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Cal Poly City and Regional Planning Department Awarded \$1.5 Million Grant for State Hazard Mitigation Planning

SAN LUIS OBISPO - Cal Poly's City and Regional Planning Department has been awarded a \$1.5 million, 3-year grant to help prepare the 2010 State of California Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan for the California Emergency Management Agency (Cal EMA), a consolidation of the former Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) and Office of Homeland Security (OHS).

Objectives of the plan include preparation of environmental, land use, development, and infrastructure management actions to protect against risks from natural hazards such as earthquakes, floods, wildfires and landslides, and human-caused hazards such as chemical pollution. Special concerns are drought, levee failure, coastal flooding and climate change.

Objectives for the emerging policy include collaboration between state agencies and activating local resources.

"The Office of Emergency Services sought out Cal Poly because they were busy assisting in response and recovery services after disasters," said Ken Topping, project director and Cal Poly professor. "Our goal is to help individual municipalities and the entire state reduce the time and cost associated with disaster mitigation."

The grant continues efforts initiated under a previous grant that enabled a Cal Poly team of faculty and students to identify and assess plans to prevent losses from such hazards. That work entitled California to receive extra federal funds for mitigation efforts. The result hasn't yet been calculated but may mean tens of millions of dollars to the state after the fall 2008 wildfires.

The project is led by City and Regional Planning Department faculty including Ken Topping, project director, and William Siembieda and Michael Boswell, co-directors.

About Disaster Mitigation:

Disaster mitigation is the alteration of the built environment to provide greater resilience against natural and human-caused hazards, preventing loss of life and property. Mitigation focuses on long-term strategic efforts to prevent disaster impact while emergency preparedness helps people stay safer during and after a disaster. For best results,

both should be coordinated among government, business and citizen groups.

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Note: Top Left image shows a flood wall erected on the Napa River. Lower Right illustrates a retrofit plan for San Francisco City Hall.

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