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Dec. 8, 2004

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Cal Poly Ranks High for Study-Abroad Students

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- Cal Poly ranks fourth in the nation among peer universities for the number of students it sends to study abroad, according to a survey by the Institute of International Education.

The Open Doors 2004 Report on International Education Exchange found that Cal Poly sent 549 students to study-abroad programs during 2002-2003. There are even more this year: 585 in more than 20 countries. Cal Poly's category in the report is universities which offer master's degrees (non-doctoral universities).

"That's the total number of students who attend some small liberal arts colleges in the United States," said Cal Poly English Professor John Battenburg, who also serves as the interim director for [International Education and Programs](#) at the university. "It's Cal Poly's best-kept secret. Not many know we have so many students studying overseas."

The annual report, published by the Institute of International Education (IIE) with funding from the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, also found that Cal Poly was the only California university in its category ranked in the top 20. The three peer universities which sent more students abroad are in Florida, North Carolina and Virginia.

"Studying abroad changes students' lives," said Battenburg. "It's an opportunity for them to leave the safety and security of Cal Poly - of California - and develop remarkable insights about the world around them."

More American students than ever before are recognizing the importance of studying abroad in a globally interdependent world, according to Open Doors 2004. In the first full academic year after the 9/11 attacks (academic year 2002-03), the report states, the number of U.S. college and university students receiving credit for study abroad increased by 8.5 percent from the previous year, reaching a record total of 174,629 students.

"We are all students of the world we live in, and today, our world is more interdependent than ever before," Secretary of State Colin Powell said during International Education Week, November 2003. "The challenges we face in areas such as security, democratic development, economics, and health cannot be addressed by any country acting alone. International education, learning about other cultures and languages through study, living overseas, and interacting with people of other countries promotes the free exchange of ideas, allows us to seek joint solutions to problems, and helps create lasting partnerships to meet our shared concerns."

The Institute of International Education has been conducting the surveys since 1985-86. In 2003-04, surveys were sent to 1,303 accredited colleges and universities throughout the United States, asking them to provide information on the number of their own students who were given credit for study abroad in 2002-03. There was a 78.4-percent response rate.

For the purpose of Open Doors, study abroad is narrowly defined as only those students who received academic credit from a U.S.-accredited institution of higher education after they returned from their study abroad experience. Students who travel and take courses without credit transfers are not reported in Open Doors, nor are students who are enrolled overseas for degrees from non-U.S. institutions.

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Editors: Students available for interviews are [Kristen Ewing](#), who participated in three Cal Poly overseas programs, Cal Poly At Sea, Thai Study and London Internship or [Karen Sommers](#) IP Denmark program.

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