

California Polytechnic State University

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MEDIA ADVISORY

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Media Tipsheet: Great Grad Profiles from Cal Poly's Class of 2004

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- Cal Poly's Class of 2004 has 3,450 students (3,196 bachelor's candidates and 254 master's candidates), all outstanding. But if you're looking for interesting grads to profile for a good feature story, consider these:

Kevin Strong - Was called to duty twice in the Air National Guard during his studies at Cal Poly, putting his education on hold both times to serve. In his senior year in liberal studies, he was called to active duty after Sept. 11, 2001, and served for a year. He returned, earned his bachelors' degree in 2002, and began working on his teaching credential at the University Center for Teacher Education. In the middle of 2003, he was called to duty with the Air National Guard again, and served in Iraq for almost a year, crewing C-130 cargo planes. On his return in 2004, he launched into his student teaching assignment. He finished in June, and will be receiving his teaching credential. He's originally from Montana.

Glenda Moscoso - Originally from Guatemala, she learned English as a second language in adult school after coming to the U.S. 13 years ago. She went on to community college in Fullerton and transferred to Cal Poly, earning a bachelor's degree in agribusiness. Married and the mother of two girls, she returned to Cal Poly and will receive a master's degree in counseling and guidance from the UCTE. She's the first in her family to earn a master's, has been active in the local Latino community throughout her studies, and wants to teach at the college level and mentor Latino students.

Lydell Aaron - An African-American student in a major/career field that is predominately white, this computer engineering grad candidate spent his early childhood in South Central Los Angeles and graduated from high school in Inglewood. When he was 16, his father brought home the family's first personal computer and put it in Aaron's bedroom -- the only one with space to hold it. A self-taught computer user who started

out learning to make Web pages, Aaron knew he wanted a career in computers -- and is now looking at job offers from Jet Propulsion Laboratories and Northrop Grumman.

Sittada Chaloeicheep - A refugee from Thailand who emigrated to Walnut Creek with her father as a child, she worked her way through college at multiple jobs with no financial aid, because her immigration status is still being processed. Along the way, she also paid thousands of dollars for surgery and hospitalizations for her mother, who still lives in Thailand. Despite her difficulties and the fact that English is her second language, she'll graduate with a bachelor's degree in political science. She's been accepted into the master's degree program in national security studies at Cal State San Bernardino.

Alisa Runstrom -- Deaf from birth, she's had sign language interpreters in all her Cal Poly classes, and at times used a service dog on campus (he's retired now). She has also worked to increase awareness of deaf issues while at Cal Poly by teaching sign language classes on campus and in the local community. She'll be receiving a bachelor's degree in animal science with minors in English and rangeland resources. Her hometown is Irvine.

Nichole Noroian -- After being accepted as a transfer student from Hartnell College in 2000, Nichole was diagnosed with multiple brain tumors and had to delay her transfer by a quarter. When she arrived at Cal Poly, she was still dealing with the side effects of her treatment, including difficulties with hearing, vision, mobility and speech. She recovered and went on to join clubs, work part time, and complete several internships. Her hometown is Salinas, and she has earned a degree in agricultural science.

Danilu Ramirez -- She's graduating from Cal Poly after only three years, which included working part time and being active in clubs on campus. During high school in Calexico, she took courses after school at the local community college and took 18-plus units every quarter at Cal Poly. She'll receive a bachelor's degree in crop science and already has several job offers she attributes in part to being bilingual. She's most likely heading to Tulare to be a production agronomist in charge of 9,000 acres of cotton, alfalfa, tomatoes and onions for J.D. Boswell Co. She continues a family tradition of three generations of farming in California.

Colleen Jones -- Jones has volunteered her entire college career with Partners in Equestrian Therapy, a non-profit group that offers disabled children and adults horseback riding sessions to improve balance, coordination and confidence. After hearing about the organization, she volunteered and wound up serving on its board of trustees. Jones, of Gualala in Northern California, will receive a bachelor's degree in kinesiology. She's currently working as a PET employee, serving as head trainer, and is interested in teaching or working with disabled students.

Robert Springer -- The Paso Robles auto parts salesman didn't go to college after he graduated from high school in 1975, but 20 years later he decided he should have. He enrolled in Cuesta College and went to night school, then transferred to Cal Poly. He graduated with honors with a bachelor's degree in history in 2003, after juggling a full-time job and full-time class load. Then he entered the UCTE teaching credential program. He has earned his credential and wants to be a high school teacher -- to encourage all his students to go on to college.

For more background information or to interview any of these great grads, contact Media Relations Coordinator Teresa Hendrix at (805) 756-7266 or thendrix@calpoly.edu for their phone numbers and e-mail addresses.

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