Dear College of Science & Mathematics New Student,

I am so glad that you will be attending Cal Poly and look forward to welcoming you this fall. You can be proud of yourself. You are entering one of the nation’s most selective public universities, one that has been recognized as the best, largely undergraduate, public institution in the west by U.S. News and World Report for more than 20 consecutive years. We at Cal Poly care deeply about your growth and success, both personal and intellectual. **We want you to be a Cal Poly graduate.**

I hope you challenge yourself to obtain your Cal Poly degree in four years. To meet this goal, you need to take an average of 15 units per quarter of the requirements stated in the catalog. This is a reasonable expectation. However, if you are significantly employed to pay for school expenses or have a time-consuming co-curricular or extra-curricular activity that is important to you, it is reasonable to take more than four years so that you can be successful and truly achieve your potential.

Your success depends on your immediate academic adjustment to college. In high school, you spent 35 hours per week in class and about five hours on homework. In college, you will spend the majority of your time learning outside of class. You will be in class 15-20 hours a week, and we recommend that you study 25-35 hours a week. Your classes and outside studying will total 40-50 hours per week, the equivalent of a full time job. If you manage your time well, including weekends, there is plenty of time for other activities. **There is nothing more important that I can tell you than to study 25-35 hours per week and to study to truly learn and understand. I urge you to take this advice very seriously.** If you are a community college transfer, remember, you will be in a much more competitive environment and taking largely upper division courses.

You will notice that not everyone will commit to quality studying. Don’t be distracted by those who don’t. They are not a large group even though sometimes, because of the visibility of their lifestyles and risky behaviors, they may seem to be. Making a commitment to your education will ensure your graduation and provide you future choices that you may not be able to imagine now.

Attending college is a distinct privilege that you should pursue responsibly and thoughtfully. If you do, you will be successful. However, every year, some members of the freshman class engage in behavior that leads to academic probation or disqualification. You can help yourself succeed by embracing behaviors that will help you attain your intellectual and personal potential, such as establishing healthy eating, sleeping and exercising habits; attending classes regularly, and spending adequate time studying.

I have enclosed some materials to help you plan for academic success. I hope you will read them now because it is important to arrive on campus focused and ready to go on the first day of classes.

Cal Poly is a special university with an excellent reputation, a tradition of academic excellence, and an impressive record of student success. You are now a part of the Cal Poly community and have a responsibility to yourself and the university to contribute to and enhance this tradition. We will support you in any way we can. We want you to be a proud graduate of Cal Poly four years from now.

Sincerely,

Philip S. Bailey, Dean  
College of Science and Mathematics