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Cal Poly Takes 'Best of Show,' Silver Medal for High-Tech Recruiting Approach

Cal Poly's latest high-tech student recruiting effort captured a silver medal and placed the university among 14 named 'Best of Show' in a national competition.

"The Key," an interactive CD-ROM featuring movies, interactive maps, 360-degree "panorama" pictorials, interviews with faculty from each department and a Gen-Y-worthy soundtrack took the prizes in the 17th Annual Admissions Advertising Awards Competition. Cal Poly mails "The Key" incoming students who have been accepted to Cal Poly but have not yet notified the university that they intend to attend the university.

The CD-ROM took a silver medal in the Internet/World Wide Web site competition category of schools with 10,000 to 20,000 students. Cal Poly placed second, behind Binghamton University and ahead of University of North Carolina, Charlotte, the University of Dayton, Indiana University of Pennsylvania and Southern Illinois University.

The judging panel of marketing, advertising and academic officials placed "The Key" on the "Best of Show" list as an example of the competition's highest production standards, creativity and professionalism. The competition included entries created in house by public and private universities, as well as materials created by professional multimedia and marketing firms hired by universities. The awards were announced in late January.

"It's important to note that 'The Key' was produced entirely in house at Cal Poly, by a team of students working under the direction of Assistant Admissions Director Albert Nunez," Cal Poly Admissions Director James Maraviglia said.

Nunez and his student team produced the winning CD-ROM while maintaining the university's admissions Web site and creating other
admissions multimedia publications. "Albert and his team of students and the admission staff do an incredible job of supporting our campuswide communications effort. I can't tell you how pleased I am to see them win this award," Maraviglia said.

Cal Poly's award-winning CD-ROM includes a section on Central Coast activities with short feature movies of students kayaking, hiking, rock climbing and surfing; 360-degree photos of Central Coast beaches; campus photo tours and interactive maps, and interviews with each of the university's department heads. Much of the material on the CD-ROM is backed by a soundtrack hand-picked by creator Nunez with 17- to -19 year-olds in mind. It was first mailed to students accepted for the fall 2001 quarter.

"What we're trying to do with 'The Key' is to get students to choose Cal Poly," Nunez said. While Cal Poly receives some 25,000 applications annually for 4,000 freshman slots, many of the students accepted at the university are also accepted at one or more of the University of California campuses and other prestigious universities across the state. "I want students to be able to pop 'The Key' in their computer and experience what it's like here, and say, 'I'm coming to Cal Poly,,' " Nunez said.

Even before the award was announced, the Cal Poly CD-ROM was drawing attention from multimedia companies and other colleges. "We've been getting calls asking 'Who did this for you?' " Nunez said. "People are really surprised when we say, 'We did it ourselves.' "

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For a copy of "The Key" contact Teresa Hendrix in Public Affairs at (805) 756-7266 or thendrix@calpoly.edu.