

President Warren Baker  
Remarks to the Cal Poly Academic Senate  
November 28, 2006

In opening remarks, Pres. Baker touched upon prospects for the 2007-08 State budget, campus enrollment plans and the Access to Excellence initiative.

Commenting on the 2007-08 budget, he noted that in November the California State University Board of Trustees approved a \$4.5 billion budget request to the State for fiscal year 2007-2008. This request recognizes the funding agreement under the Compact for Higher Education, which includes: a 4% increase in general funding; a 2.5% increase in enrollment for the CSU; and \$2.5M to fund additional 200 nursing students at the master level.

In addition to the funding elements agreed to in the governor's compact the trustees approved a request of an additional \$71.7M to support educational priorities of the Trustees, the Governor and the Legislature, which includes a \$65.2 million state General Fund revenue augmentation to avoid any increase in student fees in the 2007-2008 fiscal year and an additional one percent to address employee salary gaps.

With regard to enrollments, Pres. Baker noted that Cal Poly has been asked to plan for an enrollment increase of just two percent for next year. Acknowledging that the campus is approaching its physical capacity limits, he noted that greater emphasis is to be placed on summer enrollment growth, with a goal of ultimately achieving summer enrollments equal to 25 percent of CYFTES. Growth in summer enrollments is important for the campus' ability to continue to make the case for additional facilities, including the very important science center.

Pres. Baker responded to several questions and comments about campus enrollments. He explained that if Cal Poly grows at less than the overall System target of 2.5 percent next year, it will not be obligated to pay money back to the System but will receive proportionately less in enrollment growth funding. He acknowledged suggestions from senators regarding possible strategies to increase summer enrollments, including: surveying students about their enrollment plans; discounting campus fees during the summer; and engaging in a concerted publicity campaign to influence student course taking habits.

Pres. Baker next turned to discussion of the CSU Access to Excellence planning initiative. He noted that senate chair, Bruno Giberti and provost Bill Durgin are working to develop a campus process that will also provide an opportunity for us to review the University strategic plan and make revisions to it. He emphasized that this is best done starting in the college communities and building up to an overall university conversation. Through this effort we will assess whether our current strategic and master plans are sufficient for us to achieve all that we need to accomplish in terms of both access and excellence, paying special attention to what "excellence" means in the Cal Poly context. As we engage in this planning review we will also consider the kinds of resources required to enhance teaching and learning, including the things that help or hinder faculty in their ongoing professional growth and development. The results of the campus Access to Excellence process will not only help us in updating our campus strategic plan. It will also help us in developing plans for a new comprehensive fundraising campaign.

In further discussion, Manzar Faroohar expressed concern that class sizes have grown over the years and that the number of tenure track faculty has declined since 1990. She urged that Cal Poly hire more tenure track faculty. Pres. Baker agreed this would be beneficial but commented that the campus should also explore ways to do things better, to relieve faculty work load by reviewing how we organize teaching and learning. We should not focus simply on metrics like class size and the number of faculty.

Provost Bill Durgin observed that the physical plant in its present configuration limits us in certain ways. As we construct new building and renovate existing buildings we will work to create more flexibility and we will continue to explore how technology may be used to support teaching and learning.

In his concluding remarks, Pres. Baker noted that the CSU suffers from a significant deficit in funding in relation to demonstrated needs and the Access to Excellence process will help us to uncover needs that require funding support. Increasing tenure track faculty, consistent with the intent of ACR, could be a logical outcome of the Access to Excellence discussions. Supporting faculty development is also certainly an element of excellence as is exploring how learning resources can be used independently by students under the guidance of faculty and exploring what role technology might play in delivering these learning resources.