



Kurt Zierhut, vice president of electrical engineering at Haas Automation (left), and Cal Poly Engineering Dean Debra Larson dedicate the new Gene Haas Laboratory for Robotics and Automation.

lected to participate through the Cal Poly Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship. This marks the first time Cal Poly has been awarded this distinction. Cal Poly faculty fellows will develop courses in their academic discipline that advance self-employment and entrepreneurship, guided by Jonathan L. York, associate professor of entrepreneurship and director and founder of the Cal Poly Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship (CIE). □

New Robotics and Automation Lab Prepares Students for Manufacturing

A new robotics and automation lab in Cal Poly's Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering Department will help students gain hands-on exposure to cutting-edge systems and technology. The Gene Haas Laboratory for Robotics and Automation, which opened in mid-September, is the result of a \$50,000 gift from the Gene Haas Foundation. The lab provides new hardware, software and precision tools for Cal

Poly's already strong manufacturing engineering program. That gift also inspired an array of state-of-the-art technology donations from other industry leaders including Yaskawa America, Rockwell Automation, Keyence and Trust Automation. "Labs like this develop the high-talent workforce needed for advanced manufacturing, which is so vital to national prosperity," said College of Engineering Dean Debra Larson. "It's a great investment." □

Professor Awarded \$2.5M Grant to Foster Preschoolers' Interest in Astronomy

Jennifer Jipson, associate professor of child development in the Psychology and Child Development Department, is part of a team that has been awarded a \$2.5 million National Science Foundation grant to reinforce and extend preschoolers' interest in astronomy-related topics. The Astronomical Society of the Pacific (ASP) will spearhead the four-and-a-half-year project, titled "My Sky Tonight,"

which is designed to reveal the hurdles to early childhood science learning and develop ways to promote preschool-age science learning through astronomy. The ASP will serve as principal investigator and partner with co-principal investigators Jipson, Julia Plummer at Penn State University, and Maureen Callanan from UC Santa Cruz. The number of preschoolers visiting U.S. science centers and museums has been increasing over the years. The overall goal of the project is to help these venues offer effective informal learning opportunities for families with young children that will promote children's developing identities as "kids who like science." Jipson is an expert in young children's science learning. Her contributions to this project will focus on identifying children's ideas about and interest in astronomy, examining parent-child conversations about astronomy, and exploring ways to support children and their families in developing a greater understanding and interest in that area. □

Cal Poly Welcomes Christine Theodoropoulos, New Dean of College of Architecture

Christine Theodoropoulos, most recently head of the Architecture Department at the University of Oregon in Eugene, is the new dean of Cal Poly's College of Architecture and Environmental Design. Theodoropoulos – who is also a licensed architect and registered professional civil engineer in California – assumed her new post in September. "Christine's blend of academic and professional experience as a teacher, university administrator, architect and civil engineer make

her an excellent choice to lead our College of Architecture and Environmental Design," said Cal Poly President Jeffrey D. Armstrong. "Her career has embraced the kind of multidisciplinary approaches that will enrich our Learn by Doing programs." Theodoropoulos had served as head of the Architecture Department in the University of Oregon's School of Architecture and Allied Arts since 2003. She had been a faculty member in the department since 1997. □

Cal Poly Appoints George Hughes New Chief of University Police

Cal Poly has welcomed George Hughes, most recently leader of the Colorado School of Mines police department, as its new chief of University Police. Hughes assumed his new role Aug. 31. He brings more than 20 years of law enforcement experience to Cal Poly. Hughes succeeded Chief Bill Watton, who retired in August after 10 years leading University Police. Hughes oversees the police and parking departments with 45 staff members, including 18 sworn officers, and an annual budget of approximately \$8 million. □

Cal Poly Welcomes Douglas Epperson, New Dean of College of Liberal Arts

Douglas Epperson, a veteran of liberal arts higher education and most recently dean at Washington State University, is the new dean of the College of Liberal Arts at Cal Poly. He assumed his new post in August. "Doug understands



Cal Poly's Concrete Canoe teams have won three straight national championships.

and appreciates the special niche that Cal Poly has in higher education as one of the nation's few comprehensive polytechnic universities," said Cal Poly President Jeffrey D. Armstrong. "Doug brings to Cal Poly outstanding experience as both an administrator and a faculty member who also has created an impressive body of scholarship." Epperson had served as dean of Washington State's College of Liberal Arts since 2009. Before Washington State, Epperson spent his career at Iowa State University – beginning as an assistant professor of psychology in 1979 and ending with a five-year stint as associate dean of the university's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. □

Cal Poly Claims National Concrete Canoe Championship for Third Year in a Row

For the third consecutive year, Cal Poly won gold at the National Concrete Canoe Competition, considered the

America's Cup of civil engineering. The team's three-peat came in a canoe named Prospector in honor of the California Gold Rush. The American Society of Civil Engineers' (ASCE) 25th annual National Concrete Canoe Competition was held over the summer at the University of Nevada, Reno. Cal Poly was among 22 top engineering schools at the prestigious event, which challenges students' knowledge, creativity and stamina while showcasing the versatility and durability of concrete as a building material. The competition was broken into four equally weighted categories: final product, design paper, technical presentation and races. Cal Poly placed first in three categories and third in technical presentation. "We put in 5,250 hours on the development of Prospector," said Project Manager Erik Bjornstrom. "We applied innovative and sustainable practices to every aspect of its construction. That included testing 160 different concrete mixes, eliminating a layer of reinforcement and incorporating more sustainable materials." □