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Cal Poly Special Ed Program Awarded U.S. Department of Education Grant

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- The U.S. Department of Education has awarded the Special Education Program in Cal Poly's College of Education a grant that will help the university educate future teachers of students with disabilities.

The four-year, nearly \$777,000-grant will help students earn degrees as California credentialed special education teachers for students with mild to moderate disabilities.

To support teacher candidates, full-time students enrolled in this special education credential program will be eligible to receive up to \$8,000 for tuition, books and stipends.

The grant proposal, written by faculty members Kathleen C. Harris and Michael Ruef, is titled "Collaborative High Incidence Personnel Preparation" (CHIPP). To meet the proposal objective, the authors have revised the Cal Poly Special Education Program, incorporating a collaborative venture with local special educators to mentor teacher candidates enrolled in the program.

Another objective of the CHIPP project is aimed at educating teachers and other school personnel about the special needs of students with mild to moderate disabilities.

The CHIPP project also extends the work started last year when Cal Poly's College of Education was identified as an IRIS (IDEA and Research for Inclusive Settings) site. Cal Poly was one of five campuses nationwide to be so named.

The focus of the IRIS center is to ensure that university students completing programs in general education, school administration, counseling and nursing are well prepared to work with students with disabilities and their families, explained Harris.

The U.S. Department of Education grant will enhance this effort by bringing together Cal Poly faculty in elementary teacher preparation, secondary teacher preparation, and special education programs to develop strategies for improving teacher candidates' ability to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

For more information on the program, applications and deadlines, go online to <http://www.coe.calpoly.edu/>.

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