CAL POLY News

March 18, 2008
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

Cal Poly Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers Named Regional Chapter of the Year

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Cal Poly's Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE) makes a big impact locally, not only offering its 156 student members academic, social, professional and leadership opportunities, but also reaching out into the community with K-12 tutoring and mentoring programs.

Because of its record of service, the group was recognized as the 2006-2007 Region I Chapter of the Year at the SHPE National Conference held in Philadelphia. Region I spans from San Luis Obispo to Washington State and encompasses 26 universities.

"We took members with us to Philadelphia and it was gratifying to come home with the award," said SHPE president and civil engineering senior David Sequeira. "It showed that we have a strong, multifaceted program."

Established at Cal Poly in 1978 to recruit and retain Hispanic engineering students, SHPE is very involved in outreach. This year, members helped host two MESA (Math, Engineering, Science Achievement) Day events at Cal Poly, which involved leading several hundred underrepresented middle and high school students in hands-on engineering activities. SHPE also regularly tutors students at a local elementary and middle school.

"One of most important outreach activities this year has been working to start a SHPE-Junior chapter at Santa Maria High School," said Sequeira. "We want to get students thinking about engineering. In addition, we'll be able to offer college scholarships with grants we receive from our corporate partners and SHPE National."

On-campus, SHPE supports members with study sessions and tutoring, and the group recognizes academic achievement with cash awards and corporate-funded scholarships. Most important however, may be the fact that SHPE becomes a surrogate family for many Hispanic engineering students.

"We're the largest Hispanic organization on campus, but we try to create a family atmosphere," said Sequeira. "That's really important for students who come from a close-knit family culture. Many freshmen have never left home before and most of them are the first in their families to attend college."

###

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