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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Cal Poly Appoints William C. Harris as New Provost
and Vice President for Academic Affairs**

SAN LUIS OBISPO

- Cal Poly President Warren J. Baker announced today the appointment of William C. Harris as the university's new provost and vice president for academic affairs.

Harris is the director general of Science Foundation Ireland (SFI), a post he has held since September 2001.

Harris will officially join Cal Poly upon completion of his transition responsibilities at SFI, no later than July 2006. In the intervening months, he plans to visit Cal Poly regularly to undertake planning for new and ongoing initiatives. During this transition period, Robert C. Detweiler will continue as interim provost and vice president for academic affairs.

"I am honored by the opportunity to serve this outstanding institution and excited by the prospect of working with the faculty, staff, students and community," Harris commented. "I look forward to meeting them during this academic year. More than ever, we need a contemporary Cal Poly - an institution that is defined by its motto, learn by doing, an institution that through superb teaching and scholarship provides a vital service to the citizens of California and beyond."

Harris has had a distinguished career in teaching, research and administration. Following service as a tenured member of Furman University's chemistry faculty - including being honored for his undergraduate teaching as a Dreyfus Foundation Teacher-Scholar - Harris embarked upon an 18-year career with the National Science Foundation, from 1978 to 1996.

While he was at NSF, some of his many accomplishments included directing the mathematical and physical sciences directorate, introducing and developing the first 25 science and technology centers in the U.S. to connect university research in a focused way with long-term national problems, and initiating the Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) program in chemistry, which became an NSF-wide activity.

From 1996 to 2000, Harris served as founding president and executive director of Columbia University's Biosphere 2 Center, where he implemented an undergraduate education program focused on earth systems science, management and policy. He also forged partnerships with almost 30 colleges and universities, including Cal Poly.

In 2000, he went on to serve as vice president for research and professor of chemistry at the University of South Carolina, prior to assuming his current post at Science Foundation Ireland.

Among his honors, Harris is a member of the Royal Irish Academy, a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and recipient of the U.S. Presidential Award-Distinguished Executive in the Senior Executive Service. In 2004 he delivered the keynote address at Cal Poly's Baker Forum, a biennial public policy forum for leaders in education, government and industry, and received the Wiley Lifetime Achievement Award.

Commenting on Harris' appointment, President Warren J. Baker said: "Bill Harris brings to Cal Poly a lifelong commitment to undergraduate education, forged in his early years as a professor in South Carolina. More recently he demonstrated this commitment to the many Cal Poly students who had the distinct privilege of working with him at Biosphere 2, an experience they uniformly characterized as life-altering.

"In addition, his national and international leadership roles in science and technology will permit him to bring to the university experiences and perspectives that will serve our students and faculty well."

Baker added that while the campus awaits Harris' arrival, he is very pleased that Interim Provost Bob Detweiler has agreed to continue to provide leadership for the university and its academic programs. "Bob has accomplished a great deal for Cal Poly during his tenure as interim provost and vice president for academic affairs, and his continued service guarantees that we will not lose momentum in the coming year," he said.

Bill Harris and his wife, Connie, maintain a residence in Reston, Va. Connie, a former elementary school teacher, is an

active volunteer for the Smithsonian, in Washington , D.C. They have two grown children.

Harris earned his doctorate in chemistry from the University of South Carolina . He also completed a bachelor's degree from the College of William and Mary.

The provost and vice president for academic affairs reports to the university president and is second in command, providing overall leadership for the academic programs, while coordinating and overseeing internal operations in collaboration with other members of the university's senior management group.

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