

# ROCKET SCIENCE AND A WHOLE LOT MORE

BY TERESA HENDRIX

IT'S ROCKET SCIENCE – and a whole lot more – with the launch of three new team projects this spring by the university's Honors Program.

All three involve intensive collaboration among engineering, science and mathematics students on research to benefit industry and contribute to the community:

- *A rocket-science-in-the-classroom outreach project, Dianne DeTurris, professor of aerospace engineering*
- *An innovative "tech appeal" approach to raise health and fitness awareness among local middle school students, Kevin Taylor, professor of kinesiology*
- *Research on potential new drugs from the sea, Jennifer Carroll, professor of biochemistry*

The new program is made possible, in part, by a recent grant from the National Science Foundation. The \$500,000 grant to the university Honors Program funds scholarships for financially disadvantaged honors students in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Students who receive scholarships are required to participate in collaborative, cross-disciplinary projects that have practical value for industry or the community.

NSF provided the scholarships, deans from various colleges and programs help fund the programs, said Sema Alptekin, director of the Honors Program.

Seed money to launch 20 interdisciplinary, undergraduate research projects came from the Research and Graduate Programs office, the College of Engineering, the College of Science and Mathematics, and the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences, she said.

"The award not only supports financially disadvantaged honors students, it was a catalyst to create the kind of project-based multidisciplinary learning curriculum we had long been hoping for in the Honors Program," said Alptekin. "These deans' support was invaluable."

Eighty-eight scholarships worth \$5,000 each will be awarded annually over the next four years. □

## MATH TEACHING SCHOLARSHIP TARGETS MID-CAREER PROFESSIONALS, TOP STUDENTS

The increasingly high demand for qualified mathematics teachers in high-need schools is potentially being met with a grant of nearly \$425,000 awarded to Cal Poly by the National Science Foundation.

The Robert Noyce Scholarship Program will fund stellar students in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. It is also intended to attract mid-career professionals or students in other areas of study who have an interest in pursuing a math or science teaching credential.

Twelve one-year scholarships target "career changers" or non-mathematics majors, with another 12 two-year scholarships to be awarded to mathematics majors for their final year of undergraduate studies and their one-year credential program. All scholarship recipients will be required to teach two years in a high-need school district for each year of scholarship funds received.

The \$10,000 scholarships cover about two-thirds of the cost of the credential program at Cal Poly, according to Todd Grundmeier, co-director of the university's Noyce Scholarship Program. Scholarships will be awarded to three career changers each year for the next four years and to four current mathematics majors over each of the next three years. Complete program information can be found at [www.calpoly.edu/~math](http://www.calpoly.edu/~math).