Students' 34-ton project is dedicated

by Nancy Lewis
Editorial Assistant

It's one month short of two years since the idea was first formed to build a 48-foot pedestrian bridge connecting North Poly View Drive with the second floor of the Erhart Agriculture Building and to the Cal Poly students watched on Friday as their project culminated with one event—the cutting of a light-blue ribbon.

The dedication ceremony was held at 11:30 for the Erhart Agriculture Bridge Project, a senior project completed by four students who graduated last June: Paul Dooley, architecture; Ralph Tevisser, construction; and architectural engineering; and Joe Lapasinski, and Eric Dybevik, both construction.

A crowd of about 75 students, faculty, parents, and donors of the project gathered around the entrance to the bridge as the ceremony began, while several curious students walking by stopped to see the event.

“I can't say enough about the university that helped us out,” said Dooley. “... carpenters, painters, welders, the groundskeepers. They gave us every ounce of help they could.” He added, laughing, “at first they seemed skeptical.”

“I don't think there's a sample on campus that exemplifies our learn-by-doing philosophy more than this 34-ton model,” President Warren Baker told the crew. He praised all who helped with the project. “From beginning to end, this is a student project,” he said.

Cal Poly President Warren Baker works the scissors to cut the ribbon on the Erhart Agriculture Project.

Also on hand to speak was George Hasslein, dean of the school of architecture. The most satisfying part of the project, said Hasslein, gesturing the expanse of the bridge, will be “watching students walk from here to here.”

He praised the students for the entire project, especially the difficult part of getting enough funding for the successful completion of the bridge.

Nick Watry, a consulting engineer and a 1964 Cal Poly graduate, compared the project to a Ph.D. or a master's thesis. “I commissioned you to come back to look what you've done,” he said, addressing the bridge crew. He also encouraged the university to keep senior projects “alive.”

Watry was the engineer who first approved the plans for the bridge, even drawing up some plans of his own. He was also one of the several $1,000 donors for the project.

Funds and materials for the bridge were supplied from throughout the state, and several of the companies were on hand to receive certificates of appreciation—the Central Coast Geoscience Inc., Kaiser Rock and Sand Co., San Luis Ready Mix, Watry Engineering Inc., the ASI Campus Improvement Fund and the Construction Industry Advancement Fund through the Associate General Contractors of California.

During the ceremony, Bob Dorn, representative for the Associate General Contractors of California, presented a $7,000 check to Baker. The four students who designed the bridge were told by the association that if the project was worthwhile, funds not provided by the donors to meet the cost, would be donated by them.

Please see page 2
Donations paid for bridge

The bridge crew also received certificates of appreciation. The crew of 17 students worked for two quarters at two units a quarter in the bridge construction last Winter and Spring quarters.

A luncheon was held afterward at the Alumni House for several university members, donors of the project and the four graduates.

Total cost of the bridge project was about $20,000 all of it donated, according to Dooley. If a professional contractor had built the project, Dooley estimated it would have been in the range of $50,000.

A 7 by 20 inch plaque listing names of the four graduates, the 18 major donors, and the bridge crew, will be placed near the bridge soon.

The bridge, which was opened during finals week last Spring quarter, was finally finished over the summer when Dooley built the bench in front of the bridge. The welding department also helped him and Teyssier construct a canopy over the entrance of the building.