased in an exhibit featured at the museum this month.

Victoria Zabel

Cal Poly English major turned glass master and artist, inspired by the Art Nouveau movement, is a slightly bizarre and unlikely picture.

Regardless, that is exactly what Cal Poly alumnus Evan Chambers is. Chambers is the motivation behind the January documentary special at the San Luis Obispo Museum of Art (SLOMA).

Muara Johnston, assistant director of SLOMA, is the brains behind the documentary installation and chooses the content and movies to be featured. Johnston decides on the subject of the films, which are based on exhibits featured at SLOMA during each month.

“Evan is the inspiration behind the Art Nouveau choice for this month — the influence is apparent in his work,” Johnston said.

Although Chambers does not classify himself as Art Nouveau, the concepts have certainly impacted his work.

“The Art Nouveau style moved me to pursue glass work in the first place,” Chambers said. “It's unique, different from everything else you see. The iridescence, the heavy silver content, the feathering in my glass — that’s Art Nouveau influence.”

Art Nouveau, or new art, is a style of art that emerged around the turn of the 20th Century as an effort to combat the mass production and manufacturing characteristic of the time. Art Nouveau is typified by floral, organic design and winding, curvilinear lines. With its inception, Art Nouveau altered every creative avenue at the time — typography, illustration, architecture, home decorating, applied art and fashion.

Although Wirdak does not classify himself as Art Nouveau, the concepts have certainly impacted his work.

“Art Nouveau: Equivoque 1900” and “Alphonse Mucha — Art Nouveau Visionary” are the films SLOMA will show this month. Johnston said she tries to choose films for SLOMA that cannot be ordinarily found, often purchasing the copies directly from the filmmakers themselves. In this case, Johnston found the movies on Amazon: Germany.

“Anc Nouveau: Equivoque 1900” is directed by Maurice Rheims and Monique Lepeuve, and highlights the most important concepts of Art Nouveau.

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Likewise, Johnston said a hallmark of the Art Nouveau style is the idea that art should be a part of everyday life. That’s why Johnston decided on Chambers’ work as the basis for the chosen documentaries — his pieces are often regular items (like lamps), made beautiful by ornate decorating.

*Evan is the inspiration behind the Art Nouveau choice for this month — that’s Art Nouveau influence.*

“Everyone is into refurbishing furniture and such,” Wirdak said. “The shabby-chic, retro-vintage look that you see — really trendy and cool — is inspired by Art Nouveau. It’s different, unique, more ornate than your everyday stuff.”

Wirdak believes Art Nouveau is peaking in popularity again.

“Cal Poly art and design alumnus Adam Wirdak believes Art Nouveau is peaking in popularity again. Although Wirdak said Art Nouveau isn’t his style, he can see its inspiration all around. "Everyone is into refurbishing furniture and such,“ Wirdak said. "The shabby-chic, retro-vintage look that you see — really trendy and cool — is inspired by Art Nouveau. It’s different, unique, more ornate than your everyday stuff.”

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Movies becoming geared toward older audiences

Steven Zeitchik
LOS ANGELES TIMES

For years, the movie business has blown past older audiences. Could the breezes finally be changing direction?

Hollywood is, of course, still persistently, obsessively interested in young audiences. Yet in certain quarters, at least, it's a little less about the prepubescent these days. Two of the most notable action movies of 2010 were "The Expendables" and "Red"—films that not only prominently feature actors over 55 but that also turn characters' length of tooth into central plotlines.

Some of the end-of-year crop of serious movies, meanwhile, submit that a character's twilight years represent the most interesting phase of his or her existence. "Burley's Version" tells of a man (Paul Giamatti) who's lived a full but complicated life and enters old age as frisky as ever. The Robert Duvall-starring "Get Low," which opened in January, still believes the navel-gazing road trip of self-exploration can be done right.

"True Grit" examines a down-and-out bounty hunter (Jeff Bridges) who finds redemption despite a jaded temperament forged by decades of doing the same difficult work. And in Mike Leigh's "Another Year," perhaps the most age-explicit film of the bunch, agray middle-class couple (Jim Broadbent and Ruth Sheen) form the center of a constellation of dysfunctional friends and family.

What in the name of Berry White is happening?

Movies have explored mortality and aging for a long time, going back to the navel-gazing road trip of sep­ tuagenarian Dr. Isak Borg in Ingmar Bergman's 1957 film "Wild Strawberries" and long before that. But a few exceptions aside (Alexander Payne's 2002 post-retirement drama "About Schmidt," perhaps), one-screen old age, particularly in North American cinema, has fallen into one of two buckets: as something to fight futilely against (as it was in Ron Howard's 1985 science-fiction fantasy "Cocoon" or Tamara Jenkins' 2007 drama "The Savages") or something to suffer with quiet dignity (as it was in Peter Masterson's 1985 "The Trip to Bountiful" or Bruce Beresford's 1989 "Driving Miss Daisy," which won the best picture Oscar, Sarah Polley's 2006 remake "Away From Her" and countless others).

What many of the newer films have in common, on the other hand, is a willingness not only to delve into the texture of the senior experience but to upend conventional notions of older age. "Hollywood used to treat older people as dead ends — at best they sat in a chair and provided wisdom to a younger generation," said Bill Newcott, the entertainment editor at AARP The Magazine and founder of its Movies for Grownups awards program. "There's a much more well-rounded vision of older people now."

Both "Red" and "Expendables," for instance, feature characters at a crossroads who have little doubt about which way they'll go. Not content to accept a societally encouraged retirement, they jump back into the game (as black-ops agents and mercenaries, respectively), guns still blazing.

Leigh's movie, meanwhile, shows that golden years can take on many hues. Tom and Gerri (Broadbent and Sheen) indulge the daily Mary Berry (Lesley Manville), who's trying, un­
Movies

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successfully, to stave off a solitary old age — even as the couple themselves have created a contained existence rarely seen with characters in their ‘60s or ‘70s. “The film is about time passing and age and how we look at our lives,” Leigh said. “This is an old man’s film. Or an older man’s film, if you want to be more charitable about it.”

It’s unlikely that Hollywood is forking its recent preoccupation with teens and twentysomethings: indeed, many of these older-skewing movies were made outside or on the fringes of the studio system. But the movie business is, if nothing else, adept at recognizing a niche. And older audiences represent a very promising one.

With the first wave of baby boomers set to hit 65 in this new year, seniors are the fastest-growing segment of the U.S. population. And the elderly are spending their newfound free time going to movie theaters, an experience many grew up with but didn’t have much time for until recently. According to the Motion Picture Assn. of America, men and women over 50 constitute 20 percent of the “frequent moviego­ing” population — the same percentage as Americans ages 25 to 39.

Hollywood veterans also note a phenomenon at the other end of the age spectrum. Though Gen-Y-ers and millennials are more susceptible to of-fering their take on his life after learning a rival has written a malicious biography about him. The movie eschews a third-person point of view and tells its story intimately from Panofsky’s perspective in a way that seeks to understand old age from the inside.

Not that movies made for older people always have to feature char­acters of that age, of course. The inspirational Chinese-American drama “Mao’s Last Dancer” became a hit this past fall among filmgoers over 50 by tapping into a vein of redemption and second chances. “It’s the kind of movie that if older audience members like, they’ll tell all their friends, who will then tell all of their friends,” said Michael McClellan, the head buyer for the specialty Landmark Theatres.

And sometimes, the converse has happened, as older-skewing movies and actors have become popular precisely because of younger audiences. That certainly explains the Betty White phenomenon, in which the octogenarian actress has been embraced with a kind of hipster irony. And at it least partly accounts for the success of movies such as “The Ex­pendables,” which have performed nearly as well with younger audi­ences as with older ones.

Younger people now view the elderly differently from how previous generations did, experts say. One re­sult: Movies capable of appealing to people across the age spectrum.

The demographics and attitudes of the nation.” Newcott said, “are go­ing to yield more movies aimed at an older demographic that also appeal to a younger audience.”

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Frida Ghitis writes about global affairs for The Miami Herald.

When President Obama performed his "Comeback Kid" act last year, pushing through Congress a number of important bills, observers marveled at the sudden transformation. The president had morphed from the hapless, fence-sitting midterm schemer lacking and surprised everyone by becoming a new and daunting politician.

But watching the Obama who came before the cameras on the day of the Tucson massacre, it seems the nation has suffered a great loss with the president's transformation.

Where did the inspiring orator with the soaring prose go?

Where is the Obama who could summon the nation and call its people to greatness?

Where is the man who, campaigning in the United States, captured the imagination of the world, making them believe in America again?

With the American people trying to make sense of the attack that left a congresswoman fighting for her life and half a dozen people dead, including a federal judge and a 9-year-old girl, it was precisely the moment for the country's leader to offer words of wisdom, comfort and direction. A moment to put the people's feelings into words, the way Bill Clinton, Ronald Reagan and even George W. Bush managed to do in times of crisis.

Instead, Obama promised that "we want everyone's taxes raised. America has suffered a great loss with the president's transformation."

I support the fee increases. A public university, in its wisdom, has supported overly generous programs on the back of taxpayers, to an extraordinarily inexpensive, especially given the generosity. We've cut as far as we can into the al tax rates of any developed nation in the WORLD. I support the fee increases. A public university, in its wisdom, has supported overly generous programs on the back of taxpayers, to an extraordinarily inexpensive, especially given the generosity. We've cut as far as we can into the al tax rates of any developed nation. I support the fee increases. A public university, in its wisdom, has supported overly generous programs on the back of taxpayers, to an extraordinarily inexpensive, especially given the generosity.

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Wrestling
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this season, falling to opponents by a combined 15 points in his losses. An upset win against a ranked opponent to open the meet could provide the Mustangs a boost.

The Mustangs do appear to have the upper hand in some rematches, including Ryan Smith’s matchup against LJ Helbig at 197-pounds. Smith racked up a seven-point win against Helbig in Reno, yet a victory by eight or more on Friday could add valuable team points to the Mustangs total.

The only other Mustang to face a Cowboy this season was Steven Vasquez, who opened his Reno Tournament of Champions with a 8-5 win over Dallas Hintz at 174-pounds.

The Mustangs will be heavy favorites at 133 and 141-pounds with Filip Vasquez, who opened his Reno Tournament of Champions with a 8-5 win over Dallas Hintz at 174-pounds.

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Tennis
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doubles. This season, doubles partners Lee and junior Amy Markhoft ranked No. 20 out of 1,500 teams in the nation. Bream said, which continues the tradition of Cal Poly having “extreme­ strongly” doubles.

“We just have so much potential and so much to learn that we can only go up from here,” Lee said.

Among the new recruits is Jennifer Cornea. She’s a freshman who has been playing tennis for 11 years. Cornea was on the Loara High School team in Anaheim, where she was on the varsity team and MVP all four years.

“High school was completely different ... it wasn’t a team thing, it was more individual,” Cornea said. “It’s a lot more fun here.”

She considers becoming a Mustang one of the best choices she’s ever made.

One of the deciding factors was Bream.

“He knows the player inside and out, and he knows exactly what to tell them,” Cornea said. “If we need him, he’s there for us. He’s like a sec­ ond dad.”

Cornea looks up to the older girls on the team, following their example and dedication for the team.

“It pushes me more because they’ve been on the team so long and they have so much more experience than I do,” she said.

Bream coaches the girls not only in tennis, but in time management.

He admits that the team is in a “tough academic environment” and has to work with one of toughest schedules in the nation. Bream wants them to not neglect academics. They will play nearly every weekend dur­ing the season, as well as hold prac­tices during the week.

“We want to excel on the tennis court and the classroom,” he said.

Men’s basketball hosts Fullerton, UC Irvine

If there is one thing that has been consistent with the Cal Poly men's basketball team (6-8, 2-1 Big West) all year, it's the team's defense. That defensive pres­ sure will be tested this weekend when the Mustangs host Cal State Fullerton and UC Irvine in Mott Gym. UC Irvine is the top-ranked scoring team in the Big West and Cal State Fullerton isn't too far behind. The Titans, behind Joe "Vaughn" Johnson and Devon Peltier, are the third-best scoring team in the conference with an average of 71 points per game. However, if any team looks equipped to stop them, it is the Mustangs, who are allowing their opponents to shoot 40 percent from the floor, the best in the Big West.

THIS WEEK IN CAL POLY ATHLETICS

THURSDAY
7:00 P.M.*

CAL POLY vs.
Basketball
Fullerton

FRIDAY
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CAL POLY vs.
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SATURDAY
7:00 P.M.

CAL POLY vs.
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UC Irvine

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WE ARE THE MUSTANGS
Andre Dome returns to the courts

The Cal Poly men's tennis team is gearing up for another season, and the Mustangs can expect to arguably its best players on the court this year.

Andre Dome is expected to return to the court after a series of injuries and a major hip surgery that took him out of the game last year.

Dome graduated from Arroyo Grande High School and was considered a top-10 recruit in the nation. He was the Mustangs' No. 1 singles player his freshman year when he developed chronic hip pain.

After three months of pain, Dome consulted a doctor, who told him it was a strained groin. Dome continued to train while doing exercises to strengthen his groin.

"That week my hip was hurting so bad I could barely walk," Dome said. "I knew there was something wrong." Dome said his next step was to get a second opinion. A specialist in San Francisco said his pain was a result of his hip joint grinding against the bone.

"His February, he had hip surgery to fix the problem. The surgery meant Dome had to spend the 2010 season on the bench. It was three months after the surgery before he started playing tennis again, starting with just one to two hours a week.

Head coach Justin McGrath said he is pleased to see Dome playing again because, for a time, it was doubtful that he would return.

"He could have lost it," McGrath said. "And he's just hung in there.

Dome said he "hung in there" by recognizing the importance of exercise and using several different workout strategies to stay fit while he was recovering. Before he could run or put much stress on his hip, he frequented the gym to work on his upper body strength.

"I was trying to keep my body as fit as I could," Dome said.

He started swimming and biking, and adjusted his diet because he couldn't be as active, becoming a vegetarian for about 10 weeks.

Dome said his biggest recovery strategy was to face everyday one at a time, instead of looking to the distant future.

"Every morning I was just like, 'What can I do that day to get better?"' Dome said.

Taking 12 units last spring quarter, Dome found he had more free time on his hands than he was used to. He used his downtime to write out what he needed to work on to improve his tennis game.

"From my standpoint ... I've become a better player," Dome said.

Dome, who has been playing tennis since he picked up a racket at the age of 5, said becoming an even better player is going to take time. "With one of their star players back, the team has set their sights on winning the Big West Conference this season.

Last year the Mustangs felt Dome's absence with a rough start to their season, losing their first seven matches. The Mustangs rallied, though, making it to the Big West finals but then lost to UC Irvine.

McGrath said this year is a fresh start with a brand new group of players.

Freshman Marco Comuzio said the team dynamic is looking strong this year.

"Obviously with Andre back from injury it boosts the lineup," Comuzio said. "Everyone on the team hits a good ball."

This year, the team hopes to win their conference, though their number one goal, McGrath said, is to get into the NCAA rankings.

"We've got a tough schedule but we're excited about playing it," McGrath said. "We've got to be even-keeled, take one match at a time."

Dome said the team has a good dynamic heading into the 2011 season. As for Dome's performance on the courts, McGrath holds no specific expectations — he's just glad to see Dome playing again.

"For me, I'm just happy that he's happy," McGrath said. "I just want to have him have fun; I know he's going to get better."

Before his injury, Dome took tennis somewhat for granted. Now, he said, his surgery and recovery have made him more appreciative of the sport. Not knowing whether he would return to tennis competitively means he enjoys it more now.

"I'm very fortunate that I can be out on the court," Dome said.

Cal Poly men's tennis player Andre Dome was an All-American in 2007 and 2008 as a high school star in Arroyo Grande.

Women's tennis has eyes deadset on improvement

Katalyn Sweigart

The Cal Poly women's tennis team is looking forward to another season and the Mustangs can expect to see a strong lineup this year.

"We have a tough schedule and we're excited about playing it," McGrath said. "We've got a tough schedule but we're excited about playing it."

Dome said he's happy. "I'm just happy that I can be out on the court," Dome said.

Last year our team had a lot of experience, a lot of maturity," McGrath said. "So they set a high and positive standard for our new incoming players.

Last season, Matzeiuuer and Blackett received NCAA Individual Championships. He has yet to be pinned in the top-20 in the nation.

"They have a lot of ability," head coach Hugh Bream said. "It's now and very enthusiastic... he's motivated to learn and improve and continue to build on the tradition."

The 2011 season starts with the California Winter Invitational at California from Jan. 14 to Jan. 16, Cal Poly currently sits at No. 65 on the Intercollegiate Tennis Association (ITA) Women's National Team Rankings released on Jan. 4 — Cal Poly was No. 63 at the end of last season.

"Stay-four teams go to nationals and it's our goal to improve where we are now," Bream said.

The premier matchup comes at 165-pounds between No. 17 Ryan DeRoches of Cal Poly and No. 6 Shane Oolette of Wyoming. DeRoches currently owns a 24-4 record. Currently he is four wins shy of the season record he set last year.

Co-head coach Mark Perry said DeRoches' strong work ethic and leadership abilities on and off the mat make him deserving of top titles and wins.

"Ryan is the leader of this program, he is the leader of this team from a work ethic standpoint and from a lifestyle standpoint," Perry said. "Ryan does everything right, he deserves to win, he deserves to be a national champion, he deserves to be an All-American."

The match takes on even more importance because it is the only battle between two wrestlers ranked in the top-20 in the nation.

"And if it all comes down to he needs to step up," Perry said. "With the preparation he puts in, it should be fun when he steps on the mat."

A hotly contested rematch will also take place at 125-pounds when Brandon Rocha takes on No. 20 Tyler Cox for the second time this season. Rocha, who is 10-5 on the season, fell to Cox in a narrow 11-10 decision in the Reno Tournament of Champions. He has yet to be pinned.

"I'm just trying to share what I learned," Matzeiuuer said. "They are still my friends; I'm just giving the best that I possibly can. The girls have so much potential."

"We have a lot of experience," McGrath said. "Not knowing whether he would return to tennis competitively means he enjoys it more now.

"I'm very fortunate that I can be out on the court," Dome said.

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"We're very fortunate that I can win," Dome said. "So they set a high and positive standard for our new incoming players.

Last season, Matzeiuuer and Blackett received first-team All-Big West honors for singles and as a team received the first All-Big West honors for doubles. The two also received a NCAA Individual Championships Tournament berth. Matzeiuuer left the team only to return as their assistant coach this year.

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