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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Pete Agalos
Coach, Cal Poly Horse Judging Team
756-7414; pagalos@calpoly.edu

Cal Poly Horse Judging Team Fares Well at Competition in Oklahoma City

SAN LUIS OBISPO - Cal Poly's Horse Judging Team placed third this month at the Collegiate Judging Contest at the National Reining Horse Association's 2008 Futurity in Oklahoma City.

Team member Virginia Vouri also placed fifth in the competition's individual standings.

Cal Poly competed against 18 other teams from around the nation, besting such schools as Virginia Tech, Oklahoma State, Texas A&M, the University of Illinois and Clemson. West Texas A&M placed first, followed by the University of Wisconsin - River Falls.

The futurity ran Nov. 27 to Dec. 6 at the Oklahoma State Fairgrounds, with the collegiate judging competition taking place Dec. 4 and 5. It was the 20th time the collegiate competition has been held at the NRHA Futurity.

The competition pits five-member teams against each other in a rule book test and a penalty test on the first day, followed by a live judging of 20 horses on the second day. Team and individual scores are then compared against an official judge's to determine winners. The winning team takes home a bronze trophy and prize money.

The NRHA competition marked the Cal Poly team's second trip to Oklahoma City in a month. The team also competed Nov. 19 at the American Quarter Horse Association's Collegiate Horse Judging Contest. That was the 2008-09 team's first competition; the members had only been practicing together for a couple of months but competed against teams that had been judging together for a year or more, member Rebecca Osumi said.

"We did not do as well as we hoped," Osumi said. "But it was a good learning experience and great preparation for our next competition."

Cal Poly's team this year includes Osumi and Vouri, along with Anne Katuin, Wyatt Scott and Lindsay Kirscher. They are coached by Animal Science professor Pete Agalos.

The team judges halter class horses as well performance classes in various disciplines, including western riding, trail, English equitation, horsemanship and reining.

The team travels to several competitions around Oklahoma, Texas and Ohio throughout the school year. Agalos said Cal Poly's team is the only one from California in collegiate competition now.

The 2008-09 team is preparing to travel next to Ft. Worth, Texas, to take part in the American Paint Horse Association Collegiate Judging Contest set for April 21.

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California Polytechnic State University

San Luis Obispo, CA 93407

805.756.7266

polynews@calpoly.edu