Cal Poly Engineering Announces 2013 Outstanding Graduates

SAN LUIS OBISPO — Cal Poly Engineering announced its 2013 Outstanding Graduates at the collegewide Project Expo held May 30. The students honored included the top senior for academic excellence and three graduating seniors recognized for service to the college, university, and community, respectively. Also announced was the Student Volunteer of the Year.

Mechanical engineering senior Andrew Nahab from Riverside, Calif., was recognized as the College of Engineering’s topmost graduating senior for academic excellence. Nahab earned a 3.978 GPA and a place on the Dean’s List and President’s List every quarter from 2009-12. As an undergraduate, Nahab interned at Phillips 66, Woodward HRI and Abraaxas Energy, gaining experience in industries that include oil and gas; aerospace; and heating, ventilation and air conditioning. He was the recipient of numerous scholarships, including the Donald Chivens Scholarship, Marietta K. Gian Mechanical Engineering Scholarship, Adele and Aldo Alessio Scholarship, and Robert Byrd Scholarship.

Computer science senior Eriq Augustine from San Luis Obispo, Calif., was named Outstanding Graduating Senior for Contributions to the College of Engineering. Over the course of his education, Augustine has participated in a wide range of organizations, including the Association for Computing Machinery, White Hat Club, Cal Poly Linux Users Group, Cal Poly Game Development Club, Badminton Club, Minna No Anime, and the Chinese Cultural Club. He has served as vice president of the Cal Poly Progressive Student Alliance and is an officer in the Graduate Student Association. Augustine is known for making important contributions as a teaching assistant, instructor and departmental lead tutor.

The Outstanding Graduating Senior for Contribution to the University was civil engineering senior Aaron Opdyke from Cherry Valley, Calif. Opdyke is distinguished by his work with Engineers Without Borders-Cal Poly (EWB), a group that supports community-driven development programs in Thailand, India and Nicaragua by collaborating with local partners to design and implement sustainable engineering projects. Under Opdyke’s leadership as president, EWB tripled in size and was recognized as the National Premier Student Chapter two years in a row. Opdyke co-founded the EWB India team as a freshman. His work for the India program involved designing an affordable wastewater treatment system for more than 300 people.

Computer science senior Ross Light from Santa Clarita, Calif., was named the Outstanding Graduating Senior for Service to the Community for his mentorship of Atascadero High School’s robotics team, The Greybots. The group of up to 25 students competed in the FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Robotics Competition, an international competition. Ross taught the students to program a robot they built and designed over the course of six weeks. For many of the students, this was their first introduction to programming. In 2011, Ross helped the team win the world championship in St. Louis, an event that drew more than 300 participating teams.

Announced as the Student Volunteer of the Year was second-year civil engineering student Connor Paquin from Folsom, Calif. Paquin was recognized for instigating a pilot peer mentoring program in collaboration with the Engineering Advising Center and the Multicultural Engineering Program. Known as Poly Pals, the program matches first year engineering students with undergraduates in their departments. The mentor-mentee relationship provides new students with allies to help them navigate the university system and establishes a greater sense of community in the college. According to the Advising Center staff, Paquin’s remarkable passion to help other students has been inspiring.

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