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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Students, Faculty Launch Adaptive Kayak in Morro Bay

SAN LUIS OBSPO -- A Cal Poly alumnus working with current faculty and staff piloted an adaptive kayak through Morro Bay on its maiden voyage May 16.

Bryan Gingg (B.S., Social Sciences, 1990) has been paralyzed and without the use of his arms or legs since an auto accident in 1982.

Ging was the test pilot for a kayak for quadruplegics developed by Cal Poly Kinesiology Professor Kevin Taylor and Mechanical Engineering Professor Frank Owen, along with Cal Poly kinesiology students. The kayak is steered by an electronic sensor system run with a digital "straw."

The kayak has a small electric motor. Disabled kayakers can sip or puff on the straw to send signals to the kayak's sensor controls and operate the craft. The high-tech kayak also includes a joystick feature for paraplegic users -- those with movement in their arms.

Current kinesiology student project manager Zach Thurow and a cadre of students were on hand at Morro Bay Friday, May 16 to situate Gingg in the kayak and monitor the test of the kayak and sensor system.

Other students formed a flotilla of 13 safety paddlers in kayaks surrounding Gingg the "solo quad" kayak during its journey.

The Solo Quad-Conversion Project has been underway since 2002 when professors Taylor and Owen wrote a grant application to the Christopher and Dana Reeve Paralysis Foundation. The $11,000 grant was funded and Taylor has coordinated the project ever since, working closely with College of Engineering students and faculty as well as numerous Kinesiology students.

The Cal Poly craft will be used as part of the university's Adapted Paddling Program, which helps people with disabilities participate in aquatic recreation.

Test kayak pilot Gingg is actively involved in Access For All and was a recipient of the Paul Wolff Accessibility Advocacy Award in 2006.

Read about the solo quad kayak launch in The San Luis Obispo Tribune
See the KSBY TV news story on the solo quad launch
Read more about Cal Poly's adaptive paddling program

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