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## Cal Poly Industrial Engineering Student Employee is “Best in the West”

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Robby Nielsen, student technician for Cal Poly’s Student Project Lab and Mustang ’60 machine shop, is best in the West among state and regional student employees. The industrial engineering student recently won the Cal Poly Student Employee of the Year Award, the Northern California Student Employee of the Year Award and the Western Regional Student Employee of the Year Award.

Nielsen also placed second in the National Student Employee of the Year competition. The rounds of local, state, regional and national competitions involved nominees from thousands of institutions and were coordinated by the National Student Employment Association.

“Robby is an outstanding innovator and take-charge person who has created safer, more efficient and more widely accessible labs and machine shops,” said George Leone, technician and technician staff supervisor for the Mechanical Engineering Department. “Not only that, Robby’s work has resulted in savings of thousands of dollars,” Leone said.

Since his hiring in 2008, Nielsen has initiated a broad range of programs, such as creating classroom and online professional development programs for student technicians; developing new systems for inventorying and scheduling; and revitalizing campus and community outreach efforts.

As a result of his work in the student project and Mustang ’60 labs, Nielsen changed his major from mechanical engineering to industrial engineering to more fully capitalize on his organizational and management strengths. He will graduate next year.

“Making project-based learning safer, more accessible and more fun for students is my proudest achievement,” Nielsen said. “And it has all been possible because of the freedom, encouragement and guidance I receive from some amazing bosses – Eric Pulse and George Leone – and an incredibly dedicated staff of student techs.

“Ultimately, I want to help make Cal Poly’s project labs and operations a model for other schools,” Nielsen said.



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