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'Three's a Charm' for Cal Poly City and Regional Planning Department

SAN LUIS OBISPO – For the third time since 2000, a Cal Poly City and Regional Planning student has won the American Planning Association's prestigious National Planning Leadership Award for a Student Planner.

The APA leadership award is presented each year to a student whose outstanding contributions help create communities of lasting value, according to Carol Rhea, chair of the 2007 National Planning Awards Committee.

The APA jury selected undergraduate student Michael J. Marcus for his exceptional community involvement.

"We are producing the nation's top student planners," comments City and Regional Department Head, Bill Siembieda. "Cal Poly students have received this national award more than any other university in the country, and it's a reflection of our exceptional program and dedicated faculty."

Marcus' interest in urban planning began long before entering planning studies at Cal Poly. At age 15, he served as a full-voting, at-large Parks and Recreation Commissioner in his hometown of Benicia, California, providing leadership to the community's first annual Youth Rights Workshop. Later, as a high school freshmen, he became student coordinator for a group of concerned citizens who joined together to save Benicia's historic Arsenal District.

His enthusiasm for planning has become even stronger since then, both in and out of the classroom. Marcus's high academic marks have placed him among the top 15 percent of students at Cal Poly. He completed a planning-related internship with RBF Consulting during the summer of 2006, and participated with other Cal Poly students to develop the Templeton Downtown Plan, which received a 2006 California Chapter APA Planning Award.

"I could not help but question why I was lucky enough to have been born into a relatively privileged life," explains Marcus following his travels in Cambodia and ensuing commitment to public service. "The only justification that seemed logical is that with the privilege of being born into a middle-class American family, I have a responsibility to serve others, on a domestic and international level."

Award recipients will be honored at a special awards luncheon April 17 during the APA 2007 National Planning Conference in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

To obtain a photo of Marcus, contact Ray Ladd in the College of Architecture and Environmental Design at 805-756-7432 or rladd@calpoly.edu.

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