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Cal Poly Professor Helps Launch Research Center on School District Governance

SAN LUIS OBISPO – A Cal Poly professor is one of four scholars from around the nation recently given the OK to establish a national research center that focuses on school board governance and district superintendency.

George J. Petersen of Cal Poly's College of Education co-wrote the proposal for the new Joint Center for Superintendency and District Governance in August. His fellow authors and directors are Theodore J. Kowalski, endowed professor at the University of Dayton; Thomas Alsbury, associate professor at North Carolina State University; and Meredith Mountford, associate professor at Florida Atlantic University.

The proposal recently received approval from the University Council for Educational Administration, a national consortium of 81 research universities in North America, Canada, Great Britain, and Hong Kong.

The center will bring researchers and school leaders together and provide administration of a nationally funded research agenda in the area of superintendency and school board governance, policy and leadership. It will use digital media to provide accessibility and broad dissemination of research, on an academic level and in the practical applications and guidance for district-level leaders in the field. And it aims to provide a central organization for national associations to improve linkages and collaboration between researchers and practitioners.

Petersen said Cal Poly's participation will give the university a higher profile among the institutions that are members of the University Council for Educational Administration, as well as non-UCEA institutions, professional leadership organizations and governmental agencies.

Petersen has taught at Cal Poly since 2004. He is the former chair of the Department of Graduate Studies of Education and is currently co-director of the UCSB and Cal Poly Joint Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership. He is a former high school teacher and director of secondary education and served as a tenured associate professor at University of Missouri-Columbia and associate executive director of the University Council for Educational Administration from 1999-2004.

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