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Xeikon Donates Digital Web Press to Cal Poly's Digital Printing Lab

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- Students and industry professionals who attend Cal Poly graphic communication classes, seminars and workshops will be taught on some of the latest digital variable data printing technology, thanks to a donation from Xeikon America.

Xeikon America of Itasca, Ill., recently installed a Xeikon DCP 50D digital web press in Cal Poly's Graphic Communication Department. The company joins Hewlett-Packard, Xerox and Heidelberg in providing the university with digital technologies for printing education in one of the most comprehensive laboratories of its kind, according to Harvey Levenson, head of the Graphic Communication Department.

The gift, valued at more than $235,000, is the wide-format (20-inch web) model of the firm's digital presses and includes the Xeikon Printstreamer 2, which allows for highly complex variable-data printing at full speed.

"This is a significant contribution to the education Cal Poly provides in preparing the future leadership of the printing and imaging industry, Levenson said. "This is our first Xeikon-engine press and our first digital web press. It really rounds-out our offerings with technology from one of the more established digital press manufacturers."

University Graphic Systems (UGS), the Graphic Communication Department's student-run and managed experiential laboratory, will also use the new equipment. UGS students serve university clients with high-end campus printing. The new press will be used to deliver variable-data and short-run color printing. The lab is also being made available to Xeikon for special demonstrations and meetings when needed.

Denis Williams, Xeikon's Western region sales manager, has a long association with Cal Poly and was instrumental in arranging the donation.

"Xeikon America Inc. is very pleased to be the newest supporter of the Graphic Communication Department," Williams said. "The Xeikon DCP 50D delivers a throughput speed of 100 duplex pages per minute, uses a wide range of substrates, and produces a very high-quality product. This provides the Graphic Communication Department with the most versatile digital printing technology available today."

Brian Lawler, an internationally known expert on digital technology, will be the lead faculty member on the Xeikon project.

"We are excited to have this new Xeikon digital press," Lawler said. "It will help us prepare students for a
world in which short-run and variable-data printing are in great demand. The opportunity to have hands-on experience with several digital presses will make our students more knowledgeable and more valuable."

Founded in 1946, Cal Poly's Graphic Communication Department maintains an enrollment of 300 students pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in graphic communication with concentrations in printing and imaging management, electronic publishing and imaging, design reproduction technology, and individualized study. The department also offers courses that provide students in all disciplines an opportunity to participate in a core of courses providing entry-level background in printing, imaging and publishing.

Cal Poly is considered a very competitive university, and its graphic communication students are typically selected from among the top 10 to 15 percent of their high school or junior college graduating classes, according to Levenson. The department has more than 2,500 alumni, many of whom have reached leadership positions in the printing and publishing field.

With more than 33,000 square feet of modern laboratories, Cal Poly's Graphic Communication Department is the largest such program in the western United States and is one of the nation's best-known programs. It boasts one of the largest industry endowment and support programs in graphic arts education, with the vast majority of its equipment and facilities having been donated by industry. The department also houses the Graphic Communication Institute at Cal Poly (GrCI) for conducting research, testing, product evaluations, consulting, seminars, workshops, and conferences.

The Graphic Communication Department faculty members are internationally known as professors, scholars, researchers, consultants and authors. The department has national accreditation through the Accreditation Council for Collegiate Graphic Communications (ACCGC).

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