May 27, 2005
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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California State University and Cal Poly
Award Secretary of State Bruce McPherson Honorary Doctorate

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- California State University and Cal Poly will honor California Secretary of State Bruce A. McPherson with an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree at the university’s commencement ceremony in June.

McPherson, a former state senator and a 1965 graduate of Cal Poly’s journalism program, is being honored for his service to California, including service in both branches of the California State Legislature, where he made support for education a cornerstone of his tenure.

“Bruce McPherson’s firm belief in quality public education echoes and supports the mission of the California State University,” said Cal Poly President Warren J. Baker. “He has been a tireless supporter of this university, through legislative advocacy and strong leadership as a dedicated public servant.”

McPherson will receive his honorary degree at Cal Poly’s afternoon commencement ceremony June 11, and will deliver the keynote address to the 1,170 degree candidates from the colleges of Education, Liberal Arts, Science and Mathematics and the Orfalea College of Business. The ceremony begins at 3 p.m. in Mustang Stadium.

McPherson served two terms as a state assemblyman, representing the 27th District from 1993 to 1996. In 1996 he was elected to represent the 15th Senate District in the California State Senate and was re-elected to the position in 2000. He retired from the Legislature in December 2004. He became the 30th Secretary of State of California on March 30, 2005, after being nominated by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and unanimously confirmed by both the Assembly and Senate.

A longtime advocate of public education, he has played a leading role in shaping new policy in such areas as reducing class size, updating core curriculum, establishing graduation standards, providing additional funding for textbooks, and passing nearly $40 billion in state school bonds.

McPherson and his wife, Mary, established endowments in the mid-1980s to create a dropout-prevention program and to enhance the athletic programs for students in the Santa Cruz City School District. He spearheaded the creation of a literacy program in Santa Cruz County when he was president of the Santa Cruz Rotary Club.

He has authored legislation increasing the number of school nurses and counselors, establishing high school after-school programs, and focusing attention on grade-level reading.

Throughout his legislative career, he has played key leadership roles, including chairman of the state Senate committee on Public Safety, sub-committee on Criminal Procedure and select committee on Anti-Terrorism Policy; vice-chairman of the Education and Environmental Quality committees; and member of the Appropriations and Budget committees and a dozen other select sub-committees.

McPherson has previously addressed Cal Poly’s commencement and its annual Fall Conference, where he
explained how post-secondary education is paramount to sustaining California's economic vitality and quality of life.

In 2002 he was selected by Cal Poly's Associated Students Inc. as its inaugural "Legislator of the Year."

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