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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Provocative Perspectives Speaker to Discuss ‘Crossing Boundaries: Social Change in the New Millennium’ April 13

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Cal Poly will present Helen Zia as part of the ongoing speakers’ series Provocative Perspectives. A second-generation Chinese American, Zia has been outspoken on issues ranging from civil rights and peace to women's rights and countering hate violence and homophobia.

The free event will take place in the Vista Grande Café at Cal Poly, beginning with breakfast at 7:30 a.m., followed by the lecture at 8.

Zia, who was named a fellow by the Annenberg Institute for Justice and Journalism, will examine current social justice issues in light of her own experiences as an Asian-American. She is the former executive editor of Ms. Magazine and an award-winning journalist and scholar who has covered Asian American communities and social and political movements for more than 20 years.

Her articles, essays and reviews have appeared in numerous publications, books and anthologies. She was named one of the most influential Asian Americans of the decade by A. Magazine. Her book, “Asian American Dreams: The Emergence of an American People,” interweaves the remarkable history of Asian Americans with her own unique journey as an activist and writer.

Zia's work on the 1980s Asian American landmark civil rights case is documented in the Academy Award-nominated film, "Who Killed Vincent Chin?" and she was profiled in Bill Moyers' PBS documentary, "Becoming American: The Chinese Experience."

Zia is also coauthor, with Wen Ho Lee, of "My Country Versus Me," which reveals what happened to the Los Alamos scientist who was falsely accused of being a spy for China.

Cornel Morton, Cal Poly vice president for student affairs, says that he anticipates Zia will educate the campus by sharing her insights regarding issues such as civil rights, affirmative action and other complex sociopolitical issues. “Her talk will hopefully promote tolerance and diversity beyond the university community,” Morton said.

In addition to the breakfast talk, Zia will present an informal reading from her works and discuss her life as a writer at 7 p.m. in Philips Hall in the Performing Arts Center.

Both events are free and the public is welcome. Reservations are required for the breakfast and can be made by calling 756-0327, or e-mailing Liz Cofer at lcofer@calpoly.edu.

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