



Walter Mizuno
Mechanical
Engineering

School of Engineering

For Walter Mizuno, engineering has always been and remains a family affair.

"Engineering was something I wanted to do from the third grade," the mechanical engineering lecturer recalls. "I have several uncles who are engineers. My dad encouraged me in that direction."

"The choice of mechanical engineering came later, while I was at Reedley Community College. I had fun with mechanical engineering as a subject matter. Basically, I was interested in anything to do with machines. Trains, cars, motorcycles, planes. I wanted to really understand how internal combustion engines operate."

Today, there is much more to Walt Mizuno's field than cars and motorcycles. Nearing his tenth year with California State University, Fresno, he now sees the role of a mechanical engineer as sort of a

jack-of-all-trades problem-solver.

"The mechanical engineer will try to find the solution to a problem in which both his creative and scientific knowledge are called upon. It might involve mathematics, physics. It may be chemistry-related. The problem may be as simple as making a washing machine work, to something as complex as putting an astronaut on the moon."

"We are taking technology and humanizing it. The key to our success as a nation is taking technology and applying it for the benefit of the human race."

While he has grown as a professional from his initial interests in the field of mechanical engineering, Mizuno believes he has made important personal advances as an educator. He currently teaches classes in fluid mechanics, thermodynamics, instrumentation and fluid systems.

"I've matured a lot as a teacher," he offers in self-analysis. "I'm more critical of how I teach. Some days you may be uncertain of whether you accomplished anything. Toward the end of the semester, you realize the students can handle the problems and they have more information than they started with. That is satisfying."

Mizuno points to his relative youthfulness as a natural "in" with his students. That is not to say his expectations as an instructor are lessened, however. He requires that his students carry much of the burden for their education.

"It wasn't so long ago

that I went through what they are going through," the University of California, Berkeley graduate explains. "Plus, I like to have fun with the classes."

"I want students not to take what I say at face value, but to prove to themselves that what I am teaching is true. I let the students make the bulk of the learning decisions. They make mistakes, but they learn from those mistakes."

"If the students enjoy their work, they become more enthusiastic about what they are learning. I try to illustrate what I am teaching them by providing applications to some of the things they are studying."

Mizuno sees the CSUF environment as an excellent educational opportunity for those students who make the decision to study here. CSUF, in his opinion, is an undiscovered gem.

"Fresno's image has been very misrepresented," he explains. "It is not Los Angeles or San Francisco. It is its own unique place. I have students from Los Angeles that tell me they won't tell people back home about Fresno, because they want to keep it this way. They want to keep the crowds out."

"We have a broad-based faculty from varying backgrounds. We can offer students expertise in many different fields and one-to-one relationships with their instructors. You don't get lost in the system here. I think everyone feels they can get the help they need."

"At CSU, Fresno, if a student really wants to pursue something, we can offer them the opportunity to go after it."