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Two Faculty Members to Receive Cal Poly's Annual Distinguished Scholarship Award

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Cal Poly has named a professor of biological sciences and a professor of recreation, parks and tourism administration to receive the university's Distinguished Scholarship Award for 2011-12, the ninth year for the award program.

Biological Sciences Professor Christopher L. Kitts and Recreation, Parks & Tourism Administration Professor William W. Hendricks were recognized for exemplifying the teacher-scholar model by involving students in their research and applying Cal Poly expertise in direct contributions to the city, county and state in which Cal Poly is embedded.

Kitts and Hendricks will be honored at spring commencement ceremonies Saturday, June 9, and will be recognized during the university's Fall Conference General Session on Monday, Sept. 10.

Kitts was honored for his high-caliber and innovative work in microbiology. His work has created unique learning opportunities for students in the biological sciences and has included collaboration with students and faculty from the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences, College of Engineering, Chemistry Department, Statistics Department, and Biological Sciences Department.

The real-world projects to which Kitts has applied his disciplinary and collaborative expertise have contributed to the direct betterment of the local community. Examples include working with Unocal to participate in a bioremediation study involving the use of bacteria to clean up petroleum-spill contaminants at Avila Beach and the Guadalupe Dunes and the recent investigation of fecal contamination at the Pismo Pier.

Kitts has taught at Cal Poly since 1995 and has served as department chair of the Biological Sciences Department since 2008. He earned a bachelor's degree in 1984 in cell biology and physics from the University of Auckland, New Zealand, and his doctorate in biology in 1992 from UC Santa Cruz. He is a member of the American Society for Microbiology, International Society for Microbial Ecology and International Network for Environmental Forensics.

Hendricks was chosen for his research specializing in the human dimension of natural resources management, focusing on outdoor recreation conduct as it relates to the quality of recreation experiences and enhancing visitor experiences while safeguarding the environment. He has served as principal investigator for nine major research projects, including the Mt. San Jacinto Visitor Use Study, California Attitudes and Opinions Survey on Outdoor Recreation, the Oceano Dunes Vehicular Recreation Area Economic Impact, and the Morro Bay State Park Economic Impact.

Hendricks was inducted into the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration in 2009 and is considered by some to be the

premier parks and recreation educator in California. He received the Cal Poly Distinguished Faculty Service-Learning Award in 2000 and the Dole Faculty Award for Teaching Excellence in the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences in 2003.

Hendricks has taught at Cal Poly since 1994. He has served as department head of the Recreation, Parks & Tourism Administration Department since 2009. He earned a bachelor's degree in recreation administration at Chico State in 1980, a master's in business and public administration in 1984 at John F. Kennedy University, and a doctorate in recreation and leisure in 1993 from the University of Utah.

The Distinguished Scholarship Award was established in 2003 to recognize faculty achievements in research, creative work and other professional development activities. The award supports research and other creative endeavors and encourages the professional growth of Cal Poly faculty members.

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