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Cal Poly Engineering Announces Outstanding Staff and Faculty Awards

SAN LUIS OBISPO – The Cal Poly College of Engineering announced the recipients of an endowed professorship, an industry-sponsored faculty award and the 2011-12 Outstanding Staff Awards.

Mechanical Engineering Professor Russ Westphal received a two-year, \$40,000 Lockheed Martin Endowed Professorship award. Civil and Environmental Engineering Professor Gregg Fiegel won the \$1,000 Raytheon Excellence in Teaching and Applied Research Award, and Jim Gearhardt and Yvonne Lynch received this year's Outstanding Staff awards. The presentations were made at the College of Engineering's Fall Conference held Sept. 10.

Professorship Award

The Lockheed Martin Endowed Professorship recognizes a faculty member who has contributed new knowledge in the field of engineering, partners with industry and involves students with advanced ideas, and enhances teaching by introducing state-of-the-art topics into the classroom.

Westphal is known for doing flight research in aerodynamics instrumentation while working across department lines. Over the last two years, he has received grants of more than \$300,000 from the U.S. Air Force, Northrop Grumman and NASA for a wing boundary layer measurement system, a revolutionary configuration for energy efficiency, and work on the Cal Poly laminar flow technology program.

Raytheon Excellence in Teaching and Applied Research

Fiegel has served for many years as the faculty advisor for the Cal Poly Society of Civil Engineers. He has been honored as the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) Outstanding Faculty Advisor for Region 9 for three consecutive years. Students report that Fiegel is personable and accessible and say he is knowledgeable, clear and thorough in class. "Initially, I did not think I would enjoy geotechnical engineering at all. But by the end of the quarter, I had completely changed my mind," noted a student. "I've been strongly considering becoming a civil engineering professor. It's professors like Dr. Fiegel who provide an excellent example of what it means to effectively teach."

Outstanding Staff Awards

Gearhardt, head technician for the Mechanical Engineering Department, is a hands-on expert in machining, electronic design, programming, CAD/CAM, equipment purchasing, safety, and mechanical design analysis. According to Department Chair Andrew Davol, Gearhardt is an invaluable asset who provides service to faculty, staff and students.

"Jim doesn't seem to know the phrase 'good enough,'" said Davol. "Over the past four years, he took personal time to educate himself on wind power engineering in order to assist in the development of the Cal Poly Wind Power Research Center. What he has achieved is impressive, and his contribution to this new facility is invaluable."

As the administrative support for the Electrical Engineering Department, Lynch interacts with the majority of the 1,000 students in the electrical and computer engineering programs. Lynch initiated a weekly communication to electrical engineering students and she also organizes the Electrical and Computer Engineering Extravaganza, a special event for alumni, parents and students during Cal Poly's Open House. Known for her knowledge of the department and for her warm humor, Lynch is beloved by all, said a co-worker.

"She is great to work with, always very helpful, and always tries to find the best solutions to

satisfy all parties," noted Dennis Derickson, department chair. "She keeps us all in line to accomplish department goals and contributes significantly to a very enjoyable work environment."

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