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May 12, 2008
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Rainforest Alliance Certifies Cal Poly's Student-Run Print Operation

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- Cal Poly's student operated and managed printing and publishing company, University Graphic Systems, was recently awarded Forest Stewardship Council Certification. Cal Poly is one of only two university printing facilities to ever receive this distinction.

The certification is given by the SmartWood program of the Rainforest Alliance. The FSC is the internationally recognized standard-setting organization that accredits and monitors forestry certifiers worldwide.

Founded in 1968, University Graphic Systems is the only company of its kind run entirely by students. Ken Macro serves as faculty advisor to UGS, which offers Cal Poly graphic communication students the opportunity to learn all facets of printing and publishing, from marketing and sales to estimating, costing, budgeting, production, distribution and quality control.

UGS produces Cal Poly's student newspaper, the Mustang Daily -- the only university daily newspaper that is fully produced by students on campus and in full-color.

UGS has a general manager and 13 managers overseeing prepress, press, post press, "lean" manufacturing and sustainability. Some 50 to 70 students work in marketing, selling and production. Students make all the decisions regarding marketing, sales, management and production, budgeting and financial. They are also expected to make a profit.

"UGS epitomizes Cal Poly's 'learn by doing' philosophy," said Harvey Levenson, Cal Poly Graphic Communication Department head. "UGS exposes students to real-world business situations. After graduation, our students enter industry 'light years' ahead of their counterparts because of their UGS experience."

When the issue of sustainability in the graphic arts industry arose several years ago, UGS began to look at their "carbon footprint" and appointed a sustainability manager. Once the UGS sustainability program was in place, the students applied for an FSC review. The program was awarded the Forest Stewardship Council Chain-of-Custody certification.

"Receiving FSC certification not only shows our commitment to keeping current with industry trends, but it also shows our concern for the environment," said UGS Sustainability Manager Leah Lapotre.

"The preparedness and seriousness with which the students undertook the FSC certification process was nothing less than impressive," said SmartWood consultant Vic Barkin. "If this group of dedicated individuals is representative of the future of the printing industry as it pertains to sustainable printing practices and implementation, then it will be a bright future indeed."

About Cal Poly's Graphic Communication Department

Founded in 1946, Cal Poly's Graphic Communication Department (www.grc.calpoly.edu) has one of the largest programs of its kind in the United States. With over 33,000 square feet of laboratories, Cal Poly, one of the most competitive universities in the nation, continues to advance the educational offerings for students studying printing, electronic imaging, packaging, publishing, and cross-channel communications.

The department houses some of the most modern laboratory facilities in graphic arts education and is nationally accredited by the Accreditation Council of Collegiate Graphic Communications. The department houses the Graphic Communication Institute at Cal Poly (www.grci.calpoly.edu) as a service for industry and conducts research, testing, product evaluations, consulting, in-plant training, seminars, workshops and conferences.

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