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Cal Poly Announces Leadership Change in the College of Engineering

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Mohammad Noori will step down June 30 as Dean of the College of Engineering, a post he has held for five years, and return to the faculty to teach mechanical engineering in the upcoming academic year, Cal Poly Provost Bob Koob announced today.

Koob, who is responsible for all academic programs, also announced that Erling Smith will assume the dean's duties in his capacity as Cal Poly's vice provost for programs and planning until a new dean can be identified sometime in 2011.

Koob said, "Erling Smith is a logical choice for this transition period. Erling was successful in leading the campus recently to complete Cal Poly's strategic plan, and those skills are particularly well suited to the engineering college's need to map out its own strategic plan.

"The department chairs and the faculty of our largest college know they need a strategic plan consistent with California's growing demand for well-trained engineering graduates and a plan consistent with the university's overall direction," Koob said.

"Erling knows how to lead a group through the strategic planning process, and given his engineering and administrative background, he will also be a capable manager of the college's daily operations. Erling's ability to listen well, quickly build consensus and move forward decisively will serve everybody well during this transition period."

Smith's academic career spans more than 35 years, including teaching as a professor of civil engineering and serving as department head, associate dean, and interim dean at the University of Connecticut. A licensed professional engineer, Smith has received six National Science Foundation grants and served as an evaluator for the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology. He earned his Ph.D. in Engineering Science from the University of Durham, UK.

Koob said he expects Smith to oversee the College of Engineering for most of the upcoming academic year. A search for a new dean should be concluded after a new Cal Poly president is hired to succeed Warren Baker, who is retiring this summer. A

new president is expected to be named in early 2011, according to Charles Reed, chancellor of the California State University system.

In announcing the leadership change to the engineering faculty and staff, Koob praised Noori for his unwavering commitment to students and their success, and thanked him for his efforts on behalf of Cal Poly and the College of Engineering. Koob also cited the college's national rankings attained under Noori's leadership.

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