The magazine cited the wine and viticulture major offered here as one of the reasons Cal Poly is a prime place for surfers "wanting to major in booze."

However, Mike Ion, a mathematics sophomore, said he did not agree with the description the magazine presented of surfers as slackers.

"I don’t think that it’s a logical implication," Ion said. "Cal Poly is a difficult school, and I think it’s stereotyping surfers to be a party crowd."

Other student surfers, such as Matt Ininn, an architecture junior and member of the Cal Poly surf team, agree with Ion.

"I was kind of pissed because it seemed to me like they were trying to make a joke about Cal Poly being a party school," Ininn said. "Every year we make it on this list, but a comment seems to be made about our academics being lesser, and that’s not true."

However, other surfers such as biomedical engineering senior Stefie Giacomuzzi, are not fazed by the association.

"I mean, it is kind of funny to me," Giacomuzzi said. "I don’t find it so bad. Although the water is cold, and the surf’s not as crowded at Cal Poly as at other top surfing spots. Cal Poly is more of a top spot because there are so many breaks with literally no guys out there," Ion said. "We definitely have cold water here, that’s why it’s not as crowded (but) I kind of like it because it means less people."

Though the water can be in the low 50s, many surfers do not mind the lower temperatures.

"I would sacrifice cold water for no crowds any day," Ion said. Mike Stone, a mechanical engineering senior, said the best thing about surfing at Cal Poly is that it is generally not crowded.

"Within a 20-minute drive there are lots and lots of spots to surf that are kind of hidden," Stone said. "Whereas at other places there are a lot more points and breaks that are well known, so that could be why they are more crowded."

Stone contrasted Cal Poly with the University of California Santa Barbara (UCSB), the university chosen as the best surfing school in the nation.

"I see signs everywhere — all around campus there are shirts, different ideas and ways of promoting themselves," he said. "Having the two candidates is important because it is a little more fair, not only to the people making the votes but to the people actually running," Leonard said. "Competition is fun, and everyone likes it and to see it being built off of."

For now, Galvan and Tabriz are focused on reaching out to students and making their campaign teams heard. Tabriz, a political science senior, said he and many of the members of his campaign team are on the corners of the campus in an attempt to "spill a little bit of the campaign."
I represent the regular students, and I feel that I could sit down and have lunch with the majority of the students over (Galan).

— Kiyana Tabrizi
ASI presidential candidate

"A lot of problems and concerns have been brought to my attention (while serving on both), and that is what led me to run for ASI president," Galvan said. "It is to represent and address those concerns and develop a platform that relects those concerns of the students."

Galvan said these connections with student Life and Leadership and ASI student government, as well as his definitive platform, are what set him apart from Tabrizi.

"With myself, having a platform is so that students can hold me accountable through the year and at the end of my term," Galvan said. "I didn't have a platform, what would they hold me accountable for? This isn't a check list, this is more of a backbone for what is to come next year, and to open up the doors for many more programs for students and things like that."

Galvan's platform includes focusing on improving sustainability on campus, creating diversity and creating a more transparent student government with representation on three levels — in the university, community and statewide — or as he calls it, advocacy.

"I'm not going to say I have all the answers to all the questions, but I am going to try my best and do my work in representing all Cal Poly students," Galvan said.

"This tangible, hands-on approach is what sociology senior and Galvan's campaign manager, Michelle Fox, said students can see in Galvan at his campaign booth daily answering questions, and handing out stickers, which follows suit with his promoting sustainability (by not having trash from candy or other hands and healthly lifestyles)."
Surfing continued from page 1

best overall school for surfing, when he said UCSB is a lot more crowded and always packed.

"The wave quality is really good there though," Stone said. "It is definitely not always as easy to find the high quality waves here."

As for "sharky" waters, Giacomazzi said there is a bit of truth to the rumors. He has seen sharks a few times while out in the water on the Central Coast.

"I've never been circled or anything like that, but it definitely adds character to the surf," he said. "Compared to the SoCal beaches that are a lot more popular, these beaches are more untouched and natural, so the habitats of many of the animals including sharks are untouched."

Though many Cal Poly surfers said they agreed that when there is a swell UCSB is the best place to surf in California, surfing at Cal Poly is a different experience.

"At Cal Poly it's like natural surfing — it's just you and nature," Giacomazzi said.

Some of the other perks of attending Cal Poly listed in the article include surfboard-shaping classes and a "hip" downtown scene, as well as being good for parrying and "hanging out with tons of girls."

However, for most of the surfers here, it was not the wine, girls or parties that convinced them to attend Cal Poly.

"The surf is what definitely influenced me in choosing (Cal Poly) as a school," Ininns said. "It's more of a challenge here ... It's more work (to find good waves), but once you find them, there's more (of a) reward."
Tuesday, April 26, 2011

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**TUESDAY TUNES**

What are you listening to?

- "In The Morning" by J. Cole — David Sing, biological sciences freshman
- "Obviously" by McFly — Melinda Wiles, mathematics junior
- "Spy Hunter" by Project 86 — Mario Bautista, civil engineering sophomore
- "Sun" by Daphne Loves Derby — Kristina Pfeiffer, biochemistry junior
- "Medicine" by Starcher — Mario Bautista, civil engineering sophomore
- "Jammin'" by Bob Marley — Katie Richardson, psychology sophomore
- "Sun" by Daphne Loves Derby — Kristina Pfeiffer, biochemistry junior

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Be creative and fill up this box!
The Supreme Court refused on Monday to bypass the lower courts and take up an immediate legal challenge to the constitutionality of the nation's health care law and its requirement that all those who can afford it have medical insurance by 2014.

The announcement concerned only the timing of a decision on the health care law and said nothing about how the court may finally rule. The justices rarely skip over the lower courts before taking up a constitutional question and have said they will do so only if a case is of such "imperative public importance" as to "require immediate determination" by the high court.

The justices without giving any comment turned down an appeal from Virginia's attorney general, who insisted the Affordable Care Act has "roiled America" and left "many Americans who insist they cannot afford it have medical insurance and take up an immediate legal challenge to the nation's health care law until at least next year.

The attorneys general from more than half the states, nearly all of them Republican, filed lawsuits contending the mandate for individuals to have health insurance exceeded Congress's power to regulate commerce. The main lawsuit was filed in Pensacola, Fla.

But on the day President Obama signed the health care law into law, Kenneth Cuccinelli, Virginia's attorney general, filed a separate suit in Richmond.

He won a federal judge who declared the mandate to be unconstitutional. The Obama administration, as expected, filed an appeal and the case is to be heard by the U.S. 4th Circuit Court of Appeals on May 10.

A judge in Florida also declared the law unconstitutional, and an appeal of that decision will be heard by the U.S. 11th Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta.

Usually, the losing side appeals, but Cuccinelli nonetheless petitioned the Supreme Court to take up his case before the 4th Circuit Court could rule.

Obama administration lawyers used the opportunity to set out a lengthy defense of the health care law. They said the market for healthcare services is quite unusual. "The need for medical care is essentially universal.... Nearly everyone will require health services at some point in his or her lifetime," but the need for "expensive medical care is unpredictable. Federal law requires hospitals to provide emergency care for those in need, and in 2008, health care providers had to pay $43 billion to cover the cost of those who could not pay. The administration argues that the requirement to have health insurance will spread the costs to all those who can afford to pay.

The administration's lawyers also argued that Virginia had no standing to sue because the health care mandate applies to individuals, not the state.
Satisfy the heart with the sustainable sablefish

THE FOOD FACTOR

Heather Rockwood is a food science junior and Mustang Daily food columnist.

The ways to prepare and enjoy sablefish are just as numerous and versatile as the many names of this North Pacific Ocean inhabitant. Today we will take a moment to explore some of the names this fish goes by, and why it is beneficial for us and the environment to consider the addition of sablefish to our dinner plates.

Sablefish has a deep brown or black scale color and closely resembles a cod, so it is often referred to as black cod. However, despite its similarities in looks, the sablefish is actually not part of the cod family at all. Instead, the black cod is part of the Anoplopomatidae family.

The sablefish is rich in healthy long-chain omega 3 fatty acids, both eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) — approximately as much EPA and DHA as the seafood superstar wild salmon. These polyunsaturated “good” fats found in many fish, including sablefish, have been linked to many studies that indicate the consumption of these fatty acids can work to lower the risk of heart disease.

Researchers have found that atherosclerosis, the damage in the blood vessels that causes heart disease and stroke, is caused by inflammation in the arterial walls, and omega 3 fatty acids are known to combat this damage directly as they work as natural anti-inflammatory agents. The sablefish's naturally high oil and fat content gives it an exceptional flavorful, succulent texture and makes it undeniably tasty. It even gives it rights to another nickname: butterfish. However, be careful with this nickname as another fish, escolar or Hawaiian walu, is often marketed under this name as well. Mislabeling these two fish can lead to some unwanted and embarrassing consequences. Although escolar is sometimes advertised by the same alluring name as black cod “butterfish,” it is not the same fish or quality of fish at all.

Escolar butterfish typically causes frequent trips to the restroom, an uncontrollable orange leakage and well — need I say more? Don't be alarmed though, these undesirable characteristics are not caused by black cod but sablefish. So, as with many other areas of life, with your increased knowledge of the subject, you can save yourself some unpleasant issues and embarrassing consequences. Although escolar is sometimes advertised as a cod, the Alaskan sablefish was rated the ECO-Best fish by the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF). The fishing methods, bottom longlines, produce very little bycatch and the Alaskan sablefish is one of the top sustainable choices, along with the sablefish, the Alaskan sablefish is often marketed under the EDF.

Sablefish can be purchased in many different forms, including whole, dressed fish, fillets, steaks, frozen or fresh. The many varieties are accompanied by the many cooking methods, including baking, broiling, microwaving, poaching, sautéing, smoking and grilling. No matter what your cooking experience or flavor preference, this fish makes prepping and eating easier than you ever thought possible.

Easy to cook, good for you and flavorful — what more could this fish offer in order to make it onto your plate?

Well, add on good for the environment as well. The Alaskan sablefish was rated the ECO-Best fish by the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF). The fishing methods, bottom longlines, produce very little bycatch or harm to the bottom line ocean habitat. Individual fishing quota systems in place in Alaska allow fishermen to work under safe conditions and obtain fair prices for their catch while maintaining a sustainable and healthy fish population.

Alaska is home to the largest portion of sablefish catches. However, Oregon, Washington and California ocean waters combined typically account for just under one-third of the United States harvest. This third of the catch is marketed as ECO-OK by the EDF.

This week, as you fish your mind for quick and delicious dinner ideas, don't forget the sablefish. It's a hook, line and sinker that is sure to please the crowds.

HINT: Next week we celebrate the movement that seeks to offer better prices, decent working conditions and local sustainability to benefit the farmers and workers of developing countries.

Sablefish with salt and pepper

Ingredients

2 sablefish fillets (1 lb)
1 Tbs. fresh squeezed lemon juice
½ a small onion thinly sliced
1 clove garlic, peeled and sliced (orange, garlic, onion, lemon)
2 Tbs. butter or olive oil
Freshly ground salt and pepper

Dipping sauce

Squirl sablefish with salt and pepper. Combine lemon juice and butter and brush on all sides of sablefish.

Place fish in baking dish and arrange onion slice over fish, brush with remaining lemon oil mixture. Bake at 400°F for 15 minutes. Arrange orange slices over fish with parsley. Bake five to eight minutes longer or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork at its thickest point.

Add a side of rice or salad to make a simple meal any night of the week.
Zion I and the Grouch to perform during UU Hour

Katelyn Sweigart
KATELYN SWEIGART.GMA@GMACOM

Zion I and the Grouch, a hip-hop group from the Bay Area, will perform in the University Union (UU) Plaza during UU Hour Thursday.

Missi Bullock, Associated Students Inc. (ASI) programs coordinator, said the performers are actually two separate acts in collaboration.

The Grouch, the alias for Corey Scoffern, is a rapper from Oakland, Calif., and a member of the indie rap group Living Legends, which started in the '90s. Zion I is a hip-hop duo, comprised of MC Baba Zumbi and DJ AmpLive. The Grouch collaborated with the duo in 2006 on their album "Heroes of the City of Dope," and both acts came out with a new album in 2011 titled "Heroes in the Healing of the Nation."

"It's rare for us to be able to bring hip-hop to the Plaza," Bullock said. "So this is a really great opportunity for students to be involved in a hip-hop scene, if that's what they are into."

Jacki Iwanski, ASI musical entertainment supervisor and business administration senior, said she booked the group because it has "good name recognition" on Cal Poly's campus, and a lot of students have already heard of them. Iwanski said she recommends the group to people who like hip-hop or dance music, and said the performance will be fun and upbeat.

According to the event's Facebook page, more than 700 people are planning to attend. "It's nice because a lot of hip-hop now is huge people, like Jay-Z and Kanye West, and these guys are just as talented, but they're underground," Iwanski said. "They are not quite as well-known, but they're definitely well-known in the area and in California."

Iwanski said she tries to book musicians who come through the area. In this case, Zion I and The Grouch will also perform at SLO Brewing Co. the same day from 8 to 11 p.m.

They like keeping to a smaller scale," Iwanski said. "They don't want to be huge; they don't want to have a million views on their YouTube videos. They kind of like having the underground vibe."

"They want to keep it real with their fans and keep it underground," Bullock said. "They just want to make music and have fun."
Annual poetry contest now accepting submissions

Amber Kiwan
AMBERKIWAN@ME.COM

The 2011 Academy of American Poets contest for Cal Poly, sponsored by the English department, is now accepting original poetry submissions in honor of National Poetry Month.

The winning student poet will be awarded $100 and be published in Mochlos, an annual publication of the College of Liberal Arts. The Academy of American Poets is a national organization that promotes poetry. This contest has taken place at Cal Poly since about 1990. Last year, approximately 50 students from a broad range of majors submitted envelopes of work, each containing two to five poems.

English professor Kevin Clark said the winners are often later accepted into significant creative writing programs at the graduate level.

An off-campus, nationally published poet or critic is the judge of the submitted works and remains anonymous until he or she chooses the winning poet.

Clark, who is an award-winning and widely published poet, said this year’s judge is not only off-campus but also resides out of state. “We do this to guarantee objectivity,” Clark said.

Ensuring the contest is as fair as possible is important for poetry because of the intuitively creative and abstract nature of the process.

English professor James Cushing said, although he cannot speak for other poetry critics, he has never met anyone who violently disagrees with his thoughts on judging poetry.

Cushing was Poet Laureate of San Luis Obispo from 2008 to 2010. He also judged The Tribune’s poetry contest, Baumgarten’s contest, and many others.

“I look for something surprising, so it’s something you can’t define before it surprises you,” Cushing said.

Cushing compared this idea to that of Pulitzer Prize-winning poet James Tate, who once said poetry is the search for the unknown.

“Emily Dickinson famously claimed that she knew she was reading real poetry when she felt as if the top of her head were coming off,” Cushing wrote in a piece for The Tribune. “I read poetry for a similar reason — the pure pleasure of discovering that the world I live in is richer in beauty and wonder than I thought it was.

For Cushing, poetry is more meaningful than just words alone. “I want to read words from a human being who is being human, so that I may become more fully human,” Cushing said.

“I want to read words from a human being who is being human, so that I may become more fully human.”

— James Cushing
English professor

Starts today, any student enrolled in spring quarter may submit no more than five poems to the Faculty Offices Building, room 32.

Deadline is May 11 at 4 p.m. Works should be submitted in a manila envelope clearly labeled with the student’s real name.

Professor Carl Wooton, also a published writer and poet, said many students may be afraid to try poetry writing simply because they are unfamiliar with it.

“My advice is to read as much poetry as you can,” he said.

Wooton said the students who are often successful poets are the ones who are willing to make mistakes and take risks.

“You’ll never write really well until you are willing to write bad first,” Wooton said. “For some it may be a short period of time, but for others it may take a lifetime. But that doesn’t matter, as long as you try it.”

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The T-Shirt Guy

Zion I
continued from page 7

derground vibe. I'd say.”

Computer engineering junior Michael Chamoures said he was excited and surprised when he heard the group would be at Cal Poly.

Chamoures was first introduced to The Grouch in high school by a friend. He said he is a fan of non-mainstream hip-hop. Although he followed The Grouch, he has only heard about Zion I.

When Chamoures listened to the collaboration, he said it was a perfect match.

“If The Grouch is in it, it must be awesome,” Chamoures said. “Some of it’s really upbeat, some of it’s really mellow, just kind of nice to listen to.”

Although the group has toured in San Luis Obispo before, this is the first time Chamoures will attend a live performance. Since the group has been on the underground scene for a long time and it has a big following, he said he has high hopes for how the concert will play out.

“I think it’ll be a big turnout,” he said. “It’s really cool when a lot of people turn out at the plaza.”
Reasons behind charity, choices to empower

Charity, according to Merriam-Webster's, has two main definitions. No. 1: "benevolent good will toward or love of humanity," and No. 2: "generosity and helpfulness especially toward the needy or suffering." These two definitions are not necessarily complementary.

Good will toward humanity is a virtue, but how can it be upheld without requiring action? What principles determine the proper action? In the abstract, true charity aids the recipient toward becoming a more complete person.

The full definition of a complete person is outside the scope of this article, but a few essential characteristics merit the focus. The most complete person possesses a capacity to choose that does not infringe on any other person’s capacity to choose (to hash out the details, please solve all of politics, sociology and economics).

Slavery, explicit or implicit, reduces the slave’s capacity to choose. Starvation reduces the capacity to choose. Debt reduces the capacity to choose. Access reduces the capacity to choose. A maximized, non-infringing capacity of choice necessarily results in equality between persons, in which no one can command action from another.

It sounds good, but the world is not there yet. And so we come to charity.

People seek out and receive charity because they need something (actual or not), and charity appears as the best (or only) method of acquiring it. People around the world are trapped in situations where no good choices are accessible. People refuse (for whatever reason) to make good choices. People give charity because they derive value from addressing (or perceiving themselves as addressing) the needs of others. Some do so for good will, some for tax deductions and some for the joy of playing papa-permistributor to struggling orphans.

To receive charity is to admit dependence on the donor; it is to make your own security conditional on the generosity of another. While this is often a change for the better, it can never be a change for the best; the fact of dependence forfeits equality.

To donate charity is to willingly accept the role of a superior, if not morally, at least physically. However, kind-hearted and humanitarian the donor may be, the act of donation makes recipients beholden to the donor.

Acts of charity can be broken down into two categories: charity that increases dependence and charity that reduces that capacity. Many microloan programs increase choice by breaking dependence on loan sharks or providing capital that couldn’t be accessed. But many more charities increase dependency.

It's a kind thing to build a hospital somewhere in the sticks, but who pays for its continued existence? Who teaches and pays for the staff? Who provides the electricity and capital somewhere in the sticks, but the symptoms of problems without presenting a method for the recipients to meet those needs themselves, such charity perpetuates an attitude of dependence and inability to turn away from the gift.

The act of charity, even at its best, creates inequalities of social power. To praise acts of charity indiscriminately is to risk presenting such inequalities as unimportant or even acceptable. It breeds the perception that wealth is not an earned, created thing, but large— that the physical needs of the individual are met from without, not from within. It creates an attitude not of level pride but of low gratitude (or worse, ingratitude) on the part of the receiver.

On the part of the donor, it nurtures an attitude of paternal generosity rather than eye-to-eye respect. It teaches that the receiver is a toy of external events — both bad and good — not an actor who creates events. While the capacity to fulfill needs is limited by time, knowledge and resources, the capacity of humans to create needs is unbounded. Indiscriminate charity artificially fulfills perceived needs the person cannot fulfill themselves, creating a contrived perception of "the good life" or the way things "ought to be."

To broadly use charity in such a way, weakens a culture. It teaches people that solutions are derived normally, not from themselves but from an external entity, forming a causal assumption of dependence upon donors. This then gives power to the donors and provides a morally admirable justification for acquiring that power. Those with many needs are easy to lead; those with no needs cannot be controlled. Throughout all of history, individual and collective power is advanced by inducing the conquered to need the conqueror.

Whether a person’s situation is good or bad, it exists for a reason. The situation is the product of past and present economic, social and political facts as well as the individual’s own nature and inclinations. To treat the symptoms of problems without addressing the problems themselves has only two results: non-resolution and increased dependence of the receiver upon the donor. To treat the root problems is to assume the role of a rescuer; even if the physical problems are resolved, the receiver still bears a heavy moral obligation.

In a sense the two definitions of charity are nearly in opposition — to relieve physical need is to impose moral debt. True brotherly-love re­volts at the idea of obtaining power over others either by force or by obliga­tion, but instead, pursues a policy of equality. The most healthy rela­tionships between people are based on friendship and respect, which can only exist between equals. Charity can only be legitimate in terms of charity the attitude. A perfect world is one in which no acts of charity are made because none are needed.

Acts of charity are inherently unequalizing in character. Does that mean we should refrain from charity? No, but it does mean that we shouldn’t give it casually or be impressed with our own virtue. We need to recognize that not all problems are genuine needs, that not all needs can be appropriately satisfied, and even the greatest charity is an inherently flawed attempt to restore the world to what it should be. We should tip-toe lightly and respectfully, working only toward a position of greater friendship and respect. Sometimes that means conscientiously doing nothing at all.

Go make the world a better place — but change begins at home.

— Eric Baldwin
Libertarian columnist

The act of charity even at its best creates inequalities of social power.

— Eric Baldwin
Libertarian columnist
Stopping Hornets’ Chris Paul key for Los Angeles Lakers

Broderick Turner
LOS ANGELES TIMES

NEW ORLEANS — For the New Orleans Hornets, their playoff fate against the Los Angeles Lakers begins and ends with their tenacious All-Star point guard Chris Paul.

For the Lakers, Paul remains their biggest problem, someone who has continued to gut their defense in the best-of-seven first-round series.

Paul has orchestrated the Hornets’ attack, probing the Lakers defense, doing his part to even the series at 2-2.

Game 5 is Tuesday night at Staples Center, but Paul’s brilliant play in New Orleans’ victory in Game 4 is the primary reason there is going to be a Game 6 back here Thursday night.

“We’re not satisfied. ...We get to come back here. We’re going to go out there and try and get this Game 5.”

Paul’s triple-double of 27 points, 15 assists and a career-high 13 rebounds in Game 4 was another sign of how effective he has been.

He is leading both teams in scoring (25.5) and assists (11.5) in the series. He is the third-leading rebounder (7.0) in the series, and Paul is barely 6-feet tall.

“Chris is an anomaly,” Lakers assistant coach Jim Cleamons said.

“He’s a one-of-a-kind kind of player. Don’t complain about it. This is what we have to do. We’ve got to figure out a way to stop him effectively for two games in a row. So let’s roll up our sleeves and let’s have at it.”

Cleamons is in charge of putting the Lakers’ game plan together against the Hornets, and he has keyed in on a few must-do things for his team — like cut back on second-chance opportunities.

The Lakers allowed the Hornets to get 20 second-chance points in Game 4.

Cleamons said that happened because of the Hornets’ hustle and determination. “That’s a killer right there,” he said. “We can’t allow that.”

Cleamons also said the Lakers didn’t play with the same intensity and passion they displayed in Games 2 and 3, games the Lakers won.

Besides upping their intensity, Cleamons said, the Lakers must be quicker on their defensive rotations so they don’t allow too many easy shots.

“But the Hornets will be watching the same thing,” Cleamons said.

“Do this is where the real chess match comes in. Which team is going to take it to heart the things that the coaching staff shows them on film and take those nuggets with them out on the floor?”

The Hornets, who didn’t practice Monday, still want the ball in Paul’s hands, and they want to play with the “fight” New Orleans Coach Monty Williams constantly harps on.

“We ain’t changing nothing up,” Hornets forward Trevor Ariza said.

“We’re just playing our game.”

The Lakers have to try harder to stop Chris Paul. He posted a triple-double with 27 points, 15 assists and 13 rebounds in Game 4.

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WE ARE THE MUSTANGS
J.J. Thompson aims to cap baseball career with a bang

Jerome Goynetenche

Baseball represents something different to each player. For Cal Poly first baseman J.J. Thompson, it represents a constant battle.

“(Baseball) can beat you up, spit on you and then, all of a sudden, make you the best player in the world,” Thompson said. “This game will knock you down quite a bit, but it will teach you to bounce back from anything.”

Thompson has fought his way to the top this season. After what was a constant battle to stay in the starting lineup throughout his Cal Poly career, Thompson is now one of the top hitters. In 31 appearances, Thompson is second on the team with a .342 batting average, tied for first with 10 doubles and tied for fourth with 14 RBIs.

It’s been a struggle for Thompson, who batted .211 with 11 RBIs in his freshman season. Thompson then surged in his sophomore year, batting .292 and finishing fourth on the team with seven home runs and 41 RBIs.

Last season, however, Thompson’s improvement waned as he fought to maintain a .200 average.

“Every year there is always a point where you feel like ‘How does it get any worse?’” Thompson said. “Then it does, and you want to give it up. But then you get some success, and you start rolling with it again.”

That point came for Thompson early in the 2010 Big West Conference schedule.

Thompson remembers being on the road sitting in a hot tub with former Cal Poly center fielder Adam Melkert. Thompson said the two, feeling helpless about their struggles on the field, reflected on how they could improve.

“We were just talking about what to do,” Thompson said. “We came to the fact that we both worked really hard, and we deserved success. We just realized we had to stop caring about the results and focus more on having fun and playing the game the right way.”

It was there Thompson would rediscover the success he had been searching for all season long.

In the Mustangs’ three-game series against Long Beach State, Thompson went 7-for-12 with two doubles, two triples and a home run. He continued the rest of the season in the same fashion, finishing the remainder of the Big West Conference schedule batting 17-for-40 (.425).

He carried that momentum over to this season, where he is an integral part of the Mustangs’ success. Thompson said he feels like a lot of pressure has been taken off him in his senior year, and he is focusing more on his mental strength.

“(Head coach Larry) Lee talks about mental strength all the time,” Thompson said. “Being mentally stronger than the game, than the opponent, than the pitcher, than the situation and just realizing that you are going to fail a lot in this game, and you’ve got to keep pushing on and success will come.”

Lee said Thompson has become one of their most productive first basemen, especially on the defensive end.

“J.J. Thompson is my best defensive first baseman,” Lee said. “What we ask of our first basemen is just to take care of things and make decisions.”

With all the ups and downs, Thompson said the most memorable part of Cal Poly baseball has always been his teammates.

“I like all the guys and how everyone works hard,” Thompson said. “They all like to have fun outside of baseball and the locker room. There are just so many good memories, it’s hard to even say which one was best.”

For Thompson, the person he shared the most memories with was Melkert.

Melkert said Thompson was a good person to have as a friend and teammate. Even when the team was in its down cycles, Thompson was the person to always have a smile on his face, he said.

“I just enjoy every day with J.J.; he’s just a great kid,” Melkert said. “He’s hilarious, smart, witty and just a fun guy to be around. He works hard; he’s a guy you always want to be around all the time, he makes you laugh and makes you smile every day. His humor always rubs off on you.”

Though Thompson is unsure of where his career will take him after Cal Poly, he is sure baseball will always be a part of his life.

“Thompson said he wants to help his brother succeed because he did not have someone to mentor him.

“Growing up, I didn’t have any older guys, telling me ‘This is what you need to focus on,’” Thompson said. “I learned more from trial and error. It would have been nice to have a guy that had been through it and given that type of feedback.”

But before the Cal Poly senior starts planning for his future, his eyes are set squarely on a return to the NCAA Division I Regional berth.