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California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, California

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April 11, 2011

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# Ethics of Facebook and Social Networking to be Explored May 13 at Cal Poly

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Anthony F. Beavers – philosophy and cognitive scientist at University of Evansville in Indiana – will give lecture titled "Facebook Revisited: How the Business of Social Networking May Redefine Our Sense of Right and Wrong" on May 13 at Cal Poly.

The event, which will run 1 to 2:30 p.m. in Philips Hall (Building 6) Room 124, is the next talk in the Technology, Policy and Ethics Lecture Series being presented by Cal Poly's Ethics + Emerging Sciences Group.

With more than 600 million members, Facebook is the largest social science dataset ever collected—helping it to acquire a great deal of social and political power in a short time, in terms of profiling users and steering public opinion. Within the last year, Facebook started directing more traffic than Google and, on some reports, accounted for 12 percent of all internet activity.

Beavers will explore what the company intends to, or can, do with the site's power. From the user's perspective, Facebook is just a site for connecting with friends, "friends", and family. But what else is going on, particularly with respect to our values?

Beavers gave a talk at Cal Poly two years ago on the virtues of Facebook. His May 13 talk will revisit and reassess the themes raised earlier and consider the vices that Facebook has acquired after two years of accelerated growth. Some of the worries continuing to surround Facebook include privacy violations, redefinition of friendship, its influence on which relationships bloom, loss of life-memories, and other concerns.

Beavers is a professor of philosophy, director of Cognitive Science and director of the Digital Humanities Laboratory at the University of Evansville. He is the president of the International Association for Computing and Philosophy and serves on the organizing committees for several conferences, institutes and symposia dedicated to computer modeling, network analysis and the philosophical aspects of computing. His publications range from social and political issues involved with computing and

robotics to formal papers on the philosophy of computation and the history and philosophy of information technology.

Sponsored by Cal Poly's College of Liberal Arts and its Philosophy Department, the talk is free and open to the public. For more information, contact Patrick Lin at *palin@calpoly.edu* or visit http://ethics.calpoly.edu.

About the Ethics + Emerging Sciences Group

Based at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, the group is a non-partisan research and educational organization focused on the risks and ethical and social impacts of emerging technologies. Current projects and interests are related to issues in robotics, human enhancement, nanotechnology, geoengineering, space development and other areas.

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