

much rather deal with people who are questioning *how* we allocate funds than have to argue whether or not they can even have the information. The difficult job is making sure all of the different constituencies have ready access to that information. But even when you strive to be open and to contact everyone who may be affected by an expenditure or an allocation, you may inadvertently overlook someone who should have been consulted. Of course, it is equally challenging to try to *determine* the exact fiscal picture when you have eight deans and several vice presidents all spending money!

So you feel comfortable with the “open door” policy.

Absolutely. I don't think that I could work for someone whose style was to be secretive. There would be conflict. President Haak demonstrates strong leadership in the way that he has organized his administration. When he took office in 1980, he wanted the whole financial part of the university to be directly under his office in order to remove any conflict of resources. In other words, the vice president for academic affairs would not have to compete for resources with the vice president for administration and university relations or the dean of student affairs. Instead the president would determine how to control the allocation of funds. I believe this approach increases the faculty's confidence in how money is being spent. On campuses where the president is separated from the finance office, the faculty may not be totally sure who is making the decisions, or why decisions are being made, or whether their president has any impact on how the money is being spent. That element of uncertainty is not a force at work on our campus, because President Haak is involved from the start.

Does it require refined communication skills when you are dealing with people about financial matters?

I think the key to successful communication is treating people with respect. Our policy is never to answer an inquiry with a “yes” or “no.” Instead, we try to find out exactly what the person wants to accomplish and then we look for ways to help them do it. Sometimes that approach leads you into finding solutions for problems that may not be totally in your area of responsibility. A lot of my time is spent on university-wide issues that actually have little to do with finance. If I have a skill, it is probably an ability to work through bureaucracies. (And I'm bothered about how I'm going to explain to my granddaughter that her grandfather's main attribute is working through a bureaucracy.)

What do you feel today as you view the campus?

I have a sense that the university's faculty and staff are pulling together and moving on a progressive course that is without a lot of conflict. And I believe this constructive atmosphere reflects President Haak's leadership. I've observed several administrations during the past 30 years, and since his arrival, President Haak has initiated some dramatic and positive changes. Today there is a cooperative spirit, both on campus and in the community. It is particularly rewarding to find that the university and the community are integrated so well. I think CSU, Fresno's future looks very promising.