News
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Cal Poly Society of Women Engineers Repeats with Two Team Tech Firsts

Chapter Wins Outstanding Collegiate Section Gold Award

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Cal Poly Society of Women Engineers (SWE) again set the gold standard for university SWE chapters across the nation at WE11, the society's Annual Conference held Oct. 13-15 in Chicago.

Cal Poly brought home the Gold Award as the nation's top Outstanding Collegiate Section, and repeated history with two teams that tied for first in the Team Tech competition.

"Our students continue to represent Cal Poly so well on a national level that even before the awards ceremony on Saturday night, whenever I introduced myself and said that I was from Cal Poly, , people often responded, 'That's an amazing school!' I agree," said Helene Finger, women's engineering program director.

The Team Tech competition involves a year-long, multidisciplinary, industry-sponsored project. One of the Cal Poly SWE teams worked with Santa Maria-based Atlas Copco Mafi-Trench on a compressor wheel cooling system.

The other team designed a prosthetic attachment to aid amputees when climbing stairs. The group worked with the Quality of Life Plus (QL+) Foundation, a nonprofit group that fosters innovation to improve the quality of life for those injured in the line of duty.

The Collegiate Section Gold Award is awarded to the section, or university chapter, with the most outstanding overall program including community outreach and activities that provide leadership training and professional opportunities for its members. The Cal Poly section is the largest academic club on campus and provides engineering outreach to more than 1,350 K-12 students through on- and off-campus events. During National Engineers Week in February, SWE presented hands-on activities to 20 local fourth-grade classrooms.

"In many ways, SWE represents the best of Cal Poly's Learn By Doing experience," said Engineering Dean Debra Larson. "It's a great example of how these academic clubs and co-curricular activities help accelerate learning and truly make the campus a distinctive learning community."

Since 2002, Cal Poly SWE has been recognized as the nation's top collegiate section (Gold Award) eight times. Cal Poly has also won the highly competitive Team Tech competition eight times, including two first-place ties in 2009 and 2011.

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