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Cal Poly Computer Science Student Named ‘Best of the West’ for Enlivening Library

SAN LUIS OBISPO – At Cal Poly’s Robert E. Kennedy Library, information is everywhere—and so, it seems, is Glen Beebe. The third-year computer science major was recently named Student Employee of the Year by the Western Association of Student Employment Administrators (WASEA) for his contributions to enhancing users’ digital experience at the library.

Beebe has worked as a programmer and web developer for the library for the past two years, focusing on the library’s website. He was selected by WASEA from among 600 nominees from 13 western states.

“I work with an amazingly collaborative and creative team that strives to enhance the technological connection between students and the library,” Beebe said. “The need for libraries is never going away, and we work hard to stay current and keep people coming back.”

Beebe sets out to make sure users have the best online experience possible, said Conny Liegl, Kennedy Library’s web designer, who nominated Beebe for the honor.

“That includes a real talent for marketing and outreach,” Liegl said. “His efforts contributed to the success of our ‘I’m with the Banned’ campaign as part of the 2012 Banned Books Week. The promotion featured an interactive website, and his work helped draw more than 6,000 visitors and prompted dozens of libraries across the nation to link to our site.”

The library recently received the John Cotton Dana Award honoring outstanding library public relations and marketing, including an award of $10,000, from the American Library Association for the campaign.

“The digital displays throughout the building are another example of how he’s helping us make the resources and treasures of the library more visible and accessible to patrons,” Liegl said. “Glen comes up with intelligent solutions for programming issues and happily shares his codes and ideas so that other libraries can benefit from his work. He has received thank you notes from librarians throughout the U.S. for making their work easier.”

Beebe credits Cal Poly Engineering’s computer science classes for giving him the foundation in programming concepts that have led to his achievements at the library.

“My library projects have immersed me in languages such as HTML5, CSS, Javascript/Query, PHP, Python, and MySQL. And some, involving databases, spurred me to take a computer engineering database class that I might not have otherwise considered. The skills I have learned here will be applicable to any career path I pursue.”

Beebe wasn’t Cal Poly’s only WASEA honoree this year. Manufacturing engineering senior Sam Kaplan was first runner-up for his contributions to setting up and running the new Gene Haas Laboratory for Robotics and Automation. Second runner-up was Jennifer Ray, an agricultural communications senior who works both as a college librarian student assistant and editor-in-chief for the Brock Center of Agricultural Communications. They are among 2,500 part-time student employees at Cal Poly.

This the first time Cal Poly has had three western regional winners.

WASEA is a nonprofit association of professionals involved with programs for students who work while attending college. The association supports and promotes student employment through research, professional development and the exchange of information.

Photo: Glen Beebe, named Student Employee of the Year by the Western Association of Student Employment Administrators, with Cal Poly President Jeffrey D. Armstrong