

Monday's Message – April 26, 2010

Good afternoon everyone... Here's hoping you had a great weekend.

In 1999, then Business Administration Dean Eduardo Ochoa led a special task force of faculty members from across campus, charged to develop a case for a new college facility. The remarkable student growth combined with the shortage of quality classroom and laboratory space made this bid essential for the long-term success of every program.

This Thursday, April 29, at 10 a.m. we will have a formal groundbreaking ceremony to celebrate the work of all the people who helped make that dream a reality. I hope you will be able to join us.

The new College of Business Administration complex, adjacent to the Rose Garden, will provide more than 70,000-square-feet within three buildings. The interior will feature two auditoriums, one of which will seat 200 people, as well as several rooms with tiered-seating. Adjustable workspaces will help facilitate group projects and team-building exercises. All classrooms will be wired to offer the latest technical advancements in teaching and research.

The \$30 million dollar project is predominately funded by the voter-approved California Proposition 1D – The Kindergarten-University Public Education Facilities Bond Act of 2006 – as well as donations from foundations and private donors.

When you begin a multimillion-dollar construction project at a university, people invariably are confused about the funding source – especially during sour economic times. Case in point: A couple of weeks ago, I was lunching at Maria's when a handful of students were wondering out loud how Cal Poly Pomona could afford to build the new College of Business Administration complex, considering the rise in student fees and the furloughs for faculty and staff.

I used that conversation to create an educational moment for them, one that is important for everyone to understand. The funding for this project comes directly from the revenue generated by Proposition 1D, the voter-approved bond. By law, we cannot use those monies for anything else. Not for instruction, compensation or offsetting student fees. The California voters approved this ballot initiative for the exclusive use of improving facilities at every level of public education. If we did not build the business building, the money would go to another construction project on a different campus. I hope that you can help share that message with your friends and colleagues across campus.

Speaking of communication, California's higher education community, including leadership from the Chancellor's Office and all 23 campus, is going to descend on Sacramento tomorrow, Tuesday, April 27. This special event will also include alumni and community leaders who are understandably upset by the lack of support from the state legislature. It will be another educational moment as we continue to advocate, not only for our students, but for the future of California.

Back on campus, another really good event is also on the horizon. This Sunday, May 2, we will host the 3rd annual Southern California Tasting & Auction. Guests will enjoy fine cuisine from some of Southern California's most popular restaurants. Entertainment includes campus musicians and a visit by the Arabian horse team. Live and silent auctions will give guests the chance to acquire some one-of-a-kind items.

Tickets are \$90 apiece, and admission is limited to those 21 or older. Proceeds benefit Cal Poly Pomona students through scholarships and academic opportunities. For more information, visit www.polytaste.com. Betty and I will be there – so come join us for the festivities.

For a number of years, Cal Poly Pomona faculty have sparked an interest in math and science for elementary school children through robotics. Under the tutelage of professors Jawa Mariappan in mechanical engineering and Cesar Larriva in education, young students learn the basics, form teams and program their robots to perform specific tasks.

Our long-term goal is to develop a network of schools that will give students the option to participate in robotics from elementary through high school. Participating students will emerge with hands-on experience and technical skills that can help them succeed in college. Psychology professor Jill Nemiro and her research assistants assess the program, intent on improving curriculum and helping students learn to work together.

If you haven't seen these kids in action, it is absolutely incredible. There are two robot rallies for regional elementary schools in the coming weeks. Tomorrow, Tuesday, April 27, the College of Engineering will host an event in the atrium of building 17. CEIS will host a second event on Tuesday, May 18 in the courtyard in front of building 5.

That's all I have for today. But before I go, I want to thank all of you for your well wishes on Megan's wedding—it was a very special week for our family. Like any proud parent, I thought you might like to see a photo of the bride and groom. Here's hoping you have a great week.

Michael Ortiz