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California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, California

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Cal Poly to Take Part in President's Interfaith and Community Service Campus Challenge

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Cal Poly is one of 250 colleges and universities nationwide that will participate in President Barack Obama's Interfaith and Community Service Campus Challenge, which calls on institutions of higher education to commit to advancing interfaith and community service initiatives over the course of the 2011-12 academic year.

Through community service, students can learn about the problems faced by individuals with whom they otherwise would have little or no direct contact. The goal is that an increased number of students from different religious and non-religious backgrounds will participate in community service together and that ties will be strengthened between students and their community, said Joy Pedersen Harkins, director of The Community Center at Cal Poly.

"College is a time for students to explore spirituality, morals, beliefs, and even purpose," Harkins said. "Interfaith community service is a way for students to learn about and explore various faiths and contribute to the common good."

Planned interfaith efforts include new and existing projects such as the Hunger Walk set for Sept. 25, 2011 and Feed My Hunger Children in November. These two activities will bring together students, faculty, staff, community members and faith-based organizations to increase awareness, raise funds, and collect donations for low-income children and families.

Several other events will also take place throughout the year that will allow participants to discuss and understand social issues and increase the likelihood that participants will internalize the lessons and continue to lead lives of service.

For additional information on Cal Poly's participation in the president's challenge, contact Harkins at 805-756-6749; *jharkins@calpoly.edu*.

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