

STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY REPORT

by
President Bob H. Suzuki

Introductory Remarks

Thank you, Jim, and good morning everybody. I want to join Dr. Burke in welcoming all of you to Fall Conference 2002. And I want to extend a special welcome to those who have joined Cal Poly Pomona since last year's Fall Conference. Welcome to the Cal Poly Pomona family!

On behalf of all of us, I would first like to thank Dr. Burke, our Dean of the Collins School of Hospitality Management, for his work as chair of this year's Fall Conference committee and the other members of his committee for another outstanding effort. Would all members of the committee please stand so we can recognize you?

Also, we have another wonderful breakfast this year, thanks to the great work of our campus food service staff. Let's all turn around and give them a big hand!

Before I go into my State of the University report, let me take a few moments on a solemn note. Over the past week, people throughout the nation have commemorated the anniversary of September 11, 2001 in various ways. Because this is our first opportunity to come together as a family since September 11th, I would like to ask all of you to stand and join me at this time in a moment of silence as we pay tribute to those who lost their lives just over a year ago... Thank you very much.

As many of you know, in the aftermath of September 11th, Cal Poly Pomona reaffirmed its commitment to creating a working, learning and social environment that is free from violence, discrimination and hostility through its strong policies against such behavior. We will continue to enforce these policies to maintain a campus climate of civility and respect, and I urge all of you to support and contribute to these efforts.

State of the University

Let me begin my State of the University report by updating you on a number of recent developments on campus.

For the past 18 months, I have probably attended more grand openings of new facilities than most presidents do in a career. And we're not through yet! On October 1, we will open BioTrek, a magnificent new educational laboratory that features learning centers in aquatic biology, ethnobotany and a live rainforest. As we complete a number of remaining projects, such as the new student housing project and the University Union expansion which will be completed within the next 18 months, we will have built nearly \$200 million in new facilities since 1998. And over the next 6-8 years, we are projecting more than \$300 million in additional construction, including the \$150 million Technology Park, which we are calling "Innovation Village." A number of these projects will be funded partially or fully by gifts and donations from the private sector, which reached a record high of \$13.4 million during the past year.

I also want to mention an important project that was completed over a decade ago, the Lyle Center for Regenerative Studies. As environmental issues loom ever larger in the world, the center's work is becoming more and more significant. So I hope many of you will consider becoming involved with the center.

Today, we are educating more students than ever before, with our enrollments increasing by about a thousand students every year. Our fall headcount is just under 20,000. And with the onset of Tidal Wave II, we are becoming increasingly selective in the quality of students we admit; in fact, the mean SAT score of our first-time freshmen has been steadily rising over the past five years and is now higher than that of any CSU campus in the L.A. basin and even higher than that of San Diego State.

The efforts of our faculty and staff have resulted in prestigious academic programs, new and expanded state-of-the-art facilities, and well-prepared graduates. Your efforts have created a unique educational environment that has become widely known and greatly admired, and students are increasingly identifying Cal Poly Pomona as their campus of first choice.

Incidentally, I should mention that in a recent academic survey, our Collins School was ranked the second best school of hospitality management in the country. Dean Burke, congratulations to you and your faculty and staff for this great accomplishment!

By the way, this survey was based on quantitative data and other information submitted by the participating institutions, and not on subjective judgments about reputation. I have little doubt that many of our other academic programs would be ranked among the top in the country based on similar surveys.

All of these accomplishments are the result of the hard work that you, our faculty and staff, have done. As a consequence, you are transforming the lives of thousands of our students. So, all of you have good reason to be proud of what you have accomplished here at Cal Poly Pomona.

As I mentioned in my "Dear Colleague" letter, there is a very important bond measure, Proposition 47, on the November ballot. I am not going to repeat the information I have provided in my letter, but please inform yourself about this measure before voting because it has huge consequences for Cal Poly Pomona. We will also be providing the campus community with more information on this issue in the next several weeks.

As the numbers of students in K-12 and higher education continues to increase dramatically, California faces monumental challenges in funding all levels of education. Each of us has a responsibility to understand those challenges so we can make decisions in the best interest of our state.

I also indicated in my letter that the state is facing a fiscal crisis of major proportions with an estimated shortfall in tax revenues of around \$25 billion. While the Legislature and Governor have come to a budget agreement that does not subject higher education to any major cuts, the budget bill does give the Governor the authority to make additional cuts of up to \$750 million in the coming months.

Moreover, as I mentioned in my letter, much larger cuts may be made in the 2003/2004 fiscal year. Nonetheless, I am confident we will come through the next two years in far better shape than during the recession of the early 1990s because of better planning and the greater efficiency of our operations. We will keep you well informed of any developments in the coming months, and ask for your continued cooperation and support as we try to minimize the impact of this fiscal crisis.

Priorities for the Coming Year

For the past two years at Fall Conference, I have identified the major priorities on which to focus our efforts and resources for the coming year. As my commitment to that process and my

accountability to you, I provided all of you an update last week in my “Dear Colleague” letter of the progress we made in pursuing the seven priorities identified last year. I am proud of what all of us were able to accomplish together.

This year, I have identified five major priorities which are again based on the major goals established by the campus community through the strategic planning and shared governance process. Given the budget crisis facing California for at least the next two years, the identification of these priorities were partially based on whether they would enable us to manage our resources more effectively and efficiently. The University Budget Advisory Committee has recommended funding for a number of these priorities. However, unlike past years, we can provide very little additional funding beyond what the committee has recommended and will be asking the divisions to reallocate their existing resources for those priorities requiring significant additional funding.

The five priorities I have identified for the coming year are the following:

Priority No. 1: Enrollment Management. Given the rapid growth in our enrollment and the budget crunch we are facing, it is imperative that we manage our enrollments more stringently and carefully. Over the next two years, we cannot afford to be over-enrolled because we will not receive additional funding for exceeding our enrollment targets. Improved enrollment management will also enable us to raise the quality of the students we admit, allowing us to reduce the need for remedial education and increase retention and graduation rates. And I believe we can do this without reducing the diversity of our student population. Efforts to improve enrollment management are already under way through the leadership of Drs. Jane Ollenburger, Roger Morehouse, and Tomas Morales, who have formed the Enrollment Advisory Council consisting of representatives from all campus constituencies. This council will come together for the first time this week to begin addressing all aspects of enrollment management.

A particularly important aspect of enrollment management is good advising of students. All the research shows that good advisement increases retention and graduation rates and leaves a lasting, positive impact on students. A number of workshops on advising are scheduled for the coming year, and I encourage you to take advantage of them.

Priority No. 2. Planning. Dr. Ollenburger will continue the planning process she initiated last year in consultation with faculty, staff and students across the university. In reviewing the university’s strategic plan and priorities we have been pursuing over the past two years, I have been impressed with the progress we’ve made and the extent to which we are achieving our goals. However, as many of you know, the WASC re-accreditation report strongly recommended that the campus develop a vision which is more widely shared by the campus community.

In thinking about this, I was struck by a comment made by a speaker at a conference I attended this past summer. He made the point that an effective vision statement should have an emotional impact on people, exciting them, and capturing their imagination; thereby, inciting them to action. He gave examples of such statements:

- Martin Luther King: “I have a dream.”
- John F. Kennedy: “Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country.”

What would be a comparable statement for Cal Poly Pomona? One possibility would be: “We transform student lives.” This statement certainly captures very succinctly the most important impact all of you have on our students. In any event, I am confident we can arrive at

an appropriate vision statement that most of the campus community can not only buy into, but also have some passion about.

Priority No. 3: Delivering and Maintaining the Quality of Our Instructional Program. Even and especially during this time of austere budgets, we must deliver and maintain the quality of our instructional program. In order to ensure this, we will fully support the University Budget Advisory Committee's recommendation that our number one priority should be to offer all the classes required by our students, work with faculty to use instructional technology strategically to maintain and improve the quality of our academic program in a tight budget environment, and align the offering of classes with our enrollment management efforts.

Priority No. 4: Diversity and Educational Equity. As many of you know, I have had a deep commitment to diversity and educational equity. This commitment is based on my firm belief that no institution, especially in California, can achieve excellence without diversifying its faculty, staff, and student body, as well as its academic programs.

Through the leadership of Dr. Vinita Dhingra, an advisory committee has developed a draft Diversity Plan during the past year. This draft plan will be presented to the campus community for review and comments in the coming months. We expect to have this plan finalized and implemented sometime during the course of this year so that we can bring more coherence to our diversity and educational equity efforts, as well as to increase collaboration on these efforts to increase their impact.

Please visit the display booths for the Office of Diversity and WASC to obtain more information.

Priority No. 5: PeopleSoft. We will begin the development of the PeopleSoft Student System this year with the expectation of completing it during the Fall of 2004. By moving forward now, we can save the money we would have to spend to upgrade our existing Banner system, and reap the benefits of the new system faster. This new system will provide much more efficient and convenient web-based student services, including web registration, and an improved information base for making better decisions about courses and enrollment. We are asking the campus community to support and cooperate with this effort in order to improve the way we serve and work with students and to enable all of us to work smarter, not just harder.

As a precursor to these efforts, we are committed to completing the DARS Degree Audit System in the coming year. This system will help make advising of students more efficient, timely, and easier.

Finally, given the tight budget environment, I am pleased that the University Budget Advisory Committee has found a way to continue funding for faculty travel and development and for staff development, and am delighted to accept their recommendation to do so. Specifically, as recommended by the University Budget Advisory Committee, we will be providing \$120,000 for faculty travel, \$100,000 for faculty development, and \$75,000 for staff development. I believe it is important to provide funding for these purposes because the most valuable resource we have are the faculty and staff on this campus, and we must invest in their professional development. However, we must all be prudent in how we expend these funds because they may not be available next year depending on how severe the budget crunch becomes.

Concluding Remarks

Agnes and I are beginning our 12th year at Cal Poly Pomona. And I have never been more optimistic and enthusiastic about the university's future. However, after considering the matter

for several months and with considerable ambivalence, Agnes and I have decided that this coming year will be my last as president. I have informed Chancellor Reed that I will be retiring from the presidency in July, 2003, and have asked that he and the Board of Trustees begin a search for my successor.

It was a difficult decision for us because so much progress is being made by the campus, and we would love to continue our involvement with the future development of this great university. But Agnes and I have decided that there is never a good time to leave the presidency of a campus as dynamic as Cal Poly Pomona. There will always be new initiatives and challenges and more to do.

For the past 11 years, the university has been practically our entire life. We have been highly gratified by the progress made and the impact the university has had on the lives of thousands of students and on the surrounding communities. However, we are not getting any younger and would like to spend more time with our family, especially our grandchildren, and enjoy other aspects of life while we have the energy and our health.

While there have been many challenges during our time here, we have made many friends, and truly feel that Cal Poly Pomona is our second family. Agnes and I would like to thank all of you for all that you do to make Cal Poly Pomona such a special place, and for making our years here so gratifying and rewarding. I especially want to thank those with whom I have worked most closely: the incredibly competent staff in my office and our outstanding leadership team: the vice presidents, the deans, the associate vice presidents, department chairs and directors, and all the other campus administrators. And last but certainly not least, I want to thank our outstanding faculty and staff – you are the heart and soul of this university, and your efforts have made Cal Poly Pomona one of the truly distinctive and preeminent institutions of its kind in the nation.

I am confident that Cal Poly Pomona will rise to new heights of excellence in the years ahead. My confidence is based on the tremendous energy, initiative, enthusiasm and creativity I have seen in our faculty, staff and students and your willingness to take risks to pursue new and innovative ideas. You must all work to preserve that spirit of empowerment at Cal Poly Pomona because I believe it will be the key to the continued success of this outstanding university.

Let me conclude by saying that it has been a privilege and an honor to serve as your president. Let me also say that I still have another year as your president and won't simply be counting the weeks toward retirement. We still have a lot to accomplish, so let's work together to make this another very productive year!

Agnes and I want to wish all of you the very best in the years ahead and look forward to greeting you at the Manor House reception on Wednesday afternoon. Thank you all very, very much!