

## UNIVERSITY NEWS

### Deborah Read Named Vice President for University Advancement and CEO of the Cal Poly Foundation



Deborah Read, who brings nearly three decades of experience in higher education fundraising, has been named Cal Poly's new vice president for university advancement and CEO of the Cal Poly Foundation. Read is currently vice president for university advancement at the University of Dayton in Ohio. Cal Poly President Jeffrey D. Armstrong cited Read's breadth and depth as a career fundraiser and administrator. "I am confident," Armstrong said, "that we are adding a proven leader with deep experience at a time when Cal Poly absolutely must develop more philanthropic support for our Learn by Doing programs."

[More on Read's appointment](#)

[Read's resume and curriculum vitae](#)

[Read's statement on philanthropy and public higher education](#)

### Northern Arizona University Administrator and Civil Engineering Professor Debra Larson Named Dean of Cal Poly Engineering

Cal Poly President Jeffrey D. Armstrong named Debra Larson, a civil engineering professor and Academic Affairs administrator with Northern Arizona University, as the new dean of Cal Poly Engineering. Larson, 54, joined Cal Poly on Aug. 22, taking the reins of the university's largest college with about 5,000 students, 13 degree programs and more than 80 laboratories. "Debra understands Cal Poly thoroughly and brings an excellent blend of experience as an administrator and faculty member," Armstrong said. "She knows that our primary mission is undergraduate education, that our highest priority is student success, and that Learn by Doing is an integral part of the Cal Poly experience."

[More about Larson](#)



New Cal Poly Engineering Dean  
Debra Larson

### Cal Poly Housing Collaborative Wins Bank of America Low-Income Housing Challenge

An interdisciplinary team of Cal Poly students took first place in Bank of America's Low-Income Housing Challenge, beating out master's degree students from UC Berkeley and UC Irvine in the final round. The team partnered with developer Madonna Enterprises to create "Entrada Ranch." The proposed site features a 135-unit affordable living community in San Luis Obispo, adjacent to services and transportation. The project design includes a community center, community garden, recreational and exercise facility, connection to local trails, bike paths, a variety of open spaces and a daycare center. The project supports healthy living through site design and sustainable building, and programs that foster community, such as a cooperative garden that will produce organic produce and serve as a gathering place for residents. The team was comprised of 10 undergraduate and two graduate students: six from city and regional planning, three from business and finance, two from landscape architecture and one from construction management.

[More on the team's success](#)

### Graphic Communication Students Win Bookbuilders West Awards

Three Cal Poly Graphic Communication students were awarded scholarships at the 2011 Bookbuilders West Scholarship Competition. Christina Dillon, Daniel Triassi and Jeannie Nguyen each won \$500 for their book design projects. Bookbuilders West focuses on the design, typography, production and manufacture of books. Student competitors were asked to select and design a limited-edition book. Submissions are judged on creativity, meeting design objectives, and presentation. Dillon designed and produced "Pride and Prejudice," Triassi designed and produced "The Hardy Boys, Tower of Treasure," and Nguyen designed and produced "Ella Minnow Pea," a novel based on a society in which letter writing is the principal form of communication.

[More on the students' projects and awards](#)

### Concrete Canoe Team Captures Second Straight National Championship



Cal Poly's national champion Concrete Canoe Team

Cal Poly claimed the "America's Cup of Civil Engineering" for the second consecutive year June 18 at the American Society of Civil Engineers National Concrete Canoe Competition. Cal Poly edged out 22 other universities from the U.S. and Canada with the Cetacea – a 208-pound, ocean-themed canoe made from concrete and recycled toilets.

The 24th annual regatta, sponsored by the American Society of Civil Engineers, was hosted by the University of Evansville in Evansville, Ind. The four-part competition included an oral presentation, written report, judgment of a canoe's aesthetics and sprint and endurance races held at Audubon State Park in nearby Henderson, Ky.

The event is designed to challenge students' knowledge, creativity and stamina, while

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showcasing the versatility and durability of concrete as a building material. Competition rules this year required the use of a second aggregate and included a strong focus on sustainability. Cal Poly's innovative response was to include recycled porcelain from crushed white toilets.

"The toilet aggregate surprised a lot of people," said project Captain Chad Inlow. "We wanted to do something unique."

[Read more on the Concrete Canoe team's victory](#)

#### **Wine and Viticulture Program Honored with Lifetime Achievement Award**

The Cal Poly Wine and Viticulture program received the California Exposition and State Fair's 2011 Lifetime Achievement Award for the university's enduring contributions to the advancement of the California wine industry. Cal Poly joins UC Davis and CSU Fresno as recipients of the prestigious award, presented today at the California State Fair Gala at Cal Expo in Sacramento.

Cal Poly Wine and Viticulture was acknowledged for its unique interdisciplinary learning experience encompassing lessons from three departments – Horticulture and Crop Science, Food Science and Nutrition, and Agribusiness – combining an understanding of grape cultivation, winemaking and wine business. Upon graduation, students are industry-ready, having mastered fundamental and applied sciences, modern agribusiness principles, social science, grape cultivation, enology and wine business principles.

"We are honored to be recognized along with such an impressive group of Lifetime Achievement Award recipients," said program Director John Peterson. "This is truly a student success story, since it is the students who define us."

[More on the Lifetime Achievement Award](#)

#### **Community College Students Spending Summer as Paid Scientists at Cal Poly**

Thanks to an \$848,000 grant from the National Institutes of Health, 14 students from Allan Hancock College in Santa Maria spent their summer as paid research interns at Cal Poly.

This is the third summer Cal Poly has hosted Hancock students through the NIH's Bridges to the Baccalaureate program.

The students are paid \$10 an hour for up to 30 hours a week working under the supervision of Cal Poly faculty. The grant also pays for up to \$500 in research supplies for the students' projects. They can also apply for funding to attend national or state conferences with their professors to make presentations on their research findings.

The aim of the grant is to increase the number of underrepresented students who earn degrees in biomedical or behavioral science and go on to successful careers in science-related fields. "We're hoping they all go on to careers in science once they see how cool research is," said Emily Taylor, a Cal Poly Biological Sciences professor who coordinates the summer program.

[More on Bridges to the Baccalaureate](#)

#### **Education Professor Awarded for Special Education Achievements**

Cal Poly School of Education Professor Michael Ruef has received the 2011 Thomas Haring Award in recognition of his efforts on behalf of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. The award is given annually by the UC Santa Barbara Gervitz School of Education.

In selecting Ruef for the award, The Gervitz School noted that his work "represents the best in leadership, citizen activism and advocacy." He received the award at a ceremony in early June, along with four other recipients.

Ruef is a professor and co-coordinator of Special Education Programs in Cal Poly's School of Education. He is a founding member of the board of directors for the Central Coast Autism Spectrum Center.

"I'm honored to receive the award and hope that it will raise awareness of the issues dealt with by families touched by autism or other disabilities," Ruef said.

[More on Ruef's award](#)



Michael Ruef

#### **Passings**

##### **George Ramos**



George Ramos

Professor George Ramos, 1969 Cal Poly journalism graduate, 1993 College of Liberal Arts/College of Arts and Humanities distinguished alumnus, three-time Pulitzer prize-winning journalist with the Los Angeles Times, and former chair of Cal Poly's Journalism Department, died in late July at age 63. During his undergraduate days, he was the first Chicano student to serve as editor-in-chief of the Mustang Daily. After working at the L.A. Times from 1978 to 2003, he was appointed to lead the Journalism Department. Ramos served from 2003 to 2008 before moving into the faculty early retirement program. Ramos earned his first Pulitzer -- the Pulitzer Prize Gold Medal for Meritorious Public Service -- as part of a team in 1984. As a co-editor and reporter, he worked with other Chicano journalists to produce a series "about the roots, lives and aspirations of the 3 million Latinos who lived in California's 13 southern counties. The Pulitzer was the first ever awarded to Chicano journalists. Later, Ramos earned two Pulitzers for on-the-spot reporting -- one in 1993 on the rioting in the aftermath of the Rodney King beating case, and the other in 1995 as part of the team covering the Northridge earthquake.



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