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California Polytechnic State University

Contact: Amy Hewes
College of Engineering
805-756-6402
ahewes@calpoly.edu

Cal Poly College of Engineering Announces Faculty Awards and Outstanding Staff

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Cal Poly’s College of Engineering recently announced the recipients of industry-sponsored faculty awards and an endowed professorship, plus 2008 Outstanding Staff Awards.

Roya Javadpour of San Luis Obispo won the Northrop Grumman Excellence in Teaching Award. Chris Clark of San Luis Obispo won the Northrop Grumman Excellence in Research and Development Award, and William Murray of Grover Beach won the Raytheon Excellence in Teaching and Applied Research Award. In addition, Rob McDonald of Atascadero received the two-year Lockheed Martin Endowed Professorship award. The college’s 2008 Outstanding Staff Awards were given to Kay Kibbe and Kim Marsalek.

Javadpour, an associate professor in industrial engineering, is well known for PolyHouse, an annual home improvement project for local economically disadvantaged families who have one or more members challenged by a physical disability. She initially pursued this innovative approach to teaching project management skills in 2004 as part of her graduate level industrial engineering course.

The service learning course has been successfully offered to engineering students every spring since then, with each year’s project being more complex. This year, Javadpour’s student project managers raised over \$100,000 from community donors. In recognition of this work, Javadpour received the President’s Service Award and was named one of the San Luis Obispo Tribune’s “Top 20 Under 40.” Javadpour earned two masters and her Ph.D. from Louisiana State University.

Computer science and computer engineering assistant professor Christopher Clark, who joined Cal Poly in 2007, has established an ongoing record of interaction with government and private industry. An expert in autonomous mobile robots including the cutting-edge research area of localization and mapping, Clark is currently working with VideoRay, a leading producer of remotely operated vehicles, to enable their underwater robots with autonomous capabilities. VideoRay has sponsored Clark’s capstone design team and provided funding for the students to develop embedded autonomous control of these underwater vehicles. He has also received a grant from Lockheed Martin to build a Mars sandbox in which multiple scaled down versions of mobile robots will be operated. Clark holds a Ph.D. from Stanford University.

Professor William Murray joined Cal Poly’s Mechanical Engineering Department in 1999 and has been a leader in updating the mechatronics concentration to reflect more current technology. By revamping the senior level mechatronics course and establishing a new junior level course, Murray has promoted and enhanced student learning of core principals before they advance to the design stage of the field. Murray has also been a prime driver for the establishment of several new graduate courses in system dynamics and fluid power. In addition to his curricular development contributions, Murray has undertaken an impressive array of applied research projects. Murray holds a Ph.D. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

In only his second year at Cal Poly, aerospace engineering assistant professor Rob McDonald has established an exemplary record of research, teaching and service. He is the recipient of two notable research grants, including a three-year, \$1 million NASA grant that will facilitate the design of future aircraft. In addition, he has undertaken cutting-edge work in the area of unmanned aerial vehicles.

Currently director of the Aircraft Design program, McDonald has also been appointed to the national AIAA Aircraft Design Technical Committee, a position that will maintain Cal Poly's leadership in the field. McDonald advises numerous clubs and initiated a chapter of The Order of the Engineer, the national engineering ethics society. He received his Ph.D. from the Georgia Institute of Technology.

Kibbe, the administrative support coordinator for the Civil and Environmental Engineering Department, serves as a genial and knowledgeable first point of contact for the department's 1,000 students and the general public. She supports advising efforts, the graduate program, scheduling, the webpage, the student assistant program, events and activities, alumni outreach, and admissions work. Her work assisting the Society of Civil Engineers, frequently going above and beyond to help the student group with event coordination, exemplifies her commitment to the department and to the students.

Marsalek, a College of Engineering academic advisor, served as a student peer advisor before joining the staff in 2006. She is known for her extensive knowledge of academic rules and policies, her positive attitude, patience, and "behind the scenes" work to help students post their degrees. Last year, Marsalek won a scholarship to attend the National Academic Advising Association conference, and she returned with valuable information that the Advising Center incorporated into the Freshman Academic Probation Workshops.

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Cal Poly Public Affairs
California Polytechnic State University
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407
805.756.7266
polynews@calpoly.edu